



political detainees update (philippines)

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"SALVAGING" AND HOW IT IS COVERED UP

On October 24, 1977, a report was received from Davao concerning Rosendo Gumela who had reportedly been taken in an encounter the last week of September 1977 in Magpit, Kidapawan, Cotabato and who was detained at the PC Stockade in Davao (Cf. Update, October 25, 1977). On October 8th, Rosendo was taken handcuffed from the stockade at 11:00 P.M. and brought to the Buhanoin area and shot. That night, his body was seen at the PC stockade. Later, the body was found at the Funeria Villa.

Rosendo's brother Jose executed an affidavit dated 21 October 1977 and stating that in "the week of October 16, we received a telegram from Davao City informing us that my brother has been shot." Jose further stated in his affidavit that "according to the caretaker at the funeral parlor, the body was brought by the PC at around 1:00 A.M. of October 9, 1977."

Rosendo was given a Christian burial by his family on October 21, 1977. The death certificate signed by Jose G. Ladrio, Jr., M.D., gives the cause of death as "shock secondary to multiple gunshot wounds."

Also in Funeria Villa when Rosendo's body was recovered, was the body of Francisco del Monte from Catigan, Toril who had also allegedly been "salvaged" by the military.

The Daily Express (November 24, 1977) carried a story under the headline 2 NPA COMMANDERS, 8 DISSIDENTS KILLED and stating that two ranking commanders of the NPA had been killed in separate encounters the previous week and that "'Ka Pepe' was killed together with three of his henchmen Francisco del Monte, Rosendo Gumela and an unidentified companion during the military operations in the Cotabato-Davao City-Bukidnon triangle at the foot of Mt. Apo" (underscoring supplied).

A question arises as to how Rosendo and Francisco could have been killed in mid-November in an "encounter" when they had already been buried in October. It will be recalled that "Bong" Sison and some companions were also killed in an "encounter" last August 14th, 1977, two weeks after they had been arrested in the Makati Area.

What is alarming in these incidents is that the death penalty can be given and executed "unofficially" apart from the normal legal processes in a country in which both civil and military courts are functioning.

MISSING

Local newspapers reported the arrest of Sylvia Sales y Orsolino along with Jose Ma. Sison and others last November 10th, 1977 (Cf. Bulletin Today and Times Journal, November 20, 1977). Sylvia, along with Ramon Isberto and his wife Ester Ceniza were reportedly taken to the bartolina section of Bicutan Rehabilitation Center on or about November 13th. (A bartolina is a small, dark, room without adequate air or facilities). The three were kept in the bartolina section without proper notification of their families as to their whereabouts. Finally at Christmas-time, Ramon and his wife were allowed to be visited for the first time since their arrest.

It was reported, however, that Sylvia Sales was taken from the bartolina on or about December 23, 1977 and her whereabouts are unknown. Her family still has not been duly notified of her arrest and whereabouts, nor have they been able to visit her.

It is not uncommon for detainees to be taken to "safehouses" where they undergo severe maltreatment and are sometimes eliminated by military intelligence personnel. The military authorities always deny that these persons are in their custody, but in at least one case eight months of denial by military was finally belied by the surfacing of a detainee in an official detention center. He had been in military custody all along.

In the case of Sylvia Sales, the military has publically admitted to having taken her into their custody and therefore they cannot so easily deny it; nor can they deny anything that might happen to her while she is in their custody. If Sylvia is not surfaced in a regular detention center more than two months after her arrest, it can only be supposed that she is being/has been subjected to severe maltreatment as in the cases of so many others.

Action Called For:

Write/Cable Pres. Ferdinand E. Marcos, Malacanang Palace, Manila
 Sec. Juan Ponce Enrile, Dept. of Nat'l Defense,
 Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City

requesting that the whereabouts of Sylvia Sales be made known immediately and that she be allowed visits by her family.

FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY

One year ago January 23rd, Puri Pedro, who had been arrested in Bataan five days earlier, was visited in her hospital room by military intelligence men headed by Col. Miguel Aure of CSU, Camp Crame. Puri's sistr, Carmen, was forced to leave the room at gunpoint. When the CSU interrogators left, Puri was found dead. (Cf. the full story in Political Detainees in the Philippines (Book Two), March 1977). In an interview with BBC television last February 1977, Sec. Juan Ponce Enrile promised publically that the case would be investigated. One year later - no public investigation.