

Philippine students and academics defend Dr. Joseph Scalice against Communist Party founder Sison's "lies and obfuscation"

By our reporters
24 September 2020

The World Socialist Web Site is publishing messages of support for Dr. Joseph Scalice from Filipino students and academics. Dr. 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), and the various organizations 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 WWSW opposing the slanderous attack on him by the CPP and sharing his lecture widely.

Professor Lisandro Claudio, Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, UC Berkeley

Joseph Scalice is a product of the rigorous PhD program of the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies at UC Berkeley. He was also mentored by one of the greats of Southeast Asian Studies, the late Jeffrey Hadler. It is absurd to think that members of the department or Professor Hadler would have allowed themselves to be used as tools of the Central Intelligence Agency. If Scalice's work were mere propaganda, it would not have passed. I await a more substantial response from Sison to the evidence Scalice has presented that shows the Communist Party of the Philippines and its allied legal organizations collaborated with the Duterte regime. Scalice's approach has always been scholarly and evidence-based. His conclusions cannot be countered with lies and obfuscation.

John, a student:

I am just an undergraduate student observing Dr. Scalice's discourse. As the matter of fact, I have yet to read many of his works. (I can't for the meantime due to financial reasons, but I will when opportunity lets me.) But I am convinced by his scholarship. Just following him on social media and attending one of his lectures online made me realize that there is so much to learn (and unlearn) about the leadership in the socialist movement in the Philippines.

It's hard to say why Sison reacts the way he does to Dr. Scalice but I am sure he fails to respond to Dr. Scalice's arguments which are full of historical facts. Those facts are incontestable, the arguments not easy to dismiss. Also, he resorted to labeling the scholar as "CIA agent" and "Trotskyite" which, if my understanding is correct, signifies a threat. I am actually waiting for him to address the issue at hand which is him giving crucial support to the rise of a dictator. Dr. Scalice has written enough

about that and anyone interested to check it out can. It is unfortunate that Sison can only attack Scalice but not the very facts that are presented by the latter. I believe people, especially those who are still devoted to defending Sison, must do some rethinking on the nature of the leadership in the movement.

John J, a teacher:

I love listening to Dr. Scalice's online lectures and reading his articles posted on his Facebook, on his website, and on this website. His masterpieces about the history of communist insurgency in the Philippines and their role in National Politics are great because they are evidence-based and logical. They are all thoroughly researched and are written with clarity. Besides, I am amazed also on how he deals with those who oppose his arguments. He never stoops down with a barbaric attack of the bigot leftist such as slander, name-calling (Trotskyite), fact-distortion, etc. and instead replies to them rationally and free from any kind of fallacies. This is the ultimate reason why I would prefer listening to Dr. Scalice, whose works are evidence-based and logical, than those who argue using the barbaric Stalinist technique of fact-distortion and trolling.

Geronimo, Filipino writer and graduate student at Columbia University, New York:

Jose Maria Sison's attacks on the scholarship of Dr. Joseph Scalice reeks of the woefully anti-intellectual attitude that has plagued the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines. It's painful to see a movement that declares itself to be revolutionary resort to dismissing an opportunity to engage in public scholarship of its history and legacy. They have been infected with the virus of blind obedience and parochialism that has been spreading faster than COVID-19 in this era of fake news and tinpot dictators.

If they only listened to Dr. Joseph Scalice's lectures and read his scholarly works then they would know better than to see his efforts as an assault on Jose Maria Sison. Because it is so much more than that. Dr. Joseph Scalice was diligent in separating individual actions and official party declarations in his lecture about the support given by Jose Maria Sison and the CPP to elements of the national bourgeoisie and to Marcos and Duterte. It seems the new analysis he presented was shocking only to Jose Maria Sison and his followers because it is known to anyone who has studied the history of the Communist Party of the Philippines. Also, anyone who has enough memory to remember events of the last five years would know for a fact how the CPP-NPA-NDF were either fooled or ideologically convinced that Duterte would be more helpful to the cause of the ongoing revolution. Some have even gone to the lengths of comparing him to Salvador Allende.

In his lecture Dr. Joseph Scalice was able to answer questions why we hold the Communist Party in such regard that those opposing Digong

Duterte from the get go treated their honeymooning with fist-bumping populists as a sort of “betrayal;” why did anyone expect immediate opposition from the CPP and why do we see the CPP as a source of perpetual contra and shocked to see Renato Reyes praising Mocha Uson or Judy Taguiwalo appointed as social works chief?

More than an attack on Sison, Dr. Joseph Scalice’s lecture testified to the relevance of a leftist movement in fighting this self declared *inutil* [useless] regime and the *inutil* regimes of the future. But Jose Maria Sison and his hive failed to realize that.

Had the CPP become more critical and open, they could have carried the conversation beyond the mistakes of the past onto how to ride the global wave of progressive politics sweeping democracies right now. What is clear to Dr. Joseph Scalice is that outside of the current leftist organization, there is a mass movement older and larger than the CPP-NPA that can be mobilized to combat our current social ills and is more immune to the cooptation of fascist schemes.

Lastly, I am especially bothered by their labelling of Dr. Joseph Scalice as a “Trotskyite.” I wonder why this does not alarm activists when they very well know how the regime of Joseph Stalin executed Trotskyists within the All-Union Communist Party in the 1930s. Is Sison and the Communist Party now advocating purging as they have done in the late 1980s? I look up to leftist intellectuals and heroes but even progressive organizations are not immune to the worst kind of careerists and phoneys. Support the movement but don’t treat it like a cult.

Mario, PhD student:

Joma Sison’s Bastardized “School” of Historical Falsification, Vulgarized Slanders and Ideological Lies. In Defense of Professor Scalice’s Scholarship, Historical Truth and Trotskyism

This open letter is my defense not only of the scholarship of Professor Scalice, but also of his personal honor and so as the memory and legacy of Leon Trotsky which is continuously and hideously attacked below the belt by Joma Sison, which is ironic but understandable.

Ironic, because Joma Sison is the Founder of the so-called “Communist Party of the Philippines” but in truth and in fact, he is not a Communist, not even a Socialist but a Maoist. That alleged party is a contradiction. To be truthful to who or what they are, they should aptly rename themselves for who they truly are: the Maoist Party of the Philippines.

Where can you find a so-called “Communist Party” whose Party Bible is not the Communist Manifesto but rather the Red Book of Mao?

Where can you find a self-proclaimed “Communist Party” whose primary social class is the peasant and not the proletarians?

A party who views the Socialist revolution merely as a perspective? If that is not whimsical and stupid, then I do not know what it is.

It is for these reasons that it is understandable for the Maoist Joma to attack the Trotskyist Scalice. There is no way in the world, whether in ideas or in theory wherein the two will ever be reconciled. The former is a follower of Stalin, while the latter is a Leninist/Bolsheviks scholar.

During the August 26th lecture of Professor Scalice, it is my honor and pride that my direct question was given the chance to be asked and it was answered categorically by the discussant.

For the benefit of the reader, below is my question and after that is the reply of Professor Scalice:

Q: Based on the tenets of Marxism and Leninism, is Joma Sison a true blue communist? If yes, how come? If not, then why call their party the Communist Party of the Philippines when in fact he’s a Maoist? Is this not a case of misrepresentation?

A: Thank you for the wonderful question. Yes, and no. Historically speaking, both. Is Joma Sison a communist in the sense of the Communist Manifesto or in the sense of the Communist Party that took power in October 1917? No, he is not. He does not bear that legacy. But it was the betrayal of Stalinism that allowed it to assume the mantle of this legacy and present itself as the continuation of Marxism. This betrayal allows

him to be the leader of the Communist Party, purporting to be the continuer of Marxism. This in fact is his greatest political capital: that he can point to this history and say this is his. It is not. The history that is his is the history that I have outlined in my lecture. And so no, he does not represent the continuation of Marxism. But he does represent the continuation of Stalinism.

As revolutionaries there is no problem with me for us to engage in a brutal and bitter debate about theory, practice and how to conduct the revolution. But what I do not like and I vehemently reject is the act of mudslinging, lies and slander.

This is immoral for a true revolutionary and the heights of unethicity even on basic principles.

To call Professor Scalice a CIA paid agent, a fake scholar, etc. without providing evidence and not answering his countless critique is not only unpardonable but incontestably preposterous.

That is the same sinister way and nefarious methods used both by Stalin and Mao in denouncing their enemies.

But the central question is: who are the real enemies of the international working class movement?

Those who believe in “socialism in one country” or those who advocate and fight for the Permanence of the Revolution?

The answer is obvious!

This “issue” is not only about Professor Scalice, but also the memory, legacy and honor of the Left Opposition, the Old Bolsheviks and all those Trotskyites/Zinovievites/Bukharinists that were put to death mercilessly by Stalin and his evil cohorts.

In the moving and prophetic words of Isaac Deutscher:

“The open vindication is bound to come in any case, though not perhaps before Stalin’s ageing epigones have left the stage. When it does come, it will be more than a long-overdue act of justice towards the memory of a great man. By this act the worker’s state will announce it has at last reached maturity, broken its bureaucratic shackles, and re-embraced the classical Marxism that had been vanished with Trotsky.”

Hence, the duty of every true Bolshevik revolutionaries today is to fight the continuing historical falsifications, the lies and the slanders being peddled by the heirs of Stalin and Mao against Leon Trotsky and all the brave Bolsheviks of October!

Our duty is to defend the aims and vision of the Great October Revolution against its bloody bastard traitors and betrayers!

For Historical Truth, Justice and Vindication!!!

To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>