

A Certainty of Possibilities

THE AQUINO ERA, STILL A YEAR FROM FINISHING ITS term, is popularly considered to be as good as over. Never did an era breathe life to so many dreams only to kill them one by one in the end. All who witnessed its glorious birth would stand speechless at its burial, the weight of missed opportunities of historic proportions tugging at everyone's heart.

Yet in another horizon, a different era ends. An era of an activism of unquestioned certainties, both on the means and ends of the struggle for social change. A political and intellectual attitude that frisked an increasingly complex society for old and familiar patterns and found only a few narrow routes toward its already preconceived future. An era made tragic not by the fast and profound local and international changes but by a blind confidence to the truths of its generation that impaired its ability to genuinely appreciate and adapt to the shifting landscape.

For an era ends only when its future has died. Not when the last of its old guards join the side of the dinosaurs at the back of history but when it has lost the internal dynamism to continually generate a workable alternative and capture the popular imagination.

Two eras essentially opposite, by a twist of irony, find themselves meeting the same essential lesson: adapt or perish. Two present eras that have been pulled to the past, as people look elsewhere for the future.

But for the progressives, the death of the old era of certainties has given birth to a new era of possibilities. Unlocked from the dogmas of yesterday, the door opens wide for bolder and more creative approaches that extend beyond questions of strategies to include the very vision of the alternative society.

Indeed, the crumbling down of sacred vantage points from which society is viewed has resulted in a hail of confusions. Yet confusions impel on all the challenge for self-reflection and renewal. They force us to redefine our meanings and redirect our purposes on a reality that is changed only by those who are capable of understanding it. In this sense, we pay our last respects to the old with clenched fists and welcome the new one with our fingers crossed.