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Tribute to Comrade Monico M. Atienza

**Communist Party of the Philippines
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The Communist Party of the Philippines and the entire revolutionary movement pay the highest tribute to Comrade Monico "Ka Togs" Atienza. Ka Togs passed away on December 5 at the age of 60 after almost a year of battling a serious illness. For more than four decades, he continuously served as a loyal, assiduous and fine revolutionary and communist, and contributed immensely to the advance of the Philippine proletarian revolution.

Ka Togs was among those who participated in the reestablishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines on December 26, 1968 under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. He was elected as one of the members of the first Party Central Committee. Before this, Ka Togs was among those who led and thoroughly advanced the First Rectification Movement within and outside the CPP starting in 1967. He also strongly supported the Second Rectification Movement launched by the CPP since 1992.

Ka Togs became politically conscious of the depth of social problems and the need for proletarian revolution to attain fundamental changes in the Philippine social system while still a high school student. At the Far Eastern University (FEU) Boys High School where he graduated valedictorian in 1964, he became a member of the Kabataang Makabayan and headed the student government. Ka Togs was part of the student delegation that visited the People's Republic of China to observe and study its experiences in advancing its national-democratic and socialist revolution and the progress it has achieved.

When he went to college at the University of the Philippines in 1965, Ka Togs joined the Student Cultural Association of UP (SCAUP), an organization devoted to the in-depth study of the national situation and Marxism-Leninism, and to arousing, organizing and mobilizing fellow students. He eventually headed the organization.

He was an indefatigable reader and student of history, of Marxist-Leninist Mao Zedong Thought writings, of revolutionary works on the Philippines, China, Vietnam and other countries and of the international proletarian and people's movement.

He was a member of the first Party group within the Kabataang Makabayan and served as the organization's Secretary General from 1968 to 1970. He was at the forefront of the rapid expansion of its chapters in schools and communities in Metro Manila and the entire country. The efforts of Ka Togs, along with that of thousands of other KM activists and other national-democratic mass organizations that had sprung up within and outside schools served as the groundwork for the eruption of the First Quarter Storm of 1970 and the expansion of the revolutionary movement nationwide.

He was assigned to head the CPP National Organizing Department upon its reestablishment in 1968, a position he held until his arrest in 1974. He took charge of strengthening the Party organization and cadre force. He led the establishment and propagation of schools for national democracy that harvested tens of thousands of activists generated by the storm. The courses and trainings conducted in these schools consolidated the newly emerged activists, raised their revolutionary consciousness and served as the wellspring of cadres for the legal democratic movement and the armed struggle.

He played a key role in the widespread establishment of basic Party organizations, in the rapid expansion of the Party's membership and in the encouragement and deployment of mass activists from the ranks of workers and students to the countryside to work among the peasant masses and serve in the New People's Army.

Under Ka Tog's guidance, the first few hundred Party members in 1970 rapidly grew to 4,000 in 1974. Hundreds of fledgling Party cadres were trained and developed under his leadership.

Ka Togs became a fine and effective Party leader. He was steadfast in his class and revolutionary standpoint. He assiduously studied revolutionary theory and practice. As strict as he was in holding fast to revolutionary principles and goals, he was just as strict in practicing them in life. He struggled hard, lived simply, had no vices, was completely selfless and devoted all his talents and abilities to the revolution. He was determined, prompt, industrious, full of initiative and very efficient in fulfilling his duties. He never wavered in his goals. He was unfazed and was never distracted by obstacles or occasional failures. He was creative in solving problems and in attaining greater victories.

Ka Togs was good in managing and relating to comrades in various levels of the organization. He could effectively mobilize comrades under his leadership. He was a deep thinker, asked frequent and timely questions, exchanged ideas and cooperated with comrades in implementing tasks and improving on them. Although he was usually soft-spoken, he would sometimes raise his voice when there were problems in the conduct of tasks and when he wanted to stress a point during spirited discussions. But he was quick to humbly apologize, listen intently and politely explain himself and never brandished his authority on lower-ranking comrades. Ka Togs was friendly, humble, helpful, a good conversationalist and a pleasant companion.

Ka Togs was captured by the enemy in 1974 with his wife, child and other comrades. He was severely tortured by thugs of the Marcos fascist dictatorship. He was electrocuted in different parts of his body and his genitals were burned with lighted cigarette butts. His interrogators injected him with "truth serum" in their desperate attempt to force him to reveal information. He was deprived of sleep for several nights and was made to listen to what the enemy purported to be taped cries of his wife and child being tortured. Despite all this, the enemy failed to break Ka Togs' iron will.

Even under detention, Ka Tog's militancy and fighting spirit remained. He continued to encourage comrades to stand their ground and fight. He was among those who led a hunger strike of political detainees in Camp Bagong Diwa in 1976. The military vented all its anger on

him and other suspected protest leaders. He and the others were dragged out of their regular detention cells and were put in solitary confinement to punish them.

All these military atrocities left deep scars on Ka Togs' body and mind. He had to be brought to the V. Luna Hospital after suffering a nervous breakdown.

Even after more than a decade in detention, Ka Togs' revolutionary standpoint never wavered. He was released in 1980. He made a heroic effort to rise up and recover from all the injuries he suffered in the hands of the enemy. During his recuperation, he resumed his university studies, took masteral and doctorate courses in Philippine Studies and eventually became a professor of Filipino and Literature at the University of the Philippines.

Ka Togs made many contributions in his researches on the history of the Philippine revolution and in appreciating and developing the national language. In this masteral thesis "Kilusang Pambansang Demokratiko: Mga Hakbang at Aktibidad sa Pambansang Wika," he showed the revolutionary movement's important contribution to, and influence on, the development of the national language. Among his other writings were "Saklaw at Lapit sa Pagsulat ng Kasaysayan ng Wikang Pambansa: Isang Mungkahi;" "Filipino ng Kilusang Pambansa-Demokratiko (KPD): Pilosopiya at Pulitika sa Pambansang Wika;" "Ang Rebolusyong 1896 at ang Nagpapatuloy na Pakikibaka para sa Pambansang Dignidad at Solidaridad;" "Filipino Bilang Midyum ng Analysis;" "Kilusang Pambansa-Demokratiko sa Wika;" "Ang Pambansa-Demokratiko sa Pagpaplanong Pangwika;" "Dalawang Ilang Tala at Gramatika;" and "Ang Pulitika sa mga Tula ni Huseng Batute." He also wrote and published many creative works and Pilipino translations of other authors' important works on among others, revolution, history and science and technology.

In recognition of his expertise on the national language, he was awarded the Santiago Fonacier Professorial Chair on Language and the National Book Award in Linguistics. He was often consulted by many comrades on the use of the Pilipino language, both in the underground and legal movement.

Ka Togs effectively used the classroom and courses to propagate patriotic, democratic, progressive and revolutionary ideas. He served as adviser to countless youth activists in their organizing and mobilizing work among students. His small office was always open for "consultations" with activists. Despite his meager salary as a professor, he was always generous to activists in need.

He also became president of the First Quarter Storm Movement that comprises activists during the Marcos regime and continued to stand for and contribute to the national-democratic movement. He was often invited to speak on, and was a propagator of, the national-democratic viewpoint in various fora on current issues and political developments and even on history.

Ka Togs also helped establish and manage the Partido ng Bayan (PnB), where he served as Deputy Secretary for Organization. In 1987, the military targeted him and other leaders and members of the newly established party for assassination. Military thugs ambushed a vehicle where Ka Togs and his comrades from the PnB were riding after a radio interview at Broadcast City in Tandang Sora, Quezon City. Ka Togs was seriously wounded, while two of his

companions were killed. A .45 cal. bullet lodged in his nape. He was also hit in the leg. The gunshot wounds aggravated his other physical injuries.

Ka Togs suffered a heart attack in December 2006. It was only during his hospital confinement that doctors learned that he was also suffering from throat cancer, which caused his labored breathing.

Though he never recovered consciousness, comrades, activists, friends and many others who loved and admired him continued to visit him. Countless people cared for him and nurtured him as he lay in a coma for close to a year.

With his passing, the Communist Party of the Philippines and the entire revolutionary movement express their full appreciation for the many contributions of Comrade Monico M. Atienza in establishing and strengthening the Party and the revolutionary movement and in advancing the Filipino people's revolutionary struggle.

These contributions are deeply etched in the Party and the Philippine revolution's history. They spawned and will continue to generate many more advances and many more victories. 

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