# Guerrilla Responses to Local Collaborators in Negros Oriental during the Japanese Occupation

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## Abstract

*The issue of collaboration has invariably been a part of colonial life since the Spanish, American, even until the Japanese period. Some Filipinos opted to collaborate with the colonizers, while others decided to resist. This paper delves into the issue of collaboration during the Japanese period, specifically in Negros Oriental, and how the guerrilla movement responded to the collaborators. The guerrillas saw most collaborators as traitors for siding with the Japanese imperial forces. However, some, if not most, of the collaborators viewed their actions as honorable, for they provided, to varying extents, a form of cushion to mitigate the suffering of the Filipino people, in this paper's case, the Oriental Negrenses. Suffice it to say, the responses of the guerrillas against these collaborators, if mainly pejorative, vary from case to case. In this paper, the researcher aims to provide the different responses of the guerrillas towards famous political collaborators, military collaborators, and even lesser-known collaborators. It is hoped that this paper will shed light on the complex, let alone nebulous, issue of collaboration during the Japanese Occupation of Negros Oriental.*

*Keywords:* collaboration, resistance, guerrilla responses, Japanese Occupation of Negros Oriental, local history of Negros Oriental

## Introduction

The issue of collaboration dates back to the Spanish colonial period when the local chieftains and tribespeople worked along with or for the Spanish conquistadors. It continued even during the Philippine Revolution when local elites refused to take side with the Supremo, Andres Bonifacio; what makes it worse is the decision of the majority of these political elites to collaborate with the Americans, after seeing the futility of General Emilio Aguinaldo's fight to maintain Philippine independence. In retrospect, the ruling class – i.e., political elites – have oft-times accommodated occupying forces (e.g., Spaniards and Americans). Albeit some have also resisted, most have worked along with the colonizers. To understand the collaborative proclivities of political elites during the Japanese Occupation, one must first be cognizant of their historical development since tracing their development will provide some context to the narrative and provide the reader with a better understanding as

to why they did what they did.

In one way or another, the actions of the ruling class or the political elites during the Spanish and American period – when they worked along with the colonizers – are not dissimilar to what the next generation of political elites did during the Japanese Occupation. Whether it was a matter of survival or performing one's duty – among many other reasons – the political elites in the Philippines have invariably shown their willingness to work with an occupying force. Indeed, they were just continuing a common practice – or a habit - which pejoratively typifies the political elites as *opportunistic, selfish*, and disloyal. In their defense, the political elites would invariably describe their actions as *pragmatic*. They did not usually believe or stand by the idea of achieving independence by *revolution*, but more so by *compromise*. To the eyes of the revolutionists, their actions were *cowardly* and *traitorous*, but for the political elites, they believed that they were doing the right thing for the people – that is, to abstain from unnecessary violence and casualties.

There are few sources about collaboration in the Philippines during the Japanese period. Perhaps one of the earliest sources, if not one of the best defenses for the collaborators' cause, was Senator Claro M. Recto's *Three Years of Enemy Occupation: The Issue of Political Collaboration in the Philippines*. His book was more of a defense for him and his colleagues – to give context as to why they perforce collaborated with the Japanese occupying forces. Recto argued that their actions were not unlike those political elites who collaborated during the American Occupation, as they believed that collaboration was imperative for the country's survival. Recto argued that they were merely ordered by Quezon to "try to keep the Philippines in one piece. Try to protect the people from Japan's brutality and avarice."[1]

De Viana[2] and Steinberg[3] also wrote on Filipino collaboration with the Japanese during World War II. Their accounts, however, focused on the national level. Both historians looked into the motives and the outcome of their collaboration, not to mention how the Filipino collaborators had worked with the Japanese. Their sweeping accounts at the national level would be of much use to the present study as it gives the researcher a sense of perspective as to what was happening in the capital and what kind of collaboration had transpired there.

On collaboration at the local level, Ara has written an article on the collaboration of Mayor Catalino Hermosilla, wartime mayor of Ormoc, Leyte. Seemingly, Hermosilla's form of collaboration with the enemy was unique – in the sense that he used it to gain leverage over his enemies. Ara inferred that this was done through the Home Guard, which Hermosilla purportedly used to maintain peace and order; however, again, it became apparent that its creation was to help increase Hermosilla's influence and gradually extirpate his political rivals. "Apparently…", as Ara averred, "his chosen political stance was nothing but to protect his vested interests while

ostensibly being cooperative with the Japanese."[4] Ara's study on Hermosilla vividly depicts collaboration at the local level and how it is quite different from the national level. The motives of local collaborators vary from one place to another, depending on the province or town's political milieu. Hence, there is no general – or say, uniform – motive as to why and how the Filipino collaborators worked with the Japanese. Again, the collaborator's experiences vary; that is why a study on the different collaborators – and the different reactions to their actions – is imperative to prevent any hasty generalizations about their actions.

Lastly, another work on local history apropos of the resistance and collaboration of Filipinos during World War II is Emil B. Justimbaste's *Heroes, Brigands, Spies: The Untold Story of Leyte Guerrillas during the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945.* His book delves into the early beginnings of the Leyte Guerrilla Movement, the intricate, if not complicated, relationships among the guerrillas, the guerrilla's responses to the issue of collaboration in Leyte, which was typified by violent reprisals.[5]

## Methodology

This paper uses the *historical method,* which looks into the past, into specific events – for this paper's case, the collaboration issue and guerrilla responses–and identifies the causes and effects of those events mentioned above. The sources used for this paper are *primary sources* from the R.B Silliman War Papers, diary accounts compiled by Dr. Earl Jude Cleope in his unpublished work, the Silliman War Diaries, and many other written secondary sources like books, journal articles, and unpublished dissertations.

On explaining why the political elites collaborated with the Japanese and why the guerrillas responded the way they did against the collaborators, the researcher uses Talcott Parson's *Role Expectation and Theory of Action.* Parsons postulated, "people internalize the values of a society; that is, they make social values of the cultural system their own by learning from other actors in the social system what is expected of them."[6] Looking back at the situation of the collaborators and the resistance movement, one can see that the former was influenced by the similar role they played during the American Occupation. By and large, they acted in the same manner – that is, they collaborated with the occupying forces, the Americans, and then later on the Japanese. They carried on with what was expected of them – they simply learned from the past political elites. Parsons aptly called this as their *role expectation.* The same goes for the latter, most of whom did not have the proclivity to collaborate because they believed in freedom and independence – the same way the revolutionaries fought against the Americans during the Philippine-American War. However, it must be noted that most of the guerrillas were solidly loyal to the Americans.

Suffice it to say, this paper is more of a work on local history which is vital in order to fill the lacuna in Negros

Oriental's history, specifically during the Japanese period. Thus, it must be emphasized that this paper seeks to embolden Oriental Negrenses and make them see the complex nature of collaboration and resistance during the Japanese Occupation. The issue of collaboration and responses to it is not black and white. One should not hastily say that collaborators were traitors and the guerrillas were heroes, as their cases vary from one person to another. That being said, this paper seeks to discuss the different responses of the members of the guerrilla movement towards the collaborators and how the guerrillas dealt with them. Lastly, although not entirely the focus, this paper will also talk about the experiences of some collaborators and provide perspective as to they did what they did.

## Background

Collaboration is defined as working jointly or cooperating traitorously with the enemy. Indeed, there were varying forms of wartime collaboration with the Japanese. There is political collaboration, military collaboration, economic collaboration, and others. Political collaboration is emphasized in this paper as the main subjects collaborated in a political aspect, which is defined as the act of a government official, who is still exercising power, and is voluntarily working together with – or providing aid to – an occupying force.

Those who collaborated militarily included members of the Bureau of Constabulary and the League of Patriotic Filipinos or more infamously known as the *Makapili* (Kalipunang Makabayan ng mga Pilipino). They were – especially the latter – the most dreaded Filipino units during the war. The BC was primarily utilized "for domestic policing and counter-insurgency purposes."[7] Meanwhile, the *Makapili's* were active collaborators known for being a "fanatical, self-immolating Filipino militia" whose role was to serve as Japanese spies or saboteurs – anonymously, as they hid their identity by wearing a barong, identifying purported members of the guerrilla movement.[8] During that time, the common perception among Filipinos was that the *Makapili's* were "the ones that ordered the killing of the people."[9] In Negros Oriental, the most widely known military collaborators were part of the *Public Opinion Office*, considered the "Japanese Spy Corps", more or less like the *Makapili* in Luzon.[10]

Furthermore, the economic collaborators benefited financially by supplying the Japanese with raw materials or resources used in their war efforts. Many political elites were guilty of this crime, for example, Serging Osmena and F.C. De La Rama. Cultural collaboration, on the other hand, had something to do with propaganda; cultural collaborators oft-times worked for newspaper and magazine companies which tried to brainwash the Filipinos into believing that the Americans were their enemies (given that Asia should be for the Asians) and that would never return to the Philippines.[11]

This present study will focus more on the political collaborators and other minor collaborators and

how the guerrillas responded to their collaboration. The guerrillas respected some of them, but they detested most collaborators as traitorous and conniving individuals. As a result, the unfortunate ones were violently assassinated, while others were fortunate enough to have survived such attacks. The succeeding paragraphs will recall the different cases of collaboration and the varying responses of the guerrillas.

**Guerrilla Responses to Major Collaborators in Negros Oriental**
**Case of Mayor Mariano Perdices**

Mayor Perdices was a young politician who faced a herculean task when the Japanese arrived in the somber, soporific town of Dumaguete. He was immediately placed in a moral conundrum whether to actively collaborate with the Japanese or passively collaborate with them. In the end, he chose the latter.

Even if Perdices has been included in the list of enemy collaborators reported by Juan Dominado[12], who was the S-2 or Intelligence Officer of the 75th Infantry, he still managed to gain the trust of the members of the guerrilla movement, since there is a plenitude of instances wherein Mayor Perdices proved to have had connections with the guerrilla movement. Likewise, it is also a given that Perdices opted to remain in the occupied area to help – or, since it was a time of war, become the cushion of – the people of Dumaguete.

Before he continued serving as mayor of Dumaguete during the Japanese Occupation, one of the first things that he did to help the people of Dumaguete was to demur on the supposed plan of burning the town so that the Japanese could not make use of the infrastructures. Perdices completely opposed this plan, so he met with Silliman's President, Dr. Arthur L. Carson, and advised him not to support or push through with the said plan. More specifically, he asked Carson to give him and the other Dumaguete officials time to warn the people, as their safety was his primary concern. Without a doubt, Perdices thought that it was not a good idea – as it would be devastating to the people living in Dumaguete. He averred that "the only people to suffer from a burning policy would be the Filipinos."[13] Eventually, he successfully convinced those who had planned the said burning policy. One can say that this action of Perdices benefited the people of Dumaguete – not necessarily the Japanese – since some of them, especially those who had escaped to the hinterlands at the outset of Japanese arrival, gradually returned to their residences. Perdices' request to Carson ultimately saved the town from being unnecessarily destroyed.

When the Japanese had finally arrived, it has been noted that Perdices was one of the first municipal officials to return to the office. His intentions were clear from the start – he opted to return to Dumaguete immediately, not necessarily because he was under duress, but because he felt that he could save more lives if he were in the occupied area. It has been known – not among the Japanese forces, but among the members of the guerrilla movement

– that Perdices, even if he was seemingly the *puppet* mayor of Dumaguete, was still *clandestinely in contact with the guerrillas*. One of the few guerrilla members that he was constantly, if surreptitiously, in touch with was Lt. Juan Dominado, the intelligence officer of the 75th Infantry Regiment.

Eventually, Perdices' intent or loyalty was tested when Juan Dominado was asked by Prof. Henry Roy Bell, a faculty of Silliman University, who became one of the leading, respected figures of the guerrilla forces in Malabo, to rescue Lt. Louis Vail – a U.S. Army Signal Corps officer. Prof. Bell specifically needed Lt. Vail to fix and operate his radio in Malabo, which was crucial to get and transmit information. Lt. Vail was previously wounded and was treated at the Mission Hospital; he had just recently been married to Rosa, and Lt. Dominado reported to Prof. Bell that it would be difficult to convince Lt. Vail to help him (Prof. Bell) as he "may not want to take a break so soon that would risk their lives"[14] But Prof. Bell was adamant – he really needed Lt. Vail in Malabo. He then replied to Dominado, stating that: "If you think it would be all right to ask him, I will be satisfied with his answer – whatever it is. He was a student of mine, as you may know, and is a friend. I can provide a cottage for Louis and his new wife. He will understand my need for him. You could suggest to him offhandedly that as a prisoner his good life is not necessarily going to last long."[15]

However, things got complicated for Lt. Vail, and this was when he had a check-up at the Mission Hospital, during which he talked to a close friend from Silliman University. His name was Teodorico Lajato; he was admitted at the Mission Hospital "for a deep cut on his right forearm."[16] In their conversation, Lt. Vail voiced out his negative sentiments, if not frustrations, against the Japanese. Little did Lt. Vail know that Teodorico Lajato was the head of the *Public Opinion Office* and was a notable spy or informer (usually identifying guerrillas) for the Japanese.[17] It was only when another patient, named Angelo, overheard their conversation and quickly informed Lt. Vail that Lajato was a Japanese informer and that his wounds resulted from an ambush by Vic Jornales and his guerrilla unit that Lt. Vail started to be anxious about their future in Dumaguete. Lt. Vail did not know that his friend actively collaborated with the Japanese forces. Now his life – including his wife's life – was in danger. Thus, when Dominado spoke to Lt. Vail about the offer of Prof. Bell, he then quickly accepted it as he did not feel safe anymore in Dumaguete after his conversation with his old friend, Lajato.

Lt. Vail and his wife would eventually arrive at Malabo and meet with Prof. Bell; however, they were not accompanied by Lt. Dominado to Malabo since he had to return quickly to Dumaguete due to an emergency: his wife was missing, and the Japanese were looking for him. In his diary, Lt. Dominado recalled:

> "At about 2:00 o'clock that following morning, we were all aroused by the arrival of the boy I left with my wife. He

> was gasping for breath and could hardly utter a word. When he got his wind back, he reported that late the previous afternoon, about four hours after we left, Furisima, with some soldiers, entered our house and questioned my wife about my whereabouts… He said that all my wife could do was cry and cower in fear and that they ransacked all the rooms. My first concern was my wife, and when I asked him where [she] was, he said that she ran out and did not know where she went and that he himself ran to catch up with me."[18]

Before Lt. Dominado could arrive in Dumaguete, he encountered Vic Jornales and his men. During their conversation, Jornales proudly told Dominado that he was able to raid the house of Dumaguete's Chief of Police, Severino Pastor, last night and was able to confiscate the revolver of Chief Pastor.[19] After hearing Jornales' story, Dominado then figured out something that would exculpate him from his dilemma: he was going to need the revolver of Chief Pastor so that he can gain – or undergird – the trust of the Japanese and so that the Japanese would not doubt him as someone who is working with or for the guerrilla movement. Jornales did not have qualms with the idea and gladly gave the revolver to Dominado.

When Dominado finally arrived in Dumaguete, he first tried to look for his wife, Maria, but she was nowhere to be found. He then had already thought of the worst-case scenario, which was the notion that the Japanese had taken custody of his wife because of his role in the escape of Lt. Vail. Desperate for help, he then went to the house of Governor Guillermo Villanueva, but Villanueva did not want to help and told Dominado that he had nothing to do with him and that his case "is now handled purely by the Japanese."[20]

Since the Governor did not help him, he had no choice but to go directly to the Japanese. It took much courage to do this – his gumption, however, paid off. When he met Captain Tsuda, he then immediately presented the revolver of Chief Pastor and said: "I wasn't able to stop a raid on Chief Pastor's home last night, but afterward I retrieved the Chief's revolver that the young rascals had taken. I hope to persuade one of them to settle back in town in a few days."[21] This undoubtedly impressed Captain Tsuda, but the Captain could not answer Juan when asked about his wife's whereabouts and why the Japanese ransacked Dominado's house. Instead, he merely just congratulated Dominado and rewarded him.

Nevertheless, when Dominado left the Japanese headquarters, he, later on, found out from a friend that his wife, Maria, was safe and that, his friend explained: "she was saved by Mayor Mariano Perdices, who by great luck, had just returned from Manila – where with characteristic aplomb he attended a conference of Philippine puppet mayors. Perdices was back in time to learn of Tsuda's plan and got Maria out

in time. She is now waiting for you at your Uncle Ramos' home."[22] Mayor Perdices then hid Dominado's wife from the Japanese after knowing that her life was in danger due to Dominado's involvement in the escape of Lt. Louis Vail and his wife from Dumaguete.[23] This action by Perdices, which happened around the third week of September 1942, solidified the guerrilla's trust in him. However, the guerrillas' trust in Perdices was further undergirded when Perdices started to send medicines for Dominado to give to his compatriots in the hinterlands. Perdices was treading on thin ice; one can only imagine the potential consequences of his actions if the Japanese found out that he was working with the guerrillas.

Suffice it to say, Mayor Perdices played an essential role as wartime mayor of Dumaguete and was perceived by the guerrillas as one of them – a political collaborator who played the double-game, who risked his life to help the guerrillas and concomitantly the Americans, when he became the buffer or the middle-man between Lorenzo Cimafranca (a guerrilla runner) and Engr. E.J. Blanco led to the creation of a blueprint of Dumaguete airport. This was used for the bombing campaign of the mentioned airport in September 1944, which led to the destruction of Japanese aircraft and supplies. By and large, Perdices' role was recognized by both the guerrillas and the local populace of Dumaguete. As a result, he, later on, became a successful politician in Negros Oriental.

## Case of Governor Guillermo Villanueva

The case of Governor Guillermo Villanueva (Governor of Negros Oriental) was different from Mayor Perdices, as the former was abhorred by the guerrillas and was perceived as a traitor for actively collaborating with the Japanese forces.

However, it must be noted that Governor Villanueva's role in the occupied area was verily limited. He did not have the power and influence he had before the war. In fact, some accounts would state that he merely accompanied the Japanese in the different towns of Negros Oriental to help convince hitherto elected municipal officials to return to town. Through this, he played an essential role in convincing the municipal officials to side with the Japanese imperial forces. He convinced the mayors of Bacong, Dauin, Zamboanguita, Siaton, and Tolong to return to the occupied areas and continue to serve as puppet mayors of the Japanese imperial forces. As a result, the guerrillas then considered him as an enemy.

Other acts of Villanueva which made him unpopular among the guerrillas were him being a representative of the KALIBAPI (Kapisanan sa Paglilingkod sa Bagong Pilipinas) assembly; his role in the food confiscation incident in Tanjay; and his notice to those who had evacuated to the hinterlands in fear of the purported "conscription."

As a result of his active collaboration, he almost fell victim to guerrilla reprisals as he was ambushed on October 22,

1942, by Corporal Rodolfo Maypa and Pfc Ramon Custodio. Maypa and Custodio fired at the car of the Governor and wounded him; the wound was not fatal and was treated easily by Dr. Ponce de Leon in the Mission Hospital.[24] Nevertheless, he was lucky to survive since many fell victim to these guerrilla reprisals in October. For safety reasons, Governor Villanueva decided to leave Dumaguete and seek a haven in Opon, Cebu, on November 1. However, he only stayed temporarily in Opon while waiting for the violent reprisals to die down.[25]

Two years after, in June, 1944, Villanueva wrote a missive to Colonel Abcede, head of the resistance movement in Negros Oriental, asking him to surrender and return to the occupied area. Abcede's riposte was clear, however. He told the Governor that "my men and I are certainly going down soon but not to surrender… God willing, all true Filipinos are going down, not to shake the hands with the Japanese, but to drive them from our shores."[26] The reply of Abcede clearly showed where his – and, in general, the guerrilla movement's – loyalty was: they were freedom fighters who were loyal to America and were eagerly waiting for MacArthur's inexorable return.

Suffice it to say, the Governor was in too deep. R.B. Silliman described him as a "much-tormented official under Japanese orders."[27] He had to choose between risking his life (like Perdices did) or trying to save his life and the lives of his family members by collaborating with the Japanese. Unfortunately, he lost the guerrilla's respect because he chose the latter. He died retreating from American forces in the hinterlands of Zamboanguita. It has been said that he was killed by the retreating Japanese forces a few days before the latter surrendered. Until now, his remains have not yet been found.

## Case of Jose "Pepe" Martinez

One prominent collaborator who unnecessarily fell victim to guerrilla reprisal was former Dumaguete mayor and provincial board member Jose "Pepe" Martinez. He was active in the pacification campaign – convincing Americans, guerrillas, and other locals – to come down from the mountains to the occupied areas. The guerrillas perceived him as an active collaborator – a traitor, if you will – because of his role in these pacification campaigns. Jose Romero, however, did not see him the same way the guerrillas did; in fact, he described Martinez as a man "known for his great courage."[28] More often than not, he would go up to the mountains unarmed, with only a guide; he did not have any reservations in doing so, nor did he fear for his life. He participated in the pacification campaign because he believed he was helping the people through his collaboration with the Japanese.[29]

As previously mentioned, Pepe Martinez took the place of Jose Romero in convincing the Bryant Family from Pamplona to return to Dumaguete. During this time, he was already detested by the guerrillas and was notorious for aiding the Japanese in the arrest of Mr. Pio Caballero, the manager of the

Philippine National Bank (Dumaguete Branch). The Japanese later on executed Caballero as he refused to cooperate with them. The Bryants knew about this and were quite apprehensive to know that Pepe Martinez was heading to their plantation. They already knew his mission, so when he arrived, all they did was ask him questions about the Japanese. In reply, Martinez told them that he could not ascertain that they would be treated well, as the Japanese were "very strict" and "very stern" – even his own brother, Celerino Martinez, fell victim to Japanese brutality.[30] He then told the Bryant family that he was in "a very uncomfortable position." "The Filipinos consider me a traitor," Martinez candidly admitted, "I suppose the Americans think I am against them. And the Japanese don't trust me."[31] The statement of Pepe Martinez to the Bryants shows the conundrum that collaborators experienced during the Japanese Occupation. It showed how they were oft-times misunderstood by their fellow Filipinos and distrusted by both the Americans and the Japanese.

Unfortunately for Martinez, he became one of the targets of the guerrilla reprisals. The guerrillas wanted to arrest him and bring him to Malabo. Hence, they figured out a plan to entrap him in Luzurriaga (now Valencia) through the cooperation of Mayor Jose Villamil (Mayor of Luzuriaga). As the story goes, Villamil wrote a letter to Martinez telling the latter that "some guerrillas were willing to surrender and that he should come to Valencia and converse with them" on November 1, 1942.[32] Without hesitation, Martinez – with a few bodyguards – then went on to meet Villamil in Luzuriaga; after the meeting, they decided to go to the residence of Judge Pablo Teves (who was Martinez's uncle and Villamil's father-in-law). When Judge Teves saw Martinez, he advised him to leave the town right away as he was the target of the guerrillas and that his life was in danger. Furthermore, Teves also told him that the pacification campaign was "impossible and hopeless," stating that most of the Americans and guerrillas in the hinterlands did not consider surrender as an option.[33] A few moments later, a scuffle ensued, which led to the death of one of Martinez's bodyguards; after that, Martinez was then arrested by the guerrillas led by Lieutenant Ben Viloria and Lt. Augusto Mendaros.

The mission of the guerrillas was to bring Martinez to Malabo. Lt. Juan Dominado was to take charge in bringing him there. However, Martinez was never brought alive to Malabo, as he was killed at dawn on November 3, 1942. They have already headed for Malabo, but for some unknown reason, the guerrillas summarily executed him along the way in Apolong.[34] Dr. Jose Garcia, in an interview with Professor Caridad Rodriguez, retold the story of his final encounter with Martinez stating that:

> "My companions and I were looking for a hut to rest and have a place to sleep above Camp-Look-Out. It was about almost 6:00 o'clock in the afternoon when we were going up this hill, and on our

> way, we met Pepe Martinez, accompanied by around ten guerrilla soldiers going down the hill. We recognized each other, and we just smiled at each other. He did not talk to me. I think he was confident that nothing would happen to him. In just a short while, we found a small nipa hut in the middle of an abaca plantation, and we thought it was a good place to rest for the night. Just as we sat down on the floor we heard several shots from below the hill and found out later that Pepe Martinez was shot."[35]

The people of Luzuriaga bore the brunt of Martinez's arrest and execution – there were deleterious ramifications that followed. After knowing about what happened to Martinez, the Japanese forces sought retribution, and the next day, went to Luzuriaga. However, before they could arrive, the guerrillas had already informed the people to evacuate to the hills as they were able to receive information from the underground movement that the Japanese were planning a vicious retaliatory attack. Thus, a cavalcade of townspeople tirelessly walked to the hills to escape from the Japanese forces. Unfortunately, there were still some "stragglers" who remained in town; they were later on arrested by the Japanese and, as one eyewitness recalled, "…tied to house posts, and mercilessly burned alive."[36] The Japanese also burned almost all the buildings and houses in the town. Only three buildings were spared – the Elementary School, the Market, and the Roman Catholic Church.[37]

The people of Luzuriaga suffered tremendously simply because of the murder of Jose Martinez. In hindsight, Jose Romero described the untimely death of Martinez as "one of the drawbacks of the resistance movement."[38] Whether it was indeed a drawback or not, it is not surprising to know that the guerrillas were targeting collaborators. At that time, when emotions ran high and when things seemed black and white, one could not blame the guerrillas for doing what they did.

## Guerrilla Reprisals against Minor Collaborators in Negros Oriental

Many other violent reprisals took place before and after Martinez's execution. Santiago Lopez, the Chief of the Bolo Battalion, killed a certain Ompoy Flores – branded as the "Lajato of Zamboanguita," perhaps being a spy or informer of the Japanese – on October 24, 1942, in Zamboanguita. On October 28, Governor Villanueva ordered a policeman named Cabaron to deliver a letter to a wife of a Japanese named Shoshoki in Siquijor. Upon landing Siquijor, Cabaron was immediately shot by the guerrillas. After that, two other men from Dumaguete were sent to Siquijor to investigate the whereabouts of Cabaron; both of them were also killed.[39] On October 30, another suspected collaborator, Miguel Patero from Ajong, Sibulan, was killed by Vic Jornales and his men.[40]

In Amlan, Primo Benjamin proudly

admitted to the Lt. Pedro Bandoquillo, Captain Leon Flores, and the other members of the Amlan guerrilla unit, that he was a spy of the Japanese after being confronted by them. The case of Benjamin was interesting because he was a friend of Bandoquillo and Flores; both were in a dilemma as to what they were going to do with him after his surprising admission – perhaps not knowing the implications – of being a spy. After much consternation, the Amlan guerrilla unit then made the difficult decision to order the execution of Benjamin for being a Japanese spy.[41]

Teodorico Lajato (head of the Public Opinion Office) was also ambushed by the guerrillas led by Lt. Federico Ridad on the evening of August 29, 1942. As the story goes, Lajato was heading back to Dumaguete from Siaton when Ridad and his men opened fire at his car somewhere near Dauin. Lajato was hit in the forearm, while his driver – Gerardo Diago – was badly hurt in the leg. Nevertheless, both of them could escape – spending the night in the convent of Dauin.[42] They were subsequently treated at the Mission Hospital the next day.[43] The day after Lajato's ambush, Japanese forces then went to Siaton to fetch his family, who was left behind, and get some of his furniture as he did not intend to go back to Siaton. Indeed, the guerrillas were relentless in their blacklist mission against purported collaborators. They even killed the puppet Mayor of Bacong, Tomas Merced.[44]

However, these guerrilla reprisals stopped when Mayor Perdices advised Juan Dominado to discontinue the said blacklist mission, as it was not the right way of attaining justice. Whether it was the right way of attaining justice or not, many collaborators have already fallen victim to these violent reprisals – i.e., executions or assassinations without trial. These attacks caused fear among the collaborators in the occupied areas, but they continued to stand ground and perform their limited roles.

Even when the war was almost over, the guerrillas still looked at the collaborators and those living in the occupied areas with contempt. In his letter to the officers and men of the 7th Military District dated November 12, 1944, Lt. Colonel Abcede asked his men to "scorn and treat with contempt, all Filipinos who have worked for the enemy as "puppets", collaborators, informers, and fifth columnists; all Filipinos who in one way or another have aided or made it easy for the enemy to continue to stay in our country, but could not be prosecuted on account of the devious legalities; and all Filipinos who stayed in the enemy-occupied areas… their only aim being to join the winner after the struggle."[45] Abcede also described the collaborators and the people living in the occupied areas as opportunists by siding with the enemies or doing nothing, while he characterized the guerrillas as patriotic Filipinos.

The view of Abcede is shared among the guerrillas – as they would always think that they were of service to the country by fighting the Japanese, while the collaborators were doing a disservice by working with the Japanese. Be that as it may, looking back at the actions of the guerrillas towards the

collaborators in Negros Oriental, one can infer that both sides indeed had a bitter rivalry; unfortunately, their case was a case of Filipinos fighting against fellow Filipinos due to differing foreign loyalties – the guerrillas being extremely loyal to the Americans, while the collaborators – although not all, as most were passive collaborators – being too involved with the Japanese. Oft-times, guerrilla retaliation was swift and violent. That being said, James A. Villanueva was then able to appropriately conclude that "the summary justice and sometimes brutal methods of the guerrillas in eliminating informers and others assisting the Japanese is a dark chapter in the history of the Philippines."[46]

## Conclusion

By and large, there are two types of reactions by the guerrillas to the collaboration issue in Negros Oriental: one that is supportive (towards Perdices and other passive collaborators) and one that is violent (toward Governor Guillermo Villanueva, Jose Martinez, and other active minor collaborators). Admittedly, some of those whom the guerrillas killed did not necessarily deserve it, but the emotions ran high during those times, and they fell victim to the polarizing tendency of being either pro-American or pro-Japanese. However, it must be noted that this should not have been the case, as the issue of collaboration and resistance is not, and should not be, typified as *black* and *white*. Be that as it may, the violence waned after Mayor Perdices asked Major Juan Dominado to refrain from killing purported collaborators as this was not the right way to attain justice.

In conclusion, most of the collaborators were perceived negatively by the guerrillas due, in most part, to the latter's extreme loyalty to the Americans. They viewed most of the collaborators as traitors to the Americans who have helped the Filipino people immensely. To the guerrilla's eyes, their collaboration was a testament to their pro-Japanese proclivities. Inevitably, most of these political collaborators – especially at the national level – were given amnesty by President Manuel Roxas and the issue of collaboration gradually died down.

### Endnotes

1. Claro M. Recto, *Three Years of Enemy Occupation: The Issue of Political Collaboration in the Philippines* (Manila: People's Publishers, 1946), 9.
2. Augusto de Viana, *Kulaboretor! The Issue of Political Collaboration during World War II* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2016)
3. David J. Steinberg, *Philippine Collaboration in World War II* (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1967).
4. Satoshi Ara, "Collaboration and Resistance: Catalino Hermosilla and the Japanese Occupation of Ormoc, Leyte (1942-1945)," *Philippine Studies*, 60 (2012): 46-47.
5. Emil B. Justimbaste, *Heroes, Brigands, Spies: The Untold Story*

*of Leyte Guerrillas during the Japanese Occupation,* 1942-1945 (Ormoc: Emil B. Justimbaste, 2016).

6. Ruth A. Wallace & Alison Wolf, *Contemporary Sociological Theory: Continuing the Classical Tradition* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1991), 29.
7. Konrad Lawson, "Wartime Atrocities and the Politics of Treason in the Ruins of Japanese Empire 1937-1953" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2012), 179.
8. Ibid., 185.
9. G.R. No. L-943, The People of the Philippines vs Domingo Capacete. May 26, 1949.
10. G.R. No. L-944, The People of the Philippines vs Fausto Avila (alias Faustino M. Avila), May 26, 1949.
11. Maria Felisa Syjuco-Tan, *Philippine History Volume 1: War and Reconstruction 1941-1947* (Quezon City: Pantas Publishing & Printing Inc., 2015), 94.
12. See Enemy Collaborators, A Report by Major Juan Dominado. Enemy Collaborators, A Report by Major Juan Dominado, in FN 69 of the Robert B. Silliman World War II Papers.
13. Arthur L. Carson, *Silliman University: 1901-1959* (Taiwan: United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, 1965), 134.
14. Scott A. Mills. *Stranded in the Philippines: Professor Bell's Private War against the Japanese* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2009), 54.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 55.
17. See Enemy Collaborators, A Report by Major Juan Dominado, in FN 69 of the Robert B. Silliman World War II Papers.
18. Earl Jude Paul Cleope, *Silliman War Diaries* (unpublished), 27.
19. Mills, *Stranded in the Philippines*, 56; R.B. Silliman stated that Jornales had been eyeing on getting the gun of Chief Pastor, See Robert B. Silliman, *Pocket of Resistance: Guerrilla Warfare in Negros Island, the Philippines* (Manila: Philippine Editions, 1980), 99.
20. Cleope, *Silliman War Diaries*, 27.
21. Mills, *Stranded in the Philippines*, 57.
22. Ibid.
23. This is corroborated by R.B. Silliman's account on the said incident, stating that Perdices hid Maria "in the close of another house which belonged to her relatives." Silliman, *Pocket of Resistance*, 102.
24. Cleope, *Silliman War Diaries,* 96.
25. Ibid., 99.
26. Silliman, *Pocket of Resistance,* 64-66.
27. Ibid., 63.
28. Jose E. Romero, *Not So Long Ago: A Chronicle of My Life, Times, and Contemporaries* (Manila: Alemar-Phoneix Publishing House, Inc., 1979), 162.
29. Cleope, *Silliman War Diaries*, 15.
30. Alice Franklin Bryant, *The Sun Was Darkened* (Boston: Chapman & Grimes, Inc., 1947), 87; The slapping of Celerino Martinez was corroborated in the account of Jose Romero about Pepe Martinez. See Romero, *Not So Long Ago*,

174-175.
31. Bryant, *The Sun was Darkened*, 88.
32. Ibid.
33. Veronico Somera, *Brown American: Philippine Life, World War II and Survival in a White Man's World* (United States of America: CreateSpace, 2014), 47.
34. Cleope, *Silliman War Diaries*, 99.
35. Caridad Aldecoa Rodriguez, *Negros Oriental: From American Rule to the Present, A History Volume II The War Years* (Cebu City: Jose Clavano Incorporated, 1989), 121.
36. Somera, *Brown American*, 48; It is possible that Somera was referring to three natives of Barrio Bong-ao, namely: Castro Panday, Irineo Baybay, and Modesto Albina. As recorded, the three were tied to a post of a house and then the house was burned down by the Japanese. This was on 2 November 1942 – one day after Jose Martinez was executed by the guerrillas. See *History and Cultural Life of the Barrio Bong-ao* from the Historical Data Papers of Valencia.
37. The Elementary School was later on used as garrison headquarters for the occupying Japanese forces in Luzuriaga. Somera, *Brown American,* 48-49.
38. Romero, however, saw it as "inevitable in view of the emergency and the confusion of the times." Romero, *Not So Long Ago*, 175.
39. Cleope, *Silliman War Diaries*, 96-97.
40. Ibid., 97.
41. For the complete story of Primo Benjamin's execution, See Venancio S. Bandoquillo. "The Formation of the Amlan Guerrilla Unit – A Narrative," in FN 62, Robert B. Silliman World War II Papers.
42. Cleope, *Silliman War Diaries,* 148-149.
43. Rodriguez, *War Years,* 67; Account on the Beginning of Guerrilla Warfare in the Dumaguete Area, in FN 60 of the Robert B. Silliman World War II Papers.
44. Historical Data Papers of Bacong, 93.
45. Lt. Col. Abcede's Message to all Officers and Men of the 7th Military District, November 12 1944, in FN 26 of the Robert B. Silliman World War II Papers.
46. James Alexander Villanueva, "Awaiting the Allies' Return: The Guerrilla Resistance Against the Japanese in the Philippines during World War II'" (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2019), 204.

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