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Monitor

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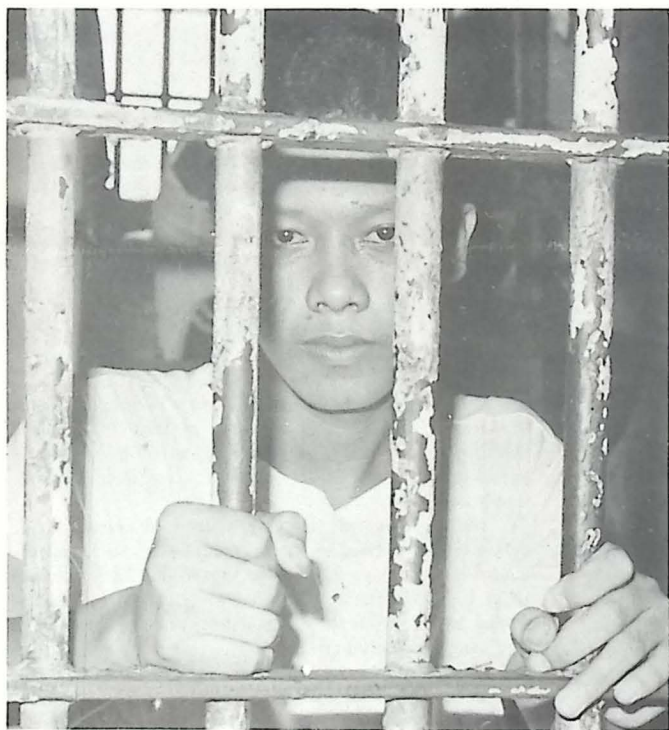
A political detainee is not a convict. He is presumed to be innocent of a crime until the contrary is proved in a fair trial. He may not be made to suffer any imprisonment other than loss of freedom caused by detention.

SPECIAL ISSUE

DAVAO CITY, PHILIPPINES

DECEMBER 1989

Political Detention: A Continuing Reality of Political Repression



BARs OF CONSCIENCE: *Jose Balsac stares out behind unyielding bars at Maa Rehabilitation Center where he started serving his sentence for conviction of a maximum of 8 years and 1 day. He was arrested on suspicion of being an NPA member on June 21, 1984. On July this year, he was transferred to Muntinlupa and later to Iwahig, Palawan Central Sub-Colony.*

Behind prison walls and bars are people who have traded individual comfort for the liberties of all. To some they are selfless persons motivated by a cause which will bear fruit maybe not in their lifetime. To the authorities of the State, however, they are threats to the so-called national security and public order.

Back to pre-colonial period, political prisoners (PPs) were unknown beings. But since the Spanish era up to the present time, history continues to record the existence of persons imprisoned because of their political beliefs. They have become fixtures in a polarized society as fewer and fewer accumulate power and wealth while more and more are driven to the edges.

Jose Rizal was detained, exiled and executed by the Spaniards; so was Apolinario Mabini during the American colonial period and thousands of Filipinos who resisted the Japanese occupation while World War II raged. Anti-colonial sentiments in the early 50s also led to the persecution of legitimate dissenters, among them Amado V. Hernandez, poet-journalist and unionist.



Thus it could be rightly said that the emergence of PPs has its roots to colonization and people's legitimate anti-colonial struggle. The PPs are as old as the 200 revolts against the tyranny of the Spanish colonizers or the millenarian movements which opposed American intrusion. They are part of what nationalist historian Renato Constantino has aptly called "continuing past."

But it was not until the Marcos dictatorship, however, that political detention was systematically enforced. Marcos vested himself with legislative powers rendering the National Assembly mere rubber-stamp. At the same time, he appointed Supreme Court justices beholden only to him. This sinister conspiracy glutted prison cells beyond their normal capacity.

Marcos' downfall and the ascent to power of Pres. Corazon Aquino following the world-renowned civilian-backed military revolt at Edsa in February 1986 raised hopes for a new Philippines. For the PPs, it was the dawning of a free day for them. After all, Aquino was the widowed wife of one of the country's celebrated PPs.

In the early months of her administration, Aquino showed sincerity in abolishing vestiges of repression. For one, she issued Proclamation No. 2 restoring the privilege of Writ of Habeas Corpus and ordered the Ministry of Defense to work out the release of all PPs. In two euphoric months, 478 PPs were released unconditionally.

Further processing of release papers for the remaining PPs, however, were hampered by legal procedures and overt and covert military interference. A laudable move was reversed. Today, over three years hence, the present dispensation has obviously opted to match, if not surpass the tradition of repression nurtured by the very regime it once condemned.

The Aquino government has made it clear that it is waging a counter-insurgency strategy called "total war," widely believed as inspired by the United States-sponsored Low Intensity Conflict doctrine. Among the many features of "total war" is the enlistment of civilians into the Armed Forces of the Philippines via the Civilian Armed Force Geographical Units (CAFGU). It is also employing "gradual constriction" tactic which has driven thousands of families from their habitual residences and workplaces. Likewise, the Aquino government has negated the universally-accepted medical neutrality principle. In the name of national security and public order, a definition catering to the interest of big business and the elite, the Aquino government has chosen to repress rather than to free.

In this context, the PPs in our midst are indeed the living symbols of repression.

A Political Prisoner is one who is arrested because of his political beliefs and charged with crimes against public order and national security. He is also one who is under detention because of his political convictions but charged with common crimes.



MISSING PAPA'S HUG: Baby Hansel, child of political detainee Alfonso Buot, visits Pa in Maa Rehabilitation Center who have been charged with Murder and Cattle rustling on July 30, 1988.

PPs in Mindanao: A socio-political profile

Forty one PPs were left out in Pres. Aquino's order to release them. Many of them were subsequently freed; charges against them were either dismissed or were resolved, acquitted or convicted. At the end of 1986, at least 13 were still languishing in jail. This number excludes those who disappeared and were still possibly in the hands of their captors or simply liquidated.

As of September this year, at least 88 percent of the detainees were arrested and detained during the current incumbency of the Aquino government. Again, this figure excludes those who disappeared and those who are not detained in formal detention centers, meaning those who are being held in AFP camps and detachments.

Region XI (Southern Mindanao) has the most number of PPs, an ironic fact considering that this region is the supposed laboratory of peace of the Aquino government.

Table 1 below shows the duration of detention of Mindanao's 144 PPs and their distribution according to sub-region (SR):

Table 1. Length of Detention and distribution of PP's according to sub-region

No. of years in detention	SR I (a/)	SR II (b/)	SR III (c/)	TOTAL	Percentage (%)
(1989) less than 1 year	25	25	10	60	41.67%
(1988) less than 2 years	4	16	5	25	17.36%
(1987) less than 3 years	2	36	4	42	29.17%
(1986) less than 4 years	1	10	2	13	9.03%
(1985) less than 5 years	2	-	1	3	2.08%
(1984) less than 6 years	-	1	-	1	0.69%
TOTAL	34	88	22	144	100%
	d/ (23.6)	(61.2)	(15.3)		

Notes: a/ Agusan Sur, Agusan Norte, Surigao Sur, Surigao Norte, Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental
 b/ Davao City, Davao Norte, Davao Sur, Davao Oriental, North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat
 c/ Misamis Occidental, Lanao Norte, Lanao Sur, Zamboanga Sur, Zamboanga Norte, Zamboanga City
 d/ Percentage of SR PPs in relation to total number of PPs.

Table 1 also reveals that the total number of detainees reduced in 1988. But the decrease was offset by a sharp increase (140%) this year (1989). This coincides with the fact that the Aquino government intensified its "gradual constriction" drive this year when the United States-Philippines Military bases Agreement shall expire.

Just as poverty knows no gender nor civil status, so does political detention. Table II shows the gender and civil status of PPs and their distribution.

Table II: Sex and Civil Status of PPs according to sub-region

Classification	SR I	SR II	SR III	TOTAL	%
	(34)	(88)	(22)	(144)	
A. Sex					
Male	29	81	21	131	(91%)
Female	5	7	1	13	(9%)
B. Civil Status					
Single	21	58	14	93	(65%)
Married	13	30	8	51	(35%)

More than one-third of the PPs are married, an indication that family responsibilities are not obstacles to their participation in the struggle for social transformation. It would seem however, that women participation, judging by the figure (13 out of 131) is still wanting.

More than 50 percent of the PPs are peasant men, women and youth. This is predicated by the fact that counter-insurgency operations are conducted mainly in the countryside.

Muddled Charges

Clearly devised to obfuscate the political nature of cases and to ensure that PPs will have difficult time with the courts of law, the practice of charging them with common criminal cases alone or in combination with subversion and or rebellion is being institutionalized. This rejects the theory of absorption which considers the context in which a specific act is committed.

Tables III and IV show the number of charges and the types of charges leveled against the PPs.

Table III Number of Charges vs PPs according to sub-region

No. of Charges	SR I	SR II	SR III	TOTAL	(%)
one	22	53	17	92	(63.9)
two	6	26	1	33	(22.9)
three	4	3	1	8	(5.5)
four and above	0	3	1	4	(2.8)
no charges	2	3	2	7	(4.9)
TOTAL	34	88	22	144	(100%)

Table IV. Type of Charges Vs. PPs according to sub-region

Type	SR I	SR II	SR III	TOTAL	(%)c/
Subversion	14	11	4	29	(20.1)
Rebellion	-	11	1	12	(8.3)
Murder	19	34	11	64	(44.4)
IPFA a/	8	19	5	32	(22.2)
Frustrated murder	2	4	-	6	(4.2)
Others b/	3	15	1	19	(13.2)

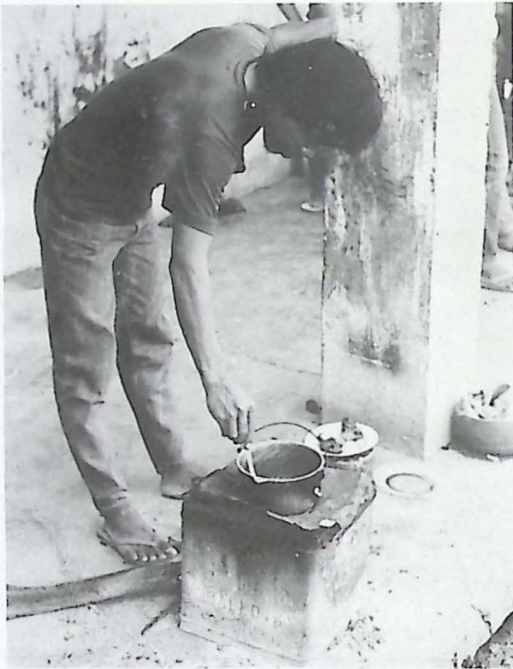
Notes:
 a/ Illegal possession of firearms, ammunition and explosives.
 b/ Kidnapping, robbery and extortion, cattle rustling, arson, robbery in band, brigandage, robbery with homicide.
 c/ Percentages are based on the total number of PPs which is 144.

Scrutinizing Tables III and IV closely, it could be seen that of the 144 PPs, only 41 or 28.5% are charged with subversion and rebellion. In contrast, 70.8% are being tried for criminal charges, specifically Murder, Frustrated murder and Illegal possession of firearms, ammunition and explosives not to mention those charged with robbery with homicide, kidnapping, robbery and extortion and others. At a quick glance, it would seem that majority of the PPs have acted on their own, if at all the charges are true, a delusory understatement of reality.

In some cases, one of the two or three cases against certain PPs had been dismissed. In others, they could be facing only murder but involving two to six counts. There is even a case wherein a PP has been convicted but still undergoes trial for other cases. Overkill, in a word.

The situation of PPs at the Davao del Sur Provincial Rehabilitation Center is illustrative.

As of August this year, there are 21 PPs incarcerated at Davao del Sur Provincial Rehabilitation Center (PRC). Only one is charged with subversion and another one for IPFA. The rest are "suspected murderers."



IMPROVISE STOVE: The ballot box that has long served its purpose is mute witness of the prisoners' plight at Davao del Sur Rehabilitation Center. Other ballot boxes are used by the inmates as toilet bowls in the absence of a comfort room in every cell.

Convicted

Generally speaking, prosecution proceeds at a snail's pace. But of the 144 PPs, 16 have been sentenced on account of the cases lodged against them. Except for Teresita Anta who pleaded guilty of subversion and was hastily sentenced with six months imprisonment (released October 12, 1989 See page 6 for her story), the rest have been condemned to spend life behind bars ranging from eights to the time they expire.

As earlier cited, some of the convicted PPs are still facing trial like Rufino Tabuada, one of the longest-held detainees. In 1987, a murder case against him was dismissed but on the same year, he was found guilty of another one. Currently, he is still attending to six counts of murder, three of which are awaiting decision. (see page 6 for details on Tabuada).

Torture

Almost 50 percent of the PPs suffered torture upon arrest and during subsequent interrogation. This is a violation of Sec. 12-2 Art. III of the Constitution which states:

"No torture, force, violence, threat, intimidation or any other means which vitiated the free will shall be used against him (any person under investigation for commission of an offense). Secret detention places, solitary, incommunicado, or other similar forms of detention are prohibited.

People who are most at risk of being tortured are members of the outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), or its armed wing, the new People's Army (NPA) and those suspected of subversion. Persons suspected of possessing arms or documents relating to the CPP or NPA or having aided the insurgency in any way, are also at risk," the Amnesty International, a human rights watchdog, declared in a report called *Philippines: Evidence of Torture*. The report was published in July 10, 1985 but its findings still hold water today.

The extent of torture may or may not be determined in the so-called "tactical interrogation" which immediately follows the arrest. In the same report, the AI said that in most cases, interrogation (and torture) is done at "unauthorized detention centers: safehouses, in the vicinity of a military camp, often in barracks not designated for holding prisoners. Safehouses maybe civilian houses, soundproofed or otherwise fitted with special features." One report reaching AI alleged that an "air-conditioned hotel room had been used for interrogation and torture."

Torture methods used are as follows:

- * electrocution in different parts of the body
- * burning, particularly with lighted cigarettes of different parts of the body;
- * manhandling with fist, gun butts, lumber and rubber hoses;
- * "wet submarine" or forcibly dipping the face into dirty toilet bowls;
- * "dry submarine" or suffocation by wrapping the victim's head with plastic bag or cellophane;

- * "water cure" or pouring water via the mouth or nostrils and jumping into or kicking the belly afterwards;
- * sexual molestation from stripping the victim naked, fondling private parts and rape, especially among females.
- * dazing the eyes through exposing (the eyes) to extremely bright lights over a long period of time (hurting or damaging the eyes);
- * prolonged blindfolding or hooding;
- * "telephone" or simultaneous banging of both ears with palms or fists;
- * pressing a hot iron against the sole of feet;
- * doping such as the use of so-called truth serum;
- * threats of execution and Russian roulette;
- * deprivation of sleep, food, water and toilet privileges;
- * "higa sa hangin" (hanging in mid-air) wherein the victims body is suspended between two beds supported only by the feet and the head which are placed on each end. While in this position, pummeled in the stomach and in the thighs.

Physically painless but psychologically tormenting is prolonged solitary confinement coupled with alternately "soft" and "hard" talk.

Depending on the quality of information extracted during interrogation and torture, which is basically a crucial test of the victim's endurance and the torturers mastery of his craft, one is either released without charges or detained with accompanying charges or "salvaged" (summarily executed). Some simply disappear without a trace.

There is also the emerging trend wherein the victim is neither formally detained nor charged but remains in the hands of the captors. Usually, he/she is used in "spotting" exercises which would mean a drive around the town or staying in highway checkpoints to finger other suspected subversives. Some are also used as guides during military operations.

Torture and prolonged detention produce far-reaching effects on the victims. The experience is definitely traumatic on both the PPs and their families. In an extreme case, the ordeal eventually committed Romeo Lanso to the mental hospital. (Please see page 7 for his story)

Appalling prison conditions

The PPs nightmare does not end with interrogation and torture. Incarceration is another form of torture, if seriously considered but even this is aggravated by dehumanizing prison conditions.

But first the standards. Ideally, PPs are not supposed to be mixed with common, violent criminals. Yet in most cases, they are placed in the same cells without due consideration to the nature of their offense. This is a violation of the 1955 "Standard Minimum treatment of Prisoners" adopted by the First United Nations congress in the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of offenders in Geneva, Switzerland.

Daily food budget range from P8.50 to P12.00 daily, certainly a measly allocation. Cells which are poorly ventilated are grossly congested. A bed for one is shared by two or



FOOD RATION: Prisoners at the Maa Rehabilitation Center expectantly look on the boiled vegetables served during lunch time.

three sometimes.

Minimum standards also include regular and prompt health services and proper hygiene terms.

As a rule, too, communication with and visits by relatives should be allowed but this is an exception in reality. Instead, relatives have told of harassment, molestation and intrusion into private communications.

Far from rehabilitating offenders, the prison is actually an infernal cell affecting the inmates dangerously. One only has to be reminded of the August hostage-taking in Camp Capt. Domingo Leonor in Davao City which killed 21 persons, including Australian missionary Jacqueline Hamill. The hostage-takers were demanding better treatment by jail wardens and better living conditions.

Subversives?

Are they or are they not subversives? The answer to the question requires an honest search into the motivation of those who label and those who are labeled. Also, one must not fail to see that PPs are human beings with inherent rights that apply to all.

And when one looks into motives, one necessarily must grapple with the question of: Whose interest are being "sub-

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CASE 1:

RUFINO TABUADA: Convicted

Is it possible that a man could be at two places at one time?

Political detainee Rufino Tabuada, 21, was convicted July 21 this year for the murder of Regino Cantorne in Talao, Sulop, Davao del Sur. Cantorne was killed by two armed men on Feb. 20, 1986 in his residence in Talao. His son, Gavino, the sole witness, testified that he recognized the triggerman to be Rufino Tabuada.

Rufino denied the charge although he admitted he was a New People's Army (NPA) organizer since January 1986. From February 17-22 of the same year, he was at the village of Bugis, seven kilometers from Talao, giving lectures to members of the Pambansang Kaisahan ng mga Magsasaka (PKM) or National Peasants Organization. The PKM is one of the 13 member-organizations of the clandestine National Democratic Front (NDF).

Rufino also said he did not know Cantorne and that, being a member of the underground district committee in the area, he was not engaged in assassination.

True or not, one fact remains. Rufino was his own witness. His misfortune is that he could not identify NPA comrades and PKM members to affirm his defense.

The judge ruled that Rufino's defenses were "alibis" and handed down his verdict: *reclusion perpetua* or life imprisonment. Rufino's counsel automatically moved for an appeal to reconsider the sentence.

The murder case involving Cantorne dragged on for two years. Within the same period, another seven counts of murder were lodged against Rufino. One had been dismissed.

Rufino was shot and arrested March 12, 1987 at 6:30 A.M. by elements of the 434th company of the Philippine Constabulary (PC) in the capital town of Digos. He was on his way to Davao Oriental to attend his brother's wedding. With him were two other companions, one was identified as Paul Comighod, a former political detainee. Reportedly, the other one escaped while Paul disappeared



CAUGHT IN A MESH: Rufino Tabuada looks at the formidable thorns that bars him from the outside world. He is convicted to life imprisonment simply because he was an NPA suspect charged with common crimes.

since.

For three days, he was confined at a

local hospital after which he was transferred to the municipal jail where he was detained until March 19. The following day, he was transferred to the municipal jail of Padada town where, he was told, a murder case awaited him.

The cases came one after the other. By May of the same year, Rufino was already facing five murder charges.

Under international laws on war, Rufino could be considered a prisoner of war (POW) rather than a prisoner of conscience. But to qualify as one, a state of civil war must first be declared which is not the case.

After the decision was handed, there was a noticeable change in the behavior of Rufino. While before he was communicative, Rufino is now very silent, maybe contemplative.

When asked why, he says: "I couldn't imagine myself in this place (prison) in my lifetime. It's too much to bear. I only wanted to help in liberating our people and our country."



CASE 2:

TERESITA ANTA: A Profile

Teresita Anta, 26, was arrested by elements of the Military Intelligence Service Group (MISG) in the village of Soong, Digos, Davao Sur on April 2 this year. Instantly, she was blindfolded and brought to what now appears to be a military safehouse. It is very hard to tell. Teresita was blindfolded for a month.

Her captors forced her to admit she was a New People's Army finance officer. At the beginning, she denied all charges against her. But as days, weeks and months wore on, and in solitary confinement she was not informed of any effort to find her, she decided to "cooperate."

It wasn't until June that she saw her parents and that subversion was slapped against her. Not really. Teresita pleaded guilty of subversion on the promise that if she did, she would be released by October. Subversion is penalized by six months imprisonment. Confused, alone and demoralized, she agreed.

She thought an arraignment would still be conducted. But to her surprise, after she answered Yes to the question whether she was as she was accused — only on the fifth time the question was sounded off, she says — the judge read the verdict and the penalty. Since she

was arrested in April yet, she had actually started serving her term.

On October 12, 1989, she was finally released with the providential presence of Nelly Intese, chairman of the Kapisanan para sa Paggpapalaya at Amnestiya ng mga Detenido sa Pilipinas (KAPATID) — Davao City chapter. KAPATID is an organization of detainees' relatives.

It sounds so simple but it was, in fact, so for Teresita.

MISG elements hounded Teresita until the time she was released. Three days before that, an MISG man "offered" to take her in custody. She refused. On the release itself, another MISG personnel came to get her. If Nelly arrived minutes late, Teresita would still be in the hands of the military.

"Under threats of further interrogation, I agreed to plead guilty. But there were conditions attached to it," Teresita reveals.

The most serious condition is for Teresita to stand state witness against other political prisoners. Another is for her to act as a military asset, a civilian agent.

"I couldn't in conscience do them,"

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CASE 3:

ROMEO LANSO: Schizophrenic

If you'd see Romeo Lanso, 26, at the Davao Regional Mental Hospital, brace yourself lest you get carried away. Romeo is not, and this has to be emphasized, a serious psychotic case but might as well evolve into one if he would be "detained" further in the bedlam of insanity.

It is true his thought processes have been upset and at the height of his nervous tension, his speech was highly irrelevant — he talked of a child inviting him — but Romeo, after seconds of painful recollection, could relate, in details, his harrowing ordeal.

On May 4, 1988, he was at Kapatagan, Digos, Davao del Sur to sell his 16-kilo coffee harvest. He wanted to purchase rice and milk for his four-month old first son and his aged parents.

Romeo possessed an admirable sense of responsibility. The youngest of six brothers and sisters who were all married, he graciously accepted the task of fostering their parents. And he did in his characteristic introvert and uncomplaining way.

"They tied me to a post and pounded my body with their fists. I felt like dying when one of them smashed a big stone in my chest."

ing way.

But on that fateful day, May 4, constabulary elements arbitrarily arrested him and took him to the detachment in Kapatagan for interrogation. He was tortured. In his mental state now, he remembers that four men took turns in beating him. He could tell, he assures, though he was blindfolded.

Romeo was suspected as one of the NPAs who ambushed a band of Civilian Home Defense Force (CHDF). No amount of refutation on his part could sway the military's belief.

"They tied me to a post and pounded my body with their fists. I felt like dying when one of them smashed a big stone in my chest," he says, stroking his chest in slow motion, in a conversation at the

mental hospital.

On the third day, Romeo, bound to a piece of lumber like a hog, was dumped inside a helicopter and flown to Digos. He was detained in the next seven months at the Digos municipal jail sharing a common cell with suspected hardcore criminals. During his first month in the jail, inmates mauled him. He went on a semi-coma for days and when he regained consciousness, he was not the same anymore.

Romeo already exhibited unusual behavioral changes but he was not referred for proper medical examination until he was getting to be almost totally irrelevant in his speech. Within this period, Romeo was tortured with the agony of separation from and anxiety over his family's economic means. His detention snarled up his otherwise rustic, self-sufficient, uncomplicated peasant life. This was something his unaffected consciousness was not able to grasp and his mental faculties gave in.

Romeo was sent to the mental hospital the first time on January 3, 1989. Dr.



OVER THE EDGE: Romeo Lanso and wife Lolita at the Davao Mental Hospital. The couple talks about Romeo's ordeal in the hands of his military captors that drove him over the edge of sanity.

ings of their hut, would have killed them. But they were at the kitchen.

Evacuations followed in three waves. On the last, their son Eglan died of diarrhea and pneumonia. Lolita thought Romeo took the news lightly when she told him in a visit. Days after that, she was informed that Romeo was back to the mental hospital.

Dr. Benjamin Molina, diagnosed Romeo to be afflicted with "schizophrenia, paranoid type with depression" an exacerbated stage. In his psychiatric report dated Sept. 27 this year, issued on the court's request, Molina noted that Lanso, a farmer with no family history of mental disturbance, is "not competent to stand court trial." He recommended that Romeo remain in the hospital for treatment.

Further, Molina remarked that Lanso's current situation, "namely, his prolonged stay in jail, the delays in the processing of his court case which led to a state of uncertainty and helplessness in his part, the recent death of his only son while in jail are realistic sources of depression which have lowered his defenses to a point of being suicidal. Since his response to medications previously has been good and the above factors are environmental, it is foreseen that the patient will improve

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Political . . .

verted?" Only in this framework should PPs be judged.

Essentially, the PPs are persons who have translated into action their perceptions of real problems like poverty, injustice, and foreign domination. These were the same issues raised by the PPs of colonial times.

Instead of consenting in silence, they have taken the risky path to achieve change, making them visible and vulnerable to repressive State policies. It was on account of this fact that the late Sen. Jose W. Diokno commented that PPs, "no matter how misguided we may think they are, are impelled not so much by a desire to harm as to improve society."

The kind of society the late revered Sen. Diokno referred to is one where land reform is called "pro-landlord" and a counter-insurgency tool; where wage and salary increases are mere compromises; where national sovereignty is prostituted and meaningless what with the continued presence of

foreign military bases and the foreign stranglehold of the economy exemplified by the notorious Letter of Intent (LOI); where defense and debt-servicing are given bigger budget allocation over social services; where graft and corruption is committed from the highest down to the lowest echelon of the bureaucracy; where unemployment and underemployment have driven millions of Filipinos to seek slavery jobs overseas; where two-thirds of the population die without medical attention; and so forth, so on.

There is indeed an urgent need to transform the society to which State authorities respond with repression. Some are arrested and sent to jail as the PPs are being subjected to; some are tolerated up to a point only the government knows; some join the outlawed organizations like CPP, the NPA and the National Democratic Front (NDF), the umbrella organization of 12 clandestine organizations.

But only because repression is the state policy.



Teresita . . .

she says although she admits that she did concede to issue a statement calling on the peasant masses and the NPAs to surrender. Copies were airborne and dropped in the interiors of Davao City and Davao del Sur.

Teresita was not seriously harmed physically except the continued blindfolding for a month, threats of being

As of this writing, Teresita is still in hiding. That she is a convicted subversive is of no help and she regrets having acceded to the MISG terms. But it was the only option other than to die or to stake other people's lives.

Uncertainty seems to be her future. "I don't know where to go to be free from the military," she says. Her immediate plan is to acquire a little amount of money to enable her to start a small

ball contact. Romeo hardly establishes eye contact with whoever he was talking with and seemingly addresses himself when he speaks especially because his voice is soft and slow. But his memory is still sharp.

There is no doubt that, as the psychiatrist has recommended, Romeo's early return to his place of origin will hasten

"No State shall permit or tolerate torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Exceptional circumstances such as state of war or a threat of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency may not be invoked as a justification of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

UN Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1975), Article 3

"salvaged" and raped. "Nobody knows you are here," she quotes her interrogators of having said. Once, she was slapped hard on her face for daring to confront a military officer why other detainees were tortured.

Up to the time she was already formally charged and convicted, she was like an "on-call" detainee who was brought to highway checkpoints to identify suspected underground workers and sympathizers. In the process, she was brought to as far as South Cotabato on board an ambulance car. Other times, usually between 7 to 10 p.m., she would be brought to hospitals presumably to see if NPAs were among the patients.

"It seemed like others' lives were in my hands," she remarks. Each time she failed to point at anybody, she would be threatened with execution or "padlocked" (solitary confinement) for several days.

business, somewhere.

"Somewhere, maybe there's a place for (a convict like) me," she hopes. Maybe, there's that somewhere. . .



Romeo . . .

a lot if he is able to go back to his previous life soonest. An expedient resolution of his case would be in order to restore his psychological stability."

Asked what he wants during the most recent visit at the hospital, Romeo answered: "I want to go home. It's so boring here. We do nothing but eat, walk, sleep or view television." That's Romeo, the schizophrenic talking.

The only indication that he was still disturbed was the lack of sustained eye-

his recovery. Every effort to help him should support Molina's psychiatric advice.



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