

Chinese students support historian Joseph Scalice against Stalinist slanders

Our correspondents
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The World Socialist Web Site is publishing messages of support from two Chinese students for Dr. Joseph Scalice. Scalice has come under attack from the Philippine Stalinists for his powerful lecture, “First as Tragedy, Second as Farce: Marcos, Duterte and the Communist Parties of the Philippines,” which examined the support given by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), to authoritarian Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte in 2016.

His lecture has a particular significance for Chinese workers and youth as Sison and the CPP are based ideologically on Maoism, the Chinese variant of Stalinism, which has had such a damaging political impact on the working class in China and throughout the region. The lecture has been translated into Chinese and is available here.

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. We urge our readers, including in China, 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.

An engineering student

The work of Dr. Scalice is very significant to the working class and the socialist revolution. If the working class is not aware of Maoists’ history of betraying and selling out revolutions, they will be led into the abyss of defeats by the Maoists over and over again. I wish that more and more people who are brave and faithful to the truth, like Dr. Scalice, will come forward to expose the treacherous records of Maoists to the world.

The baseless accusations against Dr. Scalice and of

his collusion with the US imperialism is another manifestation of Maoist traditions. Just as Stalin did in the Soviet Union—political purges and arrests—at the birth place of Maoism, China, Maoists would frame their political opponents as “Trotskyites who plot with imperialism and engage in reactionary activities,” regardless of if they really were Trotskyists. Today, even though Maoism is not politically prominent anymore in China, Maoists are still slandering Trotsky and Chinese Trotskyists. Only by slandering the moral character of Trotskyists, and through imprisoning and even physically eliminating them, could Maoists deceive the working class, lead them astray from the path of genuine Marxism, and maintain their bureaucratic rule with pseudo-Marxist rhetoric.

A science student

I would like to thank Dr. Scalice for his excellent lecture, his exposure of the Maoists’ betrayal of the working class in the Philippines, and in particular, his defense of historical truth. And this is exactly why Jose Maria Sison started to slander and attack Dr. Scalice as “a paid CIA agent” and tried to use blatant “Big Lies” cover up their records of supporting the so-called “progressive national bourgeoisie,” including the current fascistic president Rodrigo Duterte.

Slandering their political opponents has been a long-standing “tradition” within Maoists. During the Sino-Japanese War in the late thirties, Trotskyists in China were once slandered in a similar manner as “agents of Japanese imperialists.” In today’s China, the Communist Party’s regime also employs the same method to defame any oppositional tendencies, claiming that they are all instigated and paid by foreign powers.

Dr. Scalice not only reviewed CPP’s record of allying with various factions of the national

bourgeoisie, but also explained its programmatic origins, Stalinism. Like the CPP, the Communist Party in China also abandoned the working class in the cities, turned to base itself on the peasantry in the countryside, carried out guerrilla warfare, and agitated around a nationalist program after the defeat of the 1925–27 revolution. Maoism, the guiding program of the Communist Party in China and a Chinese variant of Stalinism, rejects the perspective of a world socialist revolution and the revolutionary role of the working class. Exactly because of this program, the deformed workers state formed after the 1949 revolution got trapped into a blind alley in less than 30 years, when Mao had to turn to establish relations with Washington through Nixon’s visit in 1972. This opened the door for the eventual restoration of capitalism in 1978 and the subsequent dismantling of most social gains from the 1949 revolution.

An understanding of the history is the key to the development of a revolutionary movement in any country. For many young people in China, when they start to become critical of the current regime under the Communist Party and want to orient themselves politically, they inevitably have to grapple with a lot of historical questions. Is the China today still a socialist country? Was it ever a socialist country before? How does one understand the Maoist thirty years before the capitalist restoration in 1978? Was that some glorious socialist past? What about the Great Leap Forward, the mass deaths from the famine in the 1950s, and the Cultural Revolution? Would there be a critique of these developments from the left?

For many people, the answers to these questions are not obvious or straightforward, precisely because there exist so many conflicting narratives over China’s own history from all kinds of sources, some of which is a result of genuine confusion but some of which comes from a deliberate effort to falsify history. Growing up, we are told that “history is like a doll that can be dressed up by anyone.” But none of these questions above could be seriously answered without an understanding of what really happened in China in the last century and how could these developments be put into an international context.

This is the significance of the work from scholars like Dr. Scalice, stripping away the lies, confusions, and falsifications with solid historical records and serious

research, so that workers in China could learn from their own victories and defeats from the past—what is a program to go forward, who are the allies, who are the enemies, who postures as a revolutionary leader but in reality suppresses workers’ movements and leads them into a political dead end, and who has warned against these betrayals. To defend Dr. Scalice against Sison’s slanders and attacks is to defend any serious scholars who approach historical questions in a principled manner and does a huge service to the struggles of the working class.



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