



UPDATES PHILIPPINES

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EDITORIAL

Fidel V. Agcaoili, 1944 - 2020

UPDATES Philippines dedicates this issue to the memory of Comrade Fidel, who unexpectedly passed away on 24 July 2020. He would have turned 76 on 8 August. He was the Chairperson of the NDFP Negotiating Panel engaged in peace negotiations with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and concurrently Chairperson of the NDFP Human Rights Committee. **UP**



In honor of Ka Fidel Agcaoili, a great Filipino patriot and communist fighter

By Jose Maria Sison

Founding Chairman, Communist Party of the Philippines

Chief Political Consultant, National Democratic Front of the Philippines

As Founding Chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and Chief Political Consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and on behalf of my family, I express the deepest grief over the unexpected demise of Ka Fidel Agcaoili and convey sincerest condolences to his widow and children, all his comrades, relatives and friends.

Ka Fidel has been my close comrade since the early 1960s when he joined the Student Cultural Association of the University of the Philippines, the Kabataang Makabayan and the Communist Party of the Philippines. We advanced together in our development ideologically, politically and organizationally in pursuit of the people's democratic revolution in the context of the world proletarian revolution.

Ka Fidel deserves to be honored as a great Filipino patriot and outstanding communist fighter even only on the basis of what is publicly known about him. He has accomplished far more than this in the service of the Filipino people and their revolutionary movement within the context of the epochal struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, a struggle of the oppressed and exploited for a fundamentally new and better world than one dominated by imperialism and all kinds of reaction.

He became a revolutionary without ever boasting or feeling sorry that he had sacrificed so much for the people and the revolution. He came from an upper class family and could have easily attained an endless series of high positions in the ruling system. But he chose to side with the people, especially

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the toiling masses of workers and peasants, in their just revolutionary struggle for national and social liberation.

He was outraged by the unjust semicolonial and semifeudal system and was determined to contribute what he could to develop the revolutionary movement for overthrowing it and establishing a people's democratic state under the leadership of the proletariat. He was never afraid of the tremendous odds and the risks to life, limb and liberty. He did not expect any kind of material reward for all his work and sacrifices.

When he was sent out by his parents to study in the US and keep him away from social activism in the UP, he joined the mass protests in California and soon he was back in the Philippines on time for the preparations and establishment of the Kabataang Makabayan in 1964.

Even while he was a high executive of his family's insurance company, he helped organize studies and produce publications and performed the lowly tasks that had to be undertaken in the underground in support of the mass movement and in the establishment and development of the CPP. He also carried out important missions that required a high level of knowledge and negotiating skills in dealing with domestic allies and with fraternal parties abroad. He put facilities and connections available to someone of his class origin in the service of the people and the revolution.

Anywhere the Communist Party of the Philippines had its headquarters, be it in Central Luzon or Northern Luzon, he attended the meetings of leading organs in order to participate in deliberations and make reports on matters he was responsible for and made recommendations on what policies and courses of action to take. He shared with his comrades all the discomfort and risks of travelling to and staying in rural huts and forest camps.

It was sometime in 1972 that it became untenable for Ka Fidel to work aboveground and he had to go underground. He and his wife with their two young children were on the manhunt list of the enemy. They had to face a far higher level of discomfort and risks than ever before. In 1974 he and his wife Chit were arrested, together with their two small children Eric and Joseph. He was subjected to severe physical and mental torture by the minions of the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

He became the political prisoner with the longest duration of detention (more than 10 years) during the Marcos fascist regime and earned the deep respect of many other political prisoners in the common struggle against the autocratic regime. He over served the penalty for the political offense of rebellion. And he was never tempted to take advantage of the fact that his father was a classmate and friend of Marcos at the UP College of Law to ask for much earlier release from prison.

He was released from prison as a result of his dropping the appeal of his unlawful conviction for rebellion and asserting that he had even overserved the sentence. He proved to be a steadfast proletarian revolutionary fighter with an unyielding moral stamina and complete dedication to the revolutionary cause of the people.

He helped to establish and became Secretary General of Samahan ng Ex-detainees Laban sa Detensyon at Aresto (SELDA) to work hard for the release of all political prisoners. He also helped organize Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND) in 1985 and became its Executive Director.

After the overthrow of Marcos in 1986, Ka Fidel and I worked together in laying the ground for peace negotiations upon the request of the Aquino regime through Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo. But later on Aquino would scale down the projected peace negotiations to ceasefire negotiations as prelude to setting the agenda for peace negotiations.

Ka Fidel and I were in the Preparatory Committee which established the Partido ng Bayan (PngB) on August 30, 1986. In November 1986, the first PngB Chairman Ka Rolando Olalia and his driver Ka Leonor Alay-ay were kidnapped and murdered by ultra-reactionary elements of the Armed Forces of the Philippines under Oplan God Save the Queen.

Ka Fidel had the high sense of duty and courage to take the place of Ka Lando as PngB Chairman and further organize the Partido ng Bayan for the 1987 senatorial elections. He was also uncowed by the related assassination of BAYAN secretary general Lean Alejandro and the coup and murder plans of the Enrile-RAM faction of the AFP.

Conditions became untenable for Ka Fidel to stay in Manila when he was targetted for arrest and the Aquino and Enrile-RAM factions were competing to attack the patriotic and democratic political forces. Thus, he accepted employment in a Spanish nongovernmental organization, Instituto de Estudios Políticos para América Latina y Africa (IEPALA) in 1988.

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Subsequently, he joined exploratory talks for the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations since 1989 when President Cory Aquino sent Rep. Jose Yap to The Netherlands. He became the Vice Chairperson of the NDFP Negotiating Panel when the GRP and NDFP adopted the The Hague Joint Declaration as the framework for the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations.

He played a key role in the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and in the drafting and finalization of major agreements, especially the GRP-NDFP Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, the first item in the substantive agenda of the negotiations signed by the GRP and NDFP Negotiating Panels in 1998, with him as Chairperson of the Reciprocal Working Committee of the NDFP and then Justice Secretary Silvestre Bello as Chairperson of the RWC of the GRP. He co-chaired the GRP-NDFP JMC (Joint Monitoring Committee) upon its formation in 2004.

In connection with the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations, Ka Fidel like Ka Luis Jalandoni, then Chairperson of the NDFP Negotiating Panel, had the privilege of going to the Philippines to consult with Philippine presidents, from Estrada to Duterte. It was Ka Fidel who met Duterte as often as six times in 2016 and 2017. Ka Louie turned over the position of Chairperson of the NDFP Negotiating Panel to Ka Fidel in 2017.

Since he became a member of the Central Committee of the CPP in 1970, Ka Fidel successfully carried out missions of the highest importance in representation of the highest organs of either the CPP or the NDFP in relations of practical cooperation with major political forces in the Philippines and with fraternal parties and revolutionary movements abroad.

Ka Fidel had the good fortune to become well-informed about the Second National Congress of the CPP and to see with his own eyes the high level of achievement that the revolutionary movement had reached nationwide when he traveled to the Philippines in 2016 and 2017 and visited a number of major guerrilla fronts in connection with the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. He saw the vibrant strength of the CPP, the NPA, the revolutionary mass organizations and the people's democratic government in meetings and in activities among the people.

Ka Fidel easily endeared himself to comrades and allies because he was really modest and had an infectious sense of humor even if at certain times he looked stern. He explained complex issues patiently and persuasively to comrades and friends and dished out an alternation of serious talk and a certain amount of jokes and light banter. He firmly held on to revolutionary principles and explained complex issues patiently and persuasively to comrades and friends. He gave his opinions frankly. And he welcomed objections, corrections and additions to his explanations.

He never flaunted his high level of knowledge. He was an avid reader and observer of national and global events and freely shared his views with others. His amiable characteristics will be sorely missed by many comrades and friends who knew him at close quarters and loved him.



There are more achievements of Ka Fidel that other comrades and allies in various sectors of the national democratic movement as well as in the armed revolutionary movement can narrate in memorial meetings in his honor. I yield to their direct knowledge and more detailed narratives. May all the testimonies be put together and his biography be written in order to inspire this generation and further generations of Filipinos to follow his patriotic and revolutionary example.

The revolutionary spirit, ideas and deeds of Ka Fidel are now flowing in the growing body and blood of the people's struggle for national and social liberation and for a socialist future. All the efforts and sacrifices that he has made in his lifetime will live after him in the hearts and minds and collective will and actions of the people in the people's democratic revolution and in the subsequent socialist revolution.

Revolutionaries never die, they continue to live through their revolutionary successors. Let us turn our grief to revolutionary courage. Let us celebrate the revolutionary achievements of Ka Fidel, honor him for these and emulate his example in serving the people and the revolution.

***Long live the memory of Ka Fidel Agcaoili!
Celebrate his spirit, ideas and deeds as a Filipino patriot and communist fighter!
Long live the Filipino people and the Philippine revolution!***

Ka Fidel and the future of peace negotiations

By Luis G. Jalandoni
Senior Adviser, NDFP Negotiating Panel
NDFP Chief International Representative

The sudden passing of Ka Fidel V. Agcaoili, Chairperson of the Negotiating Panel of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is a big loss to the revolutionary movement's persistent efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace through peace negotiations with the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP).

Ka Fidel was a very effective peace negotiator. At the negotiating table, facing the representatives of the GRP, he was firm in his stand, always conscious of upholding the basic aspirations of the Filipino people and the principles of the revolutionary movement. But during breaks, he earned the friendship, respect and goodwill of his counterparts and the Royal Norwegian Government third-party facilitators.

He insisted on the GRP's adherence to the framework and foundation agreement of the peace negotiations, The Hague Joint Declaration of September 1992, as well as to the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees (JASIG, 1995) and the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL, 1998). He worked hard together with all the members and consultants of the NDFP Reciprocal Working Committee on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER) and the Reciprocal Working Committee on Political and Constitutional Reforms (PCR).

He made sure that the bilateral teams from the NDFP and GRP could hold their meetings in Manila to work on the Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ARRD) and National Industrialization and Economic Development (NIED) draft agreements, two basic parts of the CASER, up to the point of initialing a common draft in mid-November 2017.

Ka Fidel was a powerful defender of political prisoners. He was always mindful of the over 600 political prisoners, demanding their release from the GRP. This is understandable, for he was himself a political prisoner for more than ten years under the Marcos dictatorship.

Despite the tremendous efforts of Ka Fidel and his team of negotiators, and the sincere efforts of the GRP team on social and economic reforms, President Duterte terminated the peace negotiations on 23 November 2017.

Determined efforts to save the NDFP-GRP peace negotiations led to several backchannel talks. Fidel related well with GRP Panel Chairperson Sec. Silvestre Bello and GRP Panel Vice-Chairperson Hernani Braganza. Up to 9 June 2018, Fidel and Sec. Bello signed a 'Stand Down Agreement', a preliminary ceasefire agreement that would have paved the way for formal peace negotiations on 28 June 2020 in Oslo, Norway.

But President Duterte, following his generals, has totally destroyed the peace negotiations and has taken a militarist approach. He has ordered the military and police to destroy the revolutionary movement.

Ka Fidel has left behind four active and efficient members of the NDFP Negotiating Panel. There remains the NDFP Chief Political Consultant, Prof. Jose Maria Sison. Those who worked on the CASER draft documents, competent and dedicated professionals, women and youth are still ready to continue the work for a just and lasting peace. So, too the personnel who worked on the Political and Constitutional Reforms draft documents.

The Duterte regime is just a passing phenomenon. When a new administration of the GRP arises that is open to resume peace talks, the revolutionary movement will be ready.

The Filipino people are determined to win national and social liberation and achieve a just and lasting peace.

The legacy and inspiration of Ka Fidel and so many other martyrs and heroes of the Filipino people are the seeds for a free and proud nation, enjoying national sovereignty, independence, and a just and lasting peace. **UP**



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