

SEP and IYSSE meetings in Australia resolve to defend Dr. Scalice from Philippine Stalinist attacks

Our reporters
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Historian Dr. Joseph Scalice has come under attack from the Philippine Stalinists for his powerful August 26 lecture, “First as Tragedy, Second as Farce: Marcos, Duterte and the Communist Parties of the Philippines,” which examined the support given by the Stalinist Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), and the various organisations that follow its political line, to authoritarian Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte in 2016.

Acutely sensitive to the criticism of the CPP, its founder Jose Maria Sison, without a shred of evidence, has denounced Dr. Scalice as a paid CIA agent and an informer for Duterte. Dr. Scalice, through the establishment of the historical record about the betrayals of the CPP, has done a service to the working class in the Philippines and internationally.

We urge our readers to come to the defence of Dr. Scalice, including by sending statements of support to the WSWs opposing the slanderous attack on him by the CPP and sharing his lecture widely.

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) in Australia and its youth wing, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), held three online meetings in defence of historian Dr. Joseph Scalice over the weekend.

On Friday, registered IYSSE clubs at the prestigious University of Melbourne (UofM) and Victoria University (VU) held a combined event discussing the significance of Scalice’s work. On Saturday, the SEP held two forums, one in Sydney and the other in the New South Wales (NSW) working-class city of Newcastle, on the same topic.

The meetings were attended by a diverse group of students, young people and workers from across Melbourne, Perth and Sydney, as well as regional NSW and Victoria.

In addition to VU and UofM students, pupils at Melbourne’s Monash, La Trobe and Deakin universities took part, along with Technical and Further Education (TAFE) students.

The IYSSE gathering adopted the following resolution:

This meeting registers its support for academic Dr. Joseph Scalice, and its unequivocal condemnation of the Stalinist slanders to which he has been subjected by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

Scalice, through meticulous scholarship, has demonstrated that the CPP has consistently sought to subordinate workers and the oppressed in the Philippines to one or other section of the capitalist class. This bankrupt program, carried out based on the Stalinist lie that there is a progressive section of the national bourgeoisie, has led to tragic defeats and authoritarianism. The CPP’s well documented support for the fascistic President Rodrigo Duterte is only the latest example.

Scalice has done a service to students in Australia and internationally, and not only the many here who are of Filipino descent. He has helped clarify one of the big issues facing our generation: Stalinism. Through his scholarship, Scalice has shown that Stalinism is the antithesis of Marxism and communism. It is based on nationalism, and an orientation to sections of the capitalist ruling elite. These issues are critical as young people are shifting to the left and seeking to find out how to fight for socialism.

We oppose the CPP’s slanders that Scalice is a “CIA agent.” These assertions are a threat of

violence and a confession of intellectual and political bankruptcy.

This meeting resolves to spread Scalice's lecture as far as possible, develop the widest discussion on the critical political issues it raises and oppose all attempts to suppress academic freedom, including the opportunist and threatening attacks on Scalice.

Attendees also viewed a video exposing CPP leader Jose Maria Sison's Big Lie that his party never supported Duterte's presidency.

There were extensive discussion and question periods at all of the meetings.

One University of Melbourne student, attending her first IYSSE event, said that the report and discussion was "so pertinent." She had long felt like a "closet communist," because of confusions stemming from the identification of communism and Stalinism. Scalice's exposures of the CPP, she said, are important for young socialists seeking to oppose the anti-communist propaganda of the right, as well as the Stalinist perversion of socialism.

Another UofM student said Scalice is "someone telling the truth and he gets attacked for it. If we don't defend people who are telling the truth, then the entire scientific endeavor of trying to find the objective truth is undermined."

A La Trobe student asked how IYSSE members and students can "broaden this conversation about Joseph Scalice and distribute his lecture so that more people are aware of what's going on in the Philippines?"

IYSSE members stressed the critical role of the *World Socialist Web Site* in the fight to defend Scalice and historical truth. It was necessary for those in attendance to grapple with the complex issues of history and political perspective raised by the lecture, in order to clarify workers and young people more broadly.

The Sydney and Newcastle SEP forums also adopted a resolution, which declared: "To defend its rights, amid a major global crisis, a turn to authoritarianism and an assault on social conditions, the working class needs to know the truth about the history of its revolutionary struggles and betrayals. The development of a movement of the working class against capitalism requires the broadest democratic discussion of political perspective. For these reasons, Sison's lies, slanders and threats against Scalice are a direct attack, not only on Dr. Scalice's rights, but also on ours."

In Sydney, a worker asked why some of his friends, who were impoverished Filipino workers, supported Duterte.

In response, SEP members explained that Duterte's rise could not be understood outside of the support extended to him by the CPP and organisations in the Philippines following its political line. This had generated widespread confusion. As has been the case internationally, the rise of right-wing and authoritarian leaders has been directly facilitated by the perfidy of the official "left," and its suppression of mass opposition and anger from the working class.

Historical parallels were drawn with the imposition of martial law by Filipino President Ferdinand Marcos in 1972. Under conditions of widespread ferment in the working class, and major strikes and protests, Marcos had only been able to institute a dictatorship because he was directly supported by one section of the Stalinist movement, while another subordinated popular opposition to a rival faction of the ruling elite, no less committed to authoritarianism.

In the Sydney forum, a student of Indian family background, said: "I cannot state enough how opposed I am to the Stalinist and Maoist political lines. Maoism has had a foothold in India for many decades and it's been a dead end for workers. The leadership has time and time again let workers down, let the people down, and stopped their struggles from going forward.

"It's become a dead end of bloodshed and a massive waste of human life and potential. That's definitely where Trotskyism comes into play, where the International Committee of the Fourth International comes into play. We need a real communist leadership that enables workers to act in their interests and that won't be channelled behind the capitalists."



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