

Rollie Kintanar and His Killers, Part II

Wednesday 8 July 2009, by [ABINALES Patricio N.](#) (Date first published: April 2003).

There were two odd things that many in UP do not want to talk about regarding the Mafia-style rubout assassination of Rollie Kintanar and the killings before him.

First all these have been mainly a one-way street. Those who had been exterminated - Hector Mabilangan, Conrado Balweg, Filemon Lagman, and Kintanar - were all ex-cadres killed because they disagreed with or were labeled political enemies by the Filipino Ayatollah Jose Ma. Sison. No one from Sison's cabal has met the same fate, despite attempts by their supporters to drum up the presence of a plot to assassinate the Great Professor. The blood being spilled has been exclusively that of the anti-Sison group. Likewise, not a single opponent of Sison has issued a counter-fatwa. The strongest counter-response so far had been simply verbal: new revelations of and counter-accusations by Nathan Quimpo, Esteban Quiambao, Ricardo Reyes, and Rodolfo Salas against Sison, while they fervently defended the record of the deceased Kintanar.

Moreover these ripostes are peculiar for their toned-down rhetoric and their humbling messages. Quimpo and Reyes, accused by Sison as the masterminds along with Kintanar for the brutal Kampanyang Ahos (KAHOS), have expressed willingness to own up to their responsibility for the near-destruction of the CPP in Mindanao in the mid-1980s. But they also added a caveat: they will only do so fully once the others, including the Sison group recognize KAHOS and the other killings in southern Tagalog, Manila, and northern Luzon as a collective responsibility of the entire Party leadership.

But Sison and his cronies will never admit that their hands too had been bloodied. For it would mean that they will have to concede that Jose Luneta was a brutal participant in Operasyong Missing Link (OPML), the event that led to Robert Francis Garcia to write his extremely popular book *To Suffer thy Comrades* (no. 8 in the National Bookstore list, Anvil Publishing is preparing its second printing). It would mean that George Madlos (Ka Oris), who now heads the CPP-NPA in northeastern Mindanao, will have to explain why the largest number of cadres killed during Kahos (over 600) was from his region. And it would mean that the Honorable Congressman Satur Ocampo must tell all regarding his role in OPML other than his claim of having stopped the killings and tortures.

Second, the victims were the ones who were the real builders of Party. Sison may have written *Philippine Society and Revolution*, outlined general strategy in the martial law period ("Our Urgent Tasks," and "Specific Characteristics of our People's War") and put his stamp on several of the early politico-military initiatives of the revolution (including the Plaza Miranda bombing and the amateurish MV Karagatan and MV Andrea arms smuggling episodes). But the painstaking building of guerilla bases and underground networks, the opening of the more resilient guerilla zones were the handiwork of the people that the CPP capo de tutti capo has issued his fatwa for.

Kintanar's work in Mindanao, for example, was incomparable. Under his and Benjamin De Vera's leadership, the Mindanao Commission became one of the strongest of the CPP's regional organizations; a reality that even Sison's cronies in Mindanao could not deny. But this has made writing the history of the revolution in the southern island a more difficult one for those who are now in control of the CPP-NPA in Mindanao. In the interviews I had with some of them, they grudgingly and with extreme difficulty had to admit how much their introduction to the revolution was the

result of the unselfish guidance of these two Dabawenos. Kahos undid a lot of these remarkable efforts, but what they did could not be denied. In fact, the survival of today's Mindanao CPP under George Madlos and others could not have been possible without the network created by Kintanar and De Vera.

Balweg was no organizer, but his charisma played a big role in making the NPA look good in the Cordilleras, while Ricardo Reyes was one of the most innovative leaders who juggled multiple responsibilities from dealing with students and NPA guerillas, to discussing coalition possibilities and the image of a future national democratic society.

But there may be no surprise here, given how much the CPP-NPA is now simply an organization centered on individuals and couples (note for example certain members of the current central committee: Joema and Julie Sison, Louie and Connie Jalandoni, Benny and Wilma Tiamson). It is not anymore a collective leadership that was characteristic of Sison's successor, Rodolfo Salas. No one among from Sison's groups approximates the depth and talent of those expelled - not even organizational henchman Rafael Baylosis, and certainly not the aging Fidel Agcaoilli.

Sison's marionettes at UP can of course argue that the CPP-NPA has fully recovered, thanks to the "Second Great Rectification Campaign." But this resurgence is mainly the result of objective conditions - a worsening economy, the corruption of the Estrada era and the incompetence and militarism of the current president. There is no evidence that the "subjective forces" have shown talent in taking advantage of the situation. EDSA 2 was less a Left project and more as a public atonement for missing EDSA 1.

Ka Roger's announcement of a list of "rejectionists" to be rubbed out, has done no good to the image of the revolutionaries, not to mention their moral standing. Rosal also has no record to show as a military tactician and one pretty much doubts if he can lead an NPA beyond its current capacity. One will need someone like Kintanar to do that. There are no student, peasant or labor movements and the LFS, KMP and KMU are hollow carapaces. Pamalakaya is a press release office and BAYAN was never the same since Lean Alejandro. Teddy Boy Casino, as Dean Jorge Bocobo put it, looks more like an afternoon TV show host; he lacks the brilliance and the skill of his assassinated predecessor.

In short, the Left is still very much bogged down in its own contradictions. Worse, Kintanar's death has opened a can of worms, and further alienated communists from many Filipinos.

And this is why I doubt if the fatwa will stop with Kintanar. For not only is an injured and embarrassed Stalinist a more brutal autocrat. Stalinists - particularly in times of crisis - will need to continue killing for only with the deaths of those who broke away from the family and tell tales of deceit, despotism, familism, and brutality, can the murderers tell the official fairy tale fully sans the qualifications, hesitations and the defensiveness (recall how Stalin had 80 percent of the original Bolshevik leadership executed, imprisoned or forcibly silenced).

And likewise, only in their deaths will the glorification of the Great Leader be fully accomplished

P.S.

* From UP Forum Online, April 2003.