

Written by Harvey S. Keh
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By Harvey S. Keh
Lead Convenor, Team RP

Many doubted but much more believed that the spirit of the First EDSA People Power Revolution is still very much alive in the Filipino Youth today. In a show of force and in response to former President Cory Aquino's call for the youth to get involved, almost a thousand young Filipinos from all walks of life braved the rains to join Team RP's Concert for Truth, Accountability and Reform held on Feb. 25, 2008, at the Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City.

In a show of force youth leaders from different schools such as Ateneo, UP, DLSU, UST, Miriam and PUP joined Team RP's call for Truth, Accountability and Reform. Bankers, doctors, lawyers, journalists, businessmen, teachers, NGO Workers and other young professionals also took time out to join the concert which started with a Forum on Truth, Accountability and Reform. The forum started with ZTE-NBN Whistleblower Joey De Venecia sharing with the audience his take on how this flawed and corruption-laden deal was entered into by our government. After De Venecia, a representative from the Union of Catholic Student Councils of the Philippines (UCSC) spoke about the need for young Filipinos to get involved and remain vigilant especially in these troubling times. To cap the forum, the Sumilao farmers talked about their long wait for their land despite a promise made by President Arroyo that she will award them their land early this year.

After the forum and at exactly 6pm, Team RP led a noise barrage along Katipunan Avenue which was participated in by thousands of vehicles that passed by during that time. The regular noise barrage is organized by the BUSINA movement, which Team RP is part of. BUSINA stands for Buong Bayan Sinisigaw Tama Na, Itama Na! BUSINA is a growing movement pushing for Truth, Accountability and Reform which counts the Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan (SLB), PAKISAMA and CODE-NGO among its members.

As soon as the noise barrage ended, the concert began with the very energetic hosts Erick Habijan and Jiggig Bautista introducing Team RP to the audience. Performers in the concert included Empty Siren Boulevard, Formula Juan, the CGE Band and Smoke My Cuban. In the middle of the concert, Noel Cabangon led the candle-lighting ceremony while also leading the crowd in singing, Bayan Ko. Testimonials of support were also given to Team RP and the Filipino Youth by noted Akbayan leaders Etta Rosales and Rep. Rissa Hontiveros-Baraquel, and Soc Banzuela of PAKISAMA, an organization that represents the farmers and peasants sector. Other notable personalities who joined the concert included Bishop Deogracias Yniguez

and Ang Ladlad Founder Danton Remoto. To cap the night, Noel Cabangon sang songs which made everyone in the audience feel once more the spirit of EDSA People Power I as he encouraged every Filipino to continue to remain vigilant and proactively push for genuine and lasting reforms in our country.

Aside from just enjoying beautiful music, Team RP also used the concert as an opportunity to invite young Filipinos to volunteer for upcoming activities that will continue to work towards achieving its goals of promoting Truth, Accountability and Reform in our government. Among the initial action areas that Team RP is planning to do are as follows:

For TRUTH

- To continue to push for the Senate investigations on the highly-controversial ZTE-NBN Deal to continue and finish.
- To push for the repealing of Executive Order 464 which prevents Cabinet members from testifying at the Senate without the permission of the President.

For ACCOUNTABILITY

- To ensure that proper charges are filed against people whether inside or outside the government who have been part of the rampant graft and corruption which is happening in our government.
- To lobby for the formation of an independent council that will investigate scams, scandals and controversies which involve the President and the First Family.

For REFORM

- *- *To push for a more transparent Government Procurement system to ensure that we will no longer have controversial and flawed deals such as the ZTE-NBN Broadband Deal.
- To push for electoral reforms such as the automation of elections, appointment of highly-qualified, ethical and clean COMELEC Commissioners and a stricter implementation on the regulation of election spending.
- To push for the awarding of the land to the Sumilao Farmers and the extension of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP)

Team RP is composed of youth leaders and young professionals who believe in reform not rhetoric. It was formed as a response to an email I sent two weeks ago which asked, Where are the Filipino Youth?, the concert last night showed us that indeed there are still many young Filipinos who want to make a difference in our society and who will no longer stand idly while our government continues to wreck our democratic institutions. Last night, many more young Filipinos joined Team RP and now, we also invite you to join us in making a stand for our country and our Future as we continue to work hard for a better Philippines. *If you want to join Team RP, please send your complete name and contact information to Steph Cuevas **at 0926-6255620 or email us at team.rp.official@gmail.com

* Team RP would also like to give special thanks to Dr. Tony La Viña and the Ateneo School of

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Government, and the Administration of the Ateneo de Manila University for all the support that it has given us.

To all those who went and took part in Team RP's Concert for Truth, Accountability and Reform, thank you very much and we look forward to having you again in our future activities! Mabuhay ang Pilipinas! Mabuhay and Kabataang Pilipino! # # #

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