

Mindanao: On the 17th founding anniversary of the Revolutionary Peoples' Army (RPA)

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Last 18 March 1995, the Revolutionary Peoples' Army (RPA) was formally founded through the agreement of all the members and the leadership of Peoples' Communist Party (PCP), the Pre-Party formation after the split from the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). During its plenum conducted to democratically discuss and change the name of its armed wing after the Regional Command's decision to break from the Chain of Command from the New People's Army (NPA). The name RPA was agreed upon because of the composition of the three peoples of Mindanao (Indigenous Peoples, Bangsamoro, and Migrant Settlers). Thus, it is deemed worthy for the name of the army to signify and reflect the representation of the three people on it. Comrades then started the formulation of its rectified military orientation which becomes a guide in the realization of its everyday work that is based on the concrete situation of Mindanao and of the country.

After more than two years of formation, the first Mindanao-wide Military Conference was called upon last 11-18 November 1997. One of the main focus of the discussion during this conference included the summing-up of the experiences of the armed struggle from the period the first unit was formed in the countryside and the partisan works in the urban and cities, the formation of the Moro Revolutionary Army (MRA) of the Bangsamoro and Kuyog Sumfat Mamalu (KSM) of the Indigenous People, finalization of the military orientation and the conduct of work of the armies in the ebb period of revolution, approval of the name of the army and election of its over-all command. It was also in this conference where negative and positive experiences were identified and become learning guide for the continuous realization of the military works in the future.

After the conference, the new military orientation was proven effective and efficient in more than a decade of practical experience. This orientation is based on Politico-Militar framework which balanced the two aspects and didn't consider one as primary or secondary to the other, which is the basic difference in principle and practice of the old party (CPP) until now. It considers political and military works as equal and considers equal footing with the other arena of struggle which would depend on the concrete situation that may arise in a specific period of time. It didn't abolish the use of arm and the arm struggle as the most authoritative and controlling form of struggle but it considered the essence of putting such in the right place. In the uneven and mal developed capitalist system like the Philippines, there is always a period where revolution is on its flow or ebb. During its ebb period, it is necessary to intensify Revolutionary Mass Work through the combination of all forms of struggles to ensure the realization of the primary demands and reforms that for a long time has been denied from the masses. The vital role of the military work is to support these actions and to defend their successes against the attack of the ruling class.

Days prior to the 17th Founding Anniversary of RPA, a pre-summing up of the army's historical account and experiences were conducted. It included the time when the first unit was formed in 1984 up to the period it made split from the old party and its military wing, the period it started on its own and the period when the new party and its military wing was formed. It was in this contextual period where numerous positive and negative experiences and its corresponding learning were identified. It is important to learn from those experiences, enhance its positive aspect, and

avoid the weaknesses from the past to be committed again.

During the celebration of its 17th year founding anniversary, comrades, activists and the masses initiated a program with the theme, Continue Embracing the Right Orientation to Intensify Revolution against Oppression. The program had three memorable and important parts which includes (1) the presentation of the armies on their expertise in military work through war games, maneuvering, combat operation in the countryside and the partisan operation in towns and cities, (2) the commemoration and tribute to martyr comrades who sacrificed their lives for revolution, and (3) support messages from different sectors, masses, and other people from different types of work in solidarity with the 17th founding anniversary of RPA. One of the messages given was from the leadership of the Revolutionary Workers Party - Mindanao (RPM-M) which expressed more encouragement and additional challenge for everyone to continue socialist revolution until it is realized.

Remembering comrades

The anniversary celebration was successful though there was information on adversary and the presence of the Reaffirmist (NPA) elements and the presence of the Philippine Army around the area. The success was made possible because of the cooperation of all comrades (military and political), activist masses, regular local forces, ally forces of the army, and some allies who gave time and support. The National Operational Command of the RPA would want to extend its revolutionary and warm gratitude to those who gave and showed their support for the success of the said celebration. RPA is hoping for a continuous warm support for any type of work of the revolutionary movement.

Long Live the Socialist Revolution!

Long Live the People and the Masses!

Long Live the 17th Founding Anniversary of the Revolutionary Peoples' Army!

Long Live the Revolutionary Workers Party - Mindanao!

Long Live the Three People (Indigenous People, Bangsamoro and Migrant Settlers)!

Long Live for everyone!

Raul Faustino

National Operational Command
Revolutionary Peoples' Army

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* <http://www.rpm-m.org/>