

**September 21, 2012**

### **COMMEMORATING REPRESSION AND RESISTANCE**

On September 21, 1972, then President Ferdinand Marcos signed Presidential Declaration 1081 declaring Martial Law. The declaration was a response to the growing unrest and dissent against the Marcos regime whose policies further marginalized the poor and whose iron hand deprived the people of their rights.

With the declaration, curfews were imposed, gatherings banned, protests silenced. Publications, radio and television stations were shut down. Organizations were deemed illegal. Communities were heavily militarized. Those critical against the government were tagged as subversives. They were arrested, detained, and tortured. A number became victims of summary executions or 'salvaging' or became victims of enforced disappearance and are still missing up to this day.

For many, it was a time of great anxiety, grief and sadness over the absence or loss of a loved one.

People who lived through this refer to the Martial Law period as a dark season of being in a constant state of fear. A false sense of peace and development enveloped Philippine society under the banner of a New Society or Bagong Lipunan.

Yet, during these most trying times, there were those who, with great self-respect and dignity, raged against the Marcos dictatorship.

We remember the struggle of the communities along the Chico River against the World Bank funded dams project.

"In 1974, the National Power Corporation (NPC) work camps, which were set up in Maswa, Basao for survey purposes, were dismantled twice by the people. A number of tribal leaders were picked up and confined at the stockade, sparking off a long line of maltreatment, arrest and detention of Kalinga natives in relation to the project.

The people resorted to bodily prevention of the survey work by physically disallowing the NPC to unload their equipment in the survey sites. At Tomiangan, the site for Chico IV, the PC- Police and the NPC tried to set up their work camps four times under armed protection, and four times were these camps torn down by the people, even under threat of death. The fourth time, the people carried the materials from Tomiangan to the PC-Police camp at Bulanao, a distance of 35 kilometers, in a silent protest march of around 250 people, lasting through the night and the curfew hours."<sup>1</sup>

Civil disobedience in different forms such as this like the 1975 La Tondena strike and the 1978 noise barrage snowballed into waves of mass actions culminating in the toppling of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986.

#### **Forty years after September 21, 1972, have things changed?**

Under President Benigno Aquino III and his Oplan Bayanihan, peace and development continue to be a farce.

In the region, militarization and other human rights violations are perpetrated with impunity similar during the Martial Law period.

Peace and Development Teams (PDT) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) continue to encamp in communities using schools and daycare centers and even civilian residences for military purposes.

---

<sup>1</sup> **A History of Resistance:** The Cordillera Mass Movement Against the Chico Dam and Cellophil Resources Corporation by Joanna K. Carino

Last July in Ifugao, a farmer was illegally detained in his own community and tortured for hours by the AFP. Wooden panels inside his house were torn down as his belongings were ransacked by elements of the 86<sup>th</sup> IB.

Last February, rape was committed against two minors from Mankayan, Benguet by Captain Danilo Lalin of the 86<sup>th</sup> IB.

From July to August 2012 in Baguio City and in Kalinga, legal people's organizations critical of the government were politically vilified as enemies of the State in counter-insurgency lectures for Grade 6 and high school students in violation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and R.A. 7610 "*Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act*". This was committed by the Charlie Company of the 5<sup>th</sup> Civil Military Operations Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division of the Philippine Army. The political vilification of people's organizations and institutions has legitimized the attack of State security forces on civilians and is being used to justify human rights violations. The violation is made worse because this is being taught to students in the effort to further stomp out the legitimacy of the right to dissent against a repressive government in the minds of the younger generation.

Mining and energy projects facilitated by the government continue to threaten the indigenous peoples rights to their land and resources. Last September 17, the Philippine National Police with the support of the AFP attempted to disperse the people's barricade against the expansion operations/drilling operations of the Lepanto Consolidated Mining Company in sitio Madaymen, Mankayan, Benguet. Residents sustained minor wounds in the scuffle and Save Mankayan Movement (SMM) Vice President Tony Ugalde was handcuffed and arrested during this incident.

At a national level, extrajudicial killings especially among indigenous peoples resisting mining projects continue.

Justice is still elusive with the culture of impunity prevailing. James Balao continues to be missing after four long painful years of search. Justice is yet to be delivered for the extrajudicial killings of Romy Sanchez, Albert Terredano, Pepe Manegdeg, Jose Doton, Markus Bangit, Alice Claver and the more than one thousand victims of extrajudicial killings under the Arroyo regime.

After forty years, we remember Martial Law against this backdrop.

To walk through the memories of Martial Law is to remember the lessons that repression was faced with organized resistance, fear was met with courage and human dignity was reclaimed even in the darkest and most difficult times.

We are obliged to live by these lessons and teach the future generations that never again should we allow this dark period to be upon us.

**END STATE TERRORISM!  
RESIST AND THWART OPLAN BAYANIHAN!  
NEVER AGAIN TO MARTIAL LAW!**

For reference:

Atty. Reynaldo Cortes  
Chairperson

Jude Baggo  
Secretary General

Contact number: 09189199007