



JUSTICE FOR CRIS MOVEMENT

c/o BU University Student Council Office
Bicol University Main Campus
Legazpi City

Cris Hugo: lider kan juvenes, tugang, aki nin banwaan*

Cris Hugo - responsible student, outstanding youth leader, patriot, *unico hijo* and *kuya* to his two sisters - was assassinated on March 19, 2006 in Legazpi City. Much like Gen. Gregorio del Pilar, Cris was too young at 20 when he died. Yet he was no less brave than the "Boy General"; his love for his country was no less ardent.

Cris had been a committed advocate for students' rights and welfare and was a staunch supporter of various pro-people causes. He metamorphosed from a seminarian exposed to social concerns to a passionate social critic and crusader. He used to say that much of his early ideas on social justice came from the seminary, where he graduated high school. While in college, Cris started his advocacy in 2003 when Bicol University students were defending campus journalists charged with libel.

His belief in activism and collective action further deepened when students victoriously pushed for a refund of exorbitant fees. Cris, who was a journalism student, then began to question the state of media freedom in the country when he took part in a campaign to seek justice for slain radio broadcaster Ruel Endrinal. In 2004, Cris also supported the effort to take up youth issues on a new platform when he campaigned for the youth party Anak ng Bayan in the party-list election.

Cris naturally gravitated towards the League of Filipino Students as he sought answers to various social questions. His involvement soon transcended intramural education when, as LFS member, he linked with marginalized sectors and facilitated discussions in workers' unions and farmers organizations. By the time of his murder, Cris was Regional Coordinator and National Council member of the LFS, newly elected Grand Chancellor of the Alpha Phi Omega Fraternity in Bicol University, and was an active campaigner for greater student involvement in the recent BU student council elections. He was also a convenor of an alliance against the destructive mining operations of Lafayette Phils. in Albay.

It was these noble activities which earned Cris the ire of defenders of the status quo. During a presidential visit in September 2004, he was detained by police when he attempted to bring to Pres. Arroyo's attention the sad plight of the youth and the people. Since then, he was the subject of surveillance, as plainclothes agents asked for his whereabouts during enrollment, and as he was allegedly included in the military Order of Battle - a plausible assertion since the military has labeled the LFS as a "communist front organization" in its previous reports.

Drawing inspiration from Rizal, Bonifacio, and other youthful heroes, Cris never showed fear amidst this intimidation. Instead, he resolutely affirmed his commitment to youth involvement in social affairs, even as he diligently gave attention to his academic studies. He was constantly communicating with fellow youth leaders about problems both political and personal. All the while, he was beloved *Kuya Taloy* to his sisters and responsible son to his parents.

But for all these - three fascist bullets took away his life.

The conspirators may have succeeded in their evil scheme to silence Cris, but his martyrdom only amplifies the millions of voices raised against the tyrannical, bloodthirsty political order that demanded his sacrifice. His memory, like that of Gregorio del Pilar, will forever endure among all progressive-minded youth and patriotic citizens. In a day of reckoning, the Filipino people whom Cris dedicated his life will render justice to him as they carry on their quest for a new and just social order.

* *Cris Hugo – youth leader, brother, son of the people*