

Fidel Agcaoili, lifelong fighter for liberation

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In the foreground, NDFP peace panel chairperson Fidel Agcaoili. Photo: Jon Bustamante, January 2017

Fidel Agcaoili, chief negotiator of the Peace Panel of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, has passed on in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

In a statement emailed to the media, the NDFP announced that he died on July 23 at 12:45 p.m. in Utrecht.

“According to the doctor, the cause of his death was pulmonary arterial rupture which caused massive internal bleeding. It was not COVID-19 related,” the NDFP’s International Information Office said in a statement.

Agcaoili, 75, assumed the chairmanship of the NDFP Peace Panel in 2016.

He was the longest-detained political prisoner during the Marcos dictatorship and later served as the founding secretary general of SELDA, an organization of political detainees.

Agcaoili also served as secretary general of the Partido ng Bayan, a national democratic political party that fielded candidates to both senatorial and congressional seats during the administration of then president Corazon Aquino.

Source: [Bulatlat](#)

Following is a statement from the Socialist Unity Party:

The Socialist Unity Party and Struggle for Socialism/La Lucha por el Socialismo send our deepest and warmest condolences to the family and friends of Fidel Agcaoili and to all his comrades in the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. We are deeply saddened to learn of the untimely passing of a beloved

revolutionary hero, a lifelong fighter for liberation who braved the single longest political imprisonment under Ferdinand Marcos's martial law, who founded the organization SELDA for ex-political detainees, and served as Secretary-General of Partido ng Bayan and as Chair of the NDFP Negotiating Panel.

Comrade Fidel embodied all the best values of a great revolutionary — selfless, humble, comradely, warm, and completely and singularly devoted to the masses. He was a true hero who devoted his life to serving the people. He is well-remembered in his life's work: the steadfast and enduring revolutionary movement of the people of the Philippines. It is an honor to have known and worked with him in the international solidarity movement. He will live forever in our hearts and in the people's struggle.

On this sad occasion, the Socialist Unity Party and Struggle/La Lucha remain steadfast in our revolutionary solidarity with the Communist Party of the Philippines, the National Democratic Front, the New People's Army, and the People's Democratic Revolution. Your struggle and victory will be his monument.

In Honor Of Ka Fidel Agcaoili. A Great Filipino Patriot And Communist Fighter

By Jose Maria Sison

International League of Peoples' Struggle Chairperson Emeritus

Chief Political Consultant, National Democratic Front of the Philippines

July 24, 2020

As Founding Chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and Chief Political Consultant of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and on behalf of my family, I express the deepest grief over the unexpected demise of Ka Fidel Agcaoili and convey sincerest condolences to his widow and children, all his comrades, relatives and friends.

Ka Fidel has been my close comrade since the early 1960s, when he joined the Student Cultural Association of the University of the Philippines, the Kabataang Makabayan and the Communist Party of the Philippines. We advanced together in our development ideologically, politically and organizationally in pursuit of the people's democratic revolution in the context of the world proletarian revolution.

Ka Fidel deserves to be honored as a great Filipino patriot and outstanding communist fighter even only on the basis of what is publicly known about him. He has accomplished far more than this in the service of the Filipino people and their revolutionary movement within the context of the epochal struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, a struggle of the oppressed and exploited for a fundamentally new and better world than one dominated by imperialism and all kinds of reaction.

He became a revolutionary without ever boasting or feeling sorry that he had sacrificed so much for the people and the revolution.. He came from an upper-class family and could have easily attained an endless series of high positions in the ruling system. But he chose to side with the people, especially the toiling masses of workers and peasants, in their just revolutionary struggle for national and social liberation.

He was outraged by the unjust semicolonial and semifeudal system and was determined to contribute what he could to develop the revolutionary movement for overthrowing it and establishing a people's democratic state under the leadership of the proletariat. He was never afraid of the tremendous odds and the risks to life,

limb and liberty. He did not expect any kind of material reward for all his work and sacrifices.

When he was sent out by his parents to study in the U.S. and keep him away from social activism in the UP, he joined the mass protests in California and soon he was back in the Philippines on time for the preparations and establishment of the Kabataang Makabayan in 1964.

Even while he was a high executive of his family's insurance company, he helped organize studies and produce publications and performed the lowly tasks that had to be undertaken in the underground in support of the mass movement and in the establishment and development of the CPP. He also carried out important missions that required a high level of knowledge and negotiating skills in dealing with domestic allies and with fraternal parties abroad. He put facilities and connections available to someone of his class origin in the service of the people and the revolution.

Anywhere the Communist Party of the Philippines had its headquarters, be it in Central Luzon or Northern Luzon, he attended the meetings of leading organs in order to participate in deliberations and make reports on matters he was responsible for and made recommendations on what policies and courses of action to take. He shared with his comrades all the discomfort and risks of travelling to and staying in rural huts and forest camps.

It was sometime in 1972 that it became untenable for Ka Fidel to work aboveground and he had to go underground. He and his wife with their two young children were on the manhunt list of the enemy. They had to face a far higher level of discomfort and risks than ever before. In 1974, he and his wife Chit were arrested, together with their two small children Eric and Joseph. He was subjected to severe physical and mental torture by the minions of the Marcos fascist dictatorship.

He became the political prisoner with the longest duration of detention (more than 10 years) during the Marcos fascist regime and earned the deep respect of many other political prisoners in the common struggle against the autocratic regime. He over served the penalty for the political offense of rebellion. And he was never tempted to take advantage of the fact that his father was a classmate and friend of Marcos at the UP College of Law to ask for much earlier release from prison.

He was released from prison as a result of his dropping the appeal of his unlawful conviction for rebellion and asserting that he had even overserved the sentence. He proved to be a steadfast proletarian revolutionary fighter with an unyielding moral stamina and complete dedication to the revolutionary cause of the people.

He helped to establish and became Chairperson of Samahan ng Ex-detainees Laban sa Detensyon at Aresto (SELDA) to work hard for the release of all political prisoners. He also helped organize Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND) in 1985 and became its Executive Director.

After the overthrow of Marcos in 1986, Ka Fidel and I worked together in laying the ground for peace negotiations upon the request of the Aquino regime through Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo. But later on Aquino would scale down the projected peace negotiations to ceasefire negotiations as prelude to setting the agenda for peace negotiations.

Ka Fidel and I were in the Preparatory Committee which established the Partido ng Bayan (PngB) on August 30, 1986. In November 1986, the first PngB Chairman Ka Rolando Olalia and his driver Ka Leonor Alay-ay were kidnapped and murdered by ultrareactionary elements of the Armed Forces of the Philippines under Oplan God Save the Queen.

Ka Fidel had the high sense of duty and courage to take the place of Ka Lando as PngB Chairman and further organize the Partido ng Bayan for the 1987 senatorial

elections. He was also uncowed by the related assassination of BAYAN Secretary General Lean Alejandro and the coup and murder plans of the Enrile-RAM faction of the AFP.

Conditions became untenable for Ka Fidel to stay in Manila when he was targeted for arrest and the Aquino and Enrile-RAM factions were competing to attack the patriotic and democratic political forces. Thus, he accepted employment in a Spanish nongovernmental organization, Instituto de Estudios Políticos para América Latina y Africa (IEPALA), in 1988.

Subsequently, he joined exploratory talks for the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations since 1989 when President Cory Aquino sent Rep. Jose Yap to The Netherlands. He became the Vice Chairperson of the NDFP Negotiating Panel when the GRP and NDFP adopted The Hague Joint Declaration as the framework for the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations.

He played a key role in the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations and in the drafting and finalization of major agreements, especially the GRP-NDFP Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, the first item in the substantive agenda of the negotiations signed by the GRP and NDFP Negotiating Panels in 1998, with him as Chairperson of the Reciprocal Working Committee of the NDFP and then Justice Secretary Silvestre Bello as Chairperson of the RWC of the GRP. He co-chaired the GRP-NDFP JMC (Joint Monitoring Committee) upon its formation in 2004.

In connection with the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations, Ka Fidel like Ka Luis Jalandoni, then Chairperson of the NDFP Negotiating Panel, had the privilege of going to the Philippines to consult with Philippine presidents, from Estrada to Duterte. It was Ka Fidel who met Duterte as often as six times in 2016 and 2017. Ka Louie turned over the position of Chairperson of the NDFP Negotiating Panel to Ka Fidel in 2017.

Since he became a member of the Central Committee of the CPP in 1970, Ka Fidel successfully carried out missions of the highest importance in representation of the highest organs of either the CPP or the NDFP in relations of practical cooperation with major political forces in the Philippines and with fraternal parties and revolutionary movements abroad.

Ka Fidel had the good fortune to become well-informed about the Second National Congress of the CPP and to see with his own eyes the high level of achievement that the revolutionary movement had reached nationwide when he traveled to the Philippines in 2016 and 2017 and visited a number of major guerrilla fronts in connection with the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations. He saw the vibrant strength of the CPP, the NPA, the revolutionary mass organizations and the people's democratic government in meetings and in activities among the people.

Ka Fidel easily endeared himself to comrades and allies because he was really modest and had an infectious sense of humor even if at certain times he looked stern. He explained complex issues patiently and persuasively to comrades and friends and dished out an alternation of serious talk and a certain amount of jokes and light banter. He firmly held on to revolutionary principles and explained complex issues patiently and persuasively to comrades and friends. He gave his opinions frankly. And he welcomed objections, corrections and additions to his explanations.

He never flaunted his high level of knowledge. He was an avid reader and observer of national and global events and freely shared his views with others. His amiable characteristics will be sorely missed by many comrades and friends who knew him at close quarters and loved him.

There are more achievements of Ka Fidel that other comrades and allies in various sectors of the national democratic movement as well as in the armed revolutionary movement can narrate in memorial meetings in his honor. I yield to their direct

knowledge and more detailed narratives. May all the testimonies be put together and his biography be written in order to inspire this generation and further generations of Filipinos to follow his patriotic and revolutionary example.

The revolutionary spirit, ideas and deeds of Ka Fidel are now flowing in the growing body and blood of the the people's struggle for national and social liberation and for a socialist future. All the efforts and sacrifices that he has made in his lifetime will live after him in the hearts and minds and collective will and actions of the people in the people's democratic revolution and in the subsequent socialist revolution.

Revolutionaries never die, they continue to live through their revolutionary successors. Let us turn our grief to revolutionary courage. Let us celebrate the revolutionary achievements of Ka Fidel, honor him for these and emulate his example in serving the people and the revolution.

Long live the memory of Ka Fidel Agcaoili!

Celebrate his spirit, ideas and deeds as a Filipino patriot and communist fighter!

Long live the Filipino people and the Philippine revolution!

