



CORDILLERA PEOPLES ALLIANCE

For the Defense of the Ancestral Domain and for Self Determination

October 5, 2012

Remembering Ama Daniel Ngayaan (1922-1987)

Today we remember Daniel Ngayaan, tribal elder, leader, hero and martyr of the Cordillera peoples' struggle, abducted and slain at Cagaluan Gate, Pasil, Kalinga province, by the Cordillera Peoples Liberation Army (CPLA) on October 5, 1987.

Ama Daniel had just come from the Regional Council meeting of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) in Baguio City on October 5, 1987, of which he was the vice chairperson until his death. At that time, he was also the chairperson of the Cordillera Bodong Peace Association (CBA), whose forerunner is the Kalinga Bontoc Peace Pact Holders Association (KBPPHA). His remains were never found.

25 years after, justice remains elusive, and remains so even with the knowledge that CPLA is accountable for his death, and later on, Romy Gardo of CPA-Abra. Even with CPLA's criminal activities and the complaints lodged against it, CPLA remains scot-free and is in fact coddled by government since the time of Cory Aquino, which gave CPLA privileged positions under Executive Order 220.

EO 220 created the Cordillera Executive Board (CEB), Cordillera Regional Assembly (CRA) and Cordillera Bodong Administration (CBAd) as transitional bodies to work towards the creation of the Cordillera Autonomous Region. In its 12 years of existence, CEB-CRA-CBAd accomplished nothing of significance. It could not even effectively conduct the educational campaign on autonomy that it was mandated to do. In 2000, Congress practically abolished it by refusing to allocate funds for its operations.

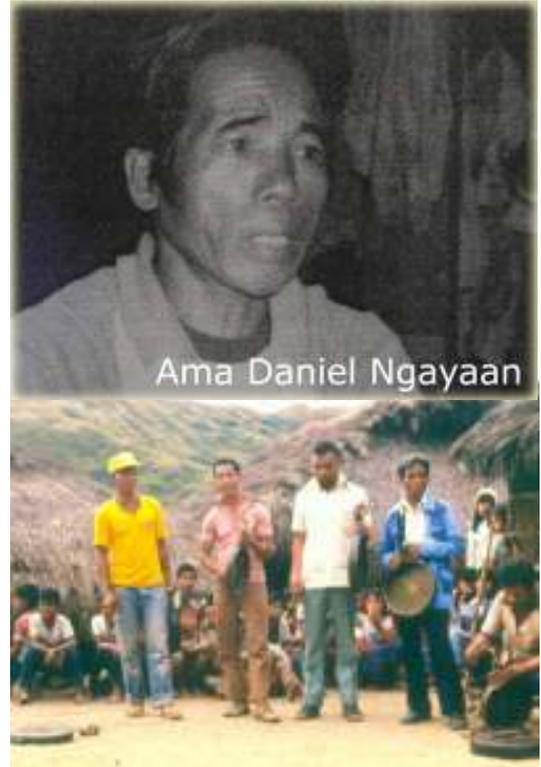
Yet, the Arroyo government later integrated the CPLA into the Armed Forces despite its criminal records, virtually forgetting CPLA's crimes.

The present Aquino government has done the same act of coddling CPLA when it entered into a MOA through OPAPP (Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process) transforming CPLA into a "socio economic unarmed force". This adds insult to injury. It repeats all over the denial of justice for Ama Daniel, and all victims of CPLA's atrocities.

Instead of prosecuting the CPLA for its crimes, the State practically absolved CPLA by assigning it government agency functions related to socio-economic programs aside from the AFP. For these, the State remains culpable of denying justice to Ngayaan, his clan, tribe and the Cordillera people's movement.

Who is Ama Daniel Ngayaan?

Like pangat Macliing Dulag, The life story of Ama Daniel and the legacy of Chico is worth knowing, as similar tales of development aggression are taking root in Kalinga, like global energy giant Chevron's plans to create a vast complex of geothermal fields in Pasil, Tinglayan and Lubuagan.



Ama Daniel Ngayaan

Lower photo: KBPPHA Assembly in Buscalan, Tinglayan, Kalinga (1983)

Ama Daniel was born in 1922 in Sitio Liglig, Tanglag Lubuagan, Kalinga. He belongs to the Tanglag tribe. Ama Daniel was able to finish elementary education with the inaccessibility of education in far-flung areas, and later raised his family of eight as a farmer and a skilled carpenter.

From 1955-1960, his leadership earned his appointment as Barangay Captain of Tanglag.

In 1974, he was one of the elders who stood up and actively participated and led the opposition against the World Bank-funded Chico River Dams project during the Marcos dictatorship. Ama Daniel significantly contributed in uniting the elders of his community, being an influential peace pact holder himself for the Tanglag tribe. Through his participation in *bodong* conferences in Buscalan, Tanglag, and as far as Metro Manila, community opposition was strengthened and consolidated. From these *bodong* conferences, elders forged a *pagta* expressing opposition to the dam project in 1975, in the spirit of the defense of ancestral heritage. His leadership figured as well in spontaneous actions against the dam such as the dismantling of the National Power Corporation camp in Mosimos, Tomiangan. Affected communities including a huge number of women marched down from Tomiangan to Camp Duyan in Bulanao, Tabuk to return parcels of the dismantled camp. This was in 1976.

Threatened by the growing opposition, the Marcos government later sent PANAMIN (Presidential Assistant on National Minorities) representative Manda Elizalde to the province. PANAMIN was used as a divide and rule mechanism against the tribal peoples just so the dam project would push through. Scholarships were offered to families, including cash and canned goods. Ama Daniel was among the first to expose the real motives of this agency. Like thousands of mass leaders and members of the progressive organizations illegally detained during the Martial Law, Ama Daniel, together with other 150 leaders, elders, oppositionists of the Chico dam was arrested in 1976. They were detained in Camp Olivias in Pampanga, charged of hampering a government project. They were released the following year with the help of different support groups from the church, the Free Legal Assistance (FLAG) and Amnesty International. His arrest and detention, did not, however, water down his determination against the dam construction and his people's fight, as he continued to figure in the struggle against the dam. Being a peace pact holder, he was among those who actively participated in the formation of the Kalinga Bontoc Peace Pact Holders Association (KBPPHA) in 1982, where he became an officer. In 1983, the growing and widening Cordillera people's movement gave rise to the birth of the Cordillera Bodong Association, which he later chaired. During the second congress of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance, Ama Daniel was elected vice chairperson. In October 5, 1987, Ama Daniel was homeward bound to Tanglag after the CPA Regional Council Meeting when he was abducted by elements of the CPLA in Cagaluan gate.

Justice for Ama Daniel

Thus, as we remember Ama Daniel today, we shall not let our guard down and continue to expose the CPLA for its criminal acts and human rights violations, and hold the State accountable. We shall continue our calls for the immediate abolition of this paramilitary group and make it answer for its crimes against the Cordillera people.

25 years after his abduction, we come to remember the life of our martyr Ama Daniel Ngayaan—his great contributions in the defense of our ancestral lands, his thoughts and deed as a progressive tribal leader. We also remember the brave people of Kalinga and Bontoc who stood up against the dam, so that, until today, the Chico river flows free.

Reference:

AB Anongos
Secretary General