

Stalinist leader Sison “is desperate to prevent Filipino workers from learning their own history”

More letters from the US, Philippines, Australia, India supporting Dr. Joseph Scalice

By our reporters
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The World Socialist Web Site is publishing more messages of support for Dr. Joseph Scalice from students, teachers, academics and others from around the world. 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 WSWS opposing the slanderous attack on him by the CPP and sharing his lecture widely.

Thomas Mackaman, Associate Professor of History, King’s College, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania:

I write this letter in support of Dr. Joseph Scalice against the slanders and threats made against him by the Filipino Stalinist, Joma Sison.

Dr. Scalice’s dissertation, “Crisis of Revolutionary Leadership: Martial Law and the Communist Parties of the Philippines, 1957–1974,” defended in committee at the University of Berkeley in 2017, is an extraordinary achievement of historical research. The first-ever study of the Sino-Soviet rift as it impacted the communist movement in the Philippines, the nearly 900-page volume is supported by impeccable research drawn from Scalice’s voluminous archival work, newspaper analysis, and interviews.

The impact of this important study is made clear by Sison’s own desperate intervention. Scalice’s work is the best sort of history. Its objectivity is derived precisely in its dedication to its subject, the Filipino working class. Sison is desperate to prevent Filipino workers from learning their own history.

Sison is free to disagree with Scalice’s findings. To do so, however, would require him to confront the evidence that Scalice presents. Of course, Sison knows better than to try. There is no honest approach to this history that allows him to slither away from his own record and the history of betrayal of the Stalinist movement he represents. Understanding this, Sison turns to slander and threats. Always the last refuge of a defeated argument!

It seems to not have occurred to Sison that his attacks only provide Dr. Scalice with one more powerful piece of evidence in his historical indictment of Filipino Stalinism. I eagerly await Scalice’s book. I only hope that this episode will find its way into its epilogue.

Sebastian, a UC Berkeley student:

I know Joseph Scalice from his student outreach work at UC Berkeley. The labeling of Scalice as a CIA agent by Sison is a ridiculous and superficial slander perpetrated by an obvious charlatan caught in a lie. Those who know Scalice know he is deeply critical of the US government and opposed to all the CIA stands for. Scalice is deeply committed to the truth and exposing lies where he sees them. Jose Maria Sison would have a hard time finding anyone at UC Berkeley whom would agree with his characterization of Joseph Scalice.

John, a student at the University of the Philippines Baguio:

I believe in the honest works of Dr. Joseph Scalice. His words are of an academic historian adhering to proper academic procedures and of historical truth. This is the sad reality of politics in the Philippines, the ugly historical truth of parties will always be denied as slander, whether from an authoritarian right or a radical left party. As historians, we must always stand to present an unfiltered and unbiased truth, and I praise Dr. Scalice for his bravery in speaking these truths despite the heavy risks implied by it.

Karol, a teacher from the Philippines:

As a Social Studies teacher, I find it confusing for Joma Sison to accuse Dr. Scalice with scandalous labels when he seems to better fit the description he is talking about. It is indeed important for scholars and teachers alike to defend each other in times of bitter defenses from these people who try to distort the truth in our very eyes. The evidence is there and can be read by any literate person but we can see that like any troll he resorted to lowly name-calling. This is a bigger challenge for us in academe to take our job seriously and inspire young people to be vigilant against people who try to benefit from their own lies.

Antonio, Philippine anthropologist, academic, writer:

I was in the underground left. At the height of the internal debates, I was a Reaffirmist—the faction of Joma Sison. Later I went back to school, earned a PhD, and taught in academe. As an anthropologist, I was in touch with progressive sources in Davao city. I was astounded by the field data. The NPAs in the city’s Paquibato district would deliver votes for Duterte for his numerous elections as city mayor. I asked why. The information given was that the NPA-generated votes were crucial to offset Duterte’s minimal votes in the city’s first district. In the 2016 elections, even the above-ground progressive left of the city voted for Duterte. They only turned around when Duterte manipulated the Marcos burial at the Libingan. These field data are for heights of incredulity—the left of Davao city supported the rise to fascism of Rodrigo Duterte. What happened to class analysis? It is an academic question that begs an answer for the death of Philippine democracy today under Duterte. I do not know and

have never met Joseph Scalice. But as an academic myself, I see that his study is corroborated. In academe, what is fundamental is truth in research, borne by data on the ground. To deny the truth that the left supported Duterte fascism is grave dishonesty. All that Sison needs to do is a mea culpa. That's all!

Ave Maria, Philippines:

I'm a graduate school student taking up Linguistics, and in my field, historical evidence sets our research output apart from mere guesswork. I've been attending many national situation-ers or natsit in the progressive groups' lingo, and it is noticeable that the majority of citations come from Mr. Jose Ma. Sison. However, I have yet to see journal articles, newspaper clippings, or any archival source that supports Sison's statements. This is the primary reason for my fascination with Dr. Joseph Scalice's scholarship. He has evidence to prove any claim he declares in public. His body of work creates an avenue for public discourse which is the ultimate goal of any scholar with a genuine quest for knowledge and truth.

Kristian Boehringer, Senior Learning Facilitator, Torrens University Australia:

The attack on Dr. Scalice by Joma Sison, is an attack on academic freedom. Political parties have no business attacking academics for their opinions. This is a very worrying and dangerous turn of events. To my mind Dr. Scalice has exposed the CPP's enthusiastic support for Duterte and provides a thought provoking explanation for that support: the Stalinist-Maoist doctrine of "two-stage" revolution. Instead of openly debating Dr. Scalice and his opinions, Joma Sison has taken refuge in dangerous name calling: methinks he doth protest too much!

Richard, former teacher:

Joseph Scalice has presented a rigorous, in-depth investigation into the support (and the ideological and social basis for that support) that Jose Maria Sison and his Maoist Philippines Communist Party has put behind the fascistic Rodrigo Duterte and how this is consistent with that party's historical support for authoritarian bourgeois politicians and the betrayal of working class interests.

I recommend watching that highly illuminating lecture, supported by a scaffold of investigation into the contemporary written records. Scalice defends academic and historical truth in a skillful and devastating way.

Scalice has been met by a series of outrageous slanders and falsifications from Jose Maria Sison, building consistently vile and outrageous falsifications of Scalice and his work. These slanders only deepen the evidence that Scalice presents and reveal the brazen lies of Sison and his party and their mendacious methods.

Martin, retired school teacher, Melbourne, Australia:

I write to express my opposition to the threats and slanders levelled at Dr. Joseph Scalice by the leader of the Stalinist Communist Party of Philippines.

Dr. Scalice's lecture exposed the shameful role that the CPP played in the electoral victory of current President Duterte whose murderous attacks on workers and poor in the Philippines has rightly shocked workers the world over. In particular, he exposed the filthy role played by the Leader of the CPP Jose Maria Sison.

From its counter revolutionary betrayal of the first workers state in the former USSR to the betrayals of the Chinese Revolution and the restitution of capitalism by the Maoist bureaucracy in China, Stalinism in all its forms is a synonym for treachery and bloody repression of the workers and peasants everywhere that are striving to put an end to capitalist exploitation and oppression.

The lies and threats levelled by Sison against Dr. Scalice are typical of Stalinism and Stalinists throughout their sordid history. Lies and violence are their stock in trade as the world Trotskyist movement has powerfully exposed time and time again! The CPP and its "spokesman" Sison should know that conscious workers, students and youth the world over demand

an end to any and all attempts at slander and threats of violence against Dr. Scalice and his honest scholarship!

Sathish, a WSWs reader in India:

I am sending this letter in defense of Dr. Joseph Scalice taking inspiration from the letters sent by all the scholars, intellectuals and youths around the world. This principled objective exposure of historical facts is of prime importance against the thuggish Stalinist and Maoist variants, who are not ready to accept their defeat and failed two stage Menshevik theory and want to influence the working class and youths with their nationalistic orientation. Sison's support for Duterte is a crime against the international working class and Scalice was correct in calling it a farce, referring to famous Marx's quote.

I watched a movie called *Ordinary People* from Netflix, which is in Tagalog and quite a strong movie about the urban poor of Manila. The working class of the Philippines should join hands with their international class brothers and not have any illusion or faith in the outdated Menshevik and Maoist "bloc of four classes" to fight the imperialist attack. As Trotsky said, imperialism in fact sharpens the class boundaries between bourgeoisie and working class and does not weld them. So, Scalice you are a great comrade and your work is really phenomenal, and monumental. I wish such post mortem works to be done soon on Indian Stalinists and the Maoists, which is a long due work.

Shanta, a retired technician of Sri Lankan background residing in Melbourne, Australia:

I wish to condemn the unsubstantiated slanders from the founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines, Jose Maria Sison denouncing Dr. Scalice as a CIA agent.

In his lecture, Dr. Scalice provides a highly factual account of betrayals committed by the CPP, exposing the misconceptions of Stalinist and Maoist politics. When listening to Dr. Scalice I noticed the amazing political similarity of the modus operandi of the CPP and the Sri Lankan Stalinists, the Communist Party of Sri Lanka and the JVP, a Sri Lankan political party originating from a Maoist right-wing tendency from the China-aligned wing of the CP Sri Lanka in the late 1960s. The Sri Lankan Stalinists' promotion of "progressive patriots," "socialism in one country," "village to city revolution" and the more recent "progressive technocrats & intellectuals," is just part and parcel of this Stalinist methodology which disoriented and misled the Sri Lankan working class movement and the radicalised youth into a series of betrayals and blunders since the 1950s. I am especially thankful to Dr. Scalice for enlightening me on how the politics based on Stalinist/Maoist ideology can betray the working-class internationally.

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