

Distorted History, Distorted Democracy: A Case of an Historico-Economic Sabotage of the Philippines' National Politics

Menelito P. Mansueto, M.A.
Mindanao State University – Iligan Institute of Technology
Email: menelito.mansueto@g.msuiit.edu.ph

Abstract

This essay attempts to provide a critical historiography by giving a flashback and discussing historical narratives often forgotten in Philippine history and national politics, showcasing the critical points and significant events that had escalated further into the next sequence of events and have continually affected Philippine politics up to this very day. I am going to bring the readers' memory back to the Plaza Miranda twin grenade blasts of 1971 which wounded more than a hundred, including nine (9) casualties, out of the four thousand estimated crowd in attendance. Among those severely injured were prominent personalities, including then-incumbent senators Jovito Salonga, Sergio Osmena Jr., Eva Estrada Kalaw, and Sonny Osmena during a kick-off rally or *miting de avance* of eight (8) Liberal Party (LP) senatorial bets for midterm elections in 1971. The blasts were initially blamed on Ferdinand E. Marcos, Sr., then incumbent president of the Republic of the Philippines and standard bearer of the Nacionalista Party, who was known as a staunch rival of Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, Jr., the star candidate of the Liberal Party and a presidential aspirant. In what follows, I shall carefully lay down the timeline of events, and present the existing narratives and discourses relative to the emerging personalities involved in this gruesome event in Philippine politics in 1971, which is more than 50 years ago. I will attempt to bridge this political occurrence of the 1970s to the political upheavals of the Duterte (FPRRD) and Marcos, Jr. presidencies, and

dare to provide an honest-to-goodness insight into the nature of democracy as shown in the unpopular version of Philippine history.

Keywords: Philippine political history, Plaza Miranda bombing, Martial Law, Ninoy Aquino, Critical Historicism

Introduction

At the height of the Duterte presidency in 2016, especially upon FPRRD's approval of the heroic burial of Ferdinand Marcos Sr. at the prestigious 'Libingan ng mga Bayani' (Heroes' Cemetery), there emerged a revival of the anti-Marcos narratives or slogans, such as "Marcos Magnanakaw" or "Mandarambong" (Marcos a Thief). This resurgence also resulted in a condescending attitude of anti-Marcos advocates who also claimed moral ascendancy over Duterte-Marcos supporters. This seemed to be a dominant narrative over the neglected ones – the untold or forgotten stories of those equally questionable politicians, many are in fact under LP. To be recalled was an instance inside UP Diliman Campus wherein someone wearing a Marcos-printed shirt and baller was publicly harassed.¹ The problem is that anti-Marcos advocates think that their version of Philippine history is flawless, and not suspect of any doubt. They tend to look at the EDSA Revolution of 1986 as flawlessly heroic, and devoid of any controversies.

This essay attempts to engage in critical historiography, it is an attempt to capsulize almost a century of Philippine History from the 1930s down to the recent administrations of President Rodrigo Duterte, and Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. Historiography as used in this study involves analytic and interpretive research using statistical analysis, content analysis, archival research, and secondary sources. My approach to making sense of Philippine History is analytic – this means that I do not look at History as something static or fixed. History is always subject to analysis, interpretation, and speculations, rather than simply accepting a ready-made static or fixed, one-sided,

¹ See Gerald Asuncion, "'Martial Law Victim' Blocks, Scold BBM Supporter Jogging at UP Campus," *newspapers.ph* April 9, 2022 <https://newspapers.ph/2022/04/martial-law-victim-blocks-scold-bbm-supporter-jogging-at-up-campus/>

and conclusive version. Also, it does not look at History as objective – To look at history as objective is to take it as if it is like a physical structure, a place, or a location wherein we can always physically visit anytime to examine, scrutinize, or investigate. Take note that even places can vanish at any moment, through catastrophes and natural destruction through the years, how much more with history which is only an idea to be captured by the collective human memory or imagination, narratives and discourses of history could change anytime the moment that a new angle, new information or revelation could surface or come into view.² And that even at the time that a historical event is unfolding or happening, it could be that the actors involved may have no clue at all about what is happening on the ground. History in a sense is also dynamic and subjective to the interpreter’s background and specific disposition, arguably, to perspectivism. The simultaneous occurrence and the chain of events could have deterred an actor or agent from doing an appropriate conduct, action, or response.³ History cannot be just one correct single narrative.⁴ To have it fixed and final would necessarily forfeit the

² The use of the term “narrative,” instead of “facts,” is thereby preferred following the influence of Paul Ricoeur’s three-volume work, *Time and Narrative*, wherein he employed a phenomenological-hermeneutic approach to understanding history or human historicity through the collective memory or human consciousness. A more extensive discussion supporting Ricoeur’s view of ‘history as narrative’ will be incorporated below much later in this paper. See Paul Ricoeur, “Narrated Time” in *Philosophy Today*, 29 (4), 1985, 259-272. See also Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. By K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer, Vol. III (USA: The University of Chicago Press, 1985).

³ An instance to be taken as an example of this scenario or assertion (though a bit unrelated to the main topic here) is when Senator Francis Escudero was asked with malicious intent by a media reporter about his endorsement in a political ad for 2016 presidential aspirant Jejomar Binay who was later accused of corrupt practices. Senator Escudero responds that he did not know any of these allegations beforehand at the time of his endorsement of the latter in the 2010 VP race. Some things or issues could only come into full view after an action was done. See Jee Y. Geronimo, “Escudero: It’s not logical to support VP Binay again,” in *Rappler*, December 1, 2015. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/elections/114493-escudero-not-logical-support-president-binay/>

⁴ Disregarding these already-neglected ‘narratives’ of history could also be tantamount to a ‘testimonial injustice’ as theorized by Miranda Fricker. The absence of such narratives could also imply a ‘hermeneutical injustice’ that possibly leads to a biased and one-sided account or interpretation of Philippine history. See Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1-23. For an extensive discussion of ‘epistemic injustice’ in

essence of democracy and could hinder any further analysis to develop. Sometimes the jigsaw puzzle can only be completed when the missing pieces are found. Also, contrary opinions are inherent in a democratic system. It would even seem fascistic if everyone would follow and agree on just one single version of the same truth. That would be equally horrifying! The existence of opposing views is part of and contributes to the whole discourse in the pursuit of the whole truth.

I have no intention to glorify the Marcos, Sr. administration, I am simply using him as a point of comparison to the succeeding presidents after him, particularly, Ramos and the two (2) Aquino presidents. This is in no way to be taken that my stance is of being an apologist to the Marcoses, as they are equally a rich and powerful political clan, a dynasty for that matter, they do not need me—an ordinary academic researcher, for the purification of their souls. I also made sure that this essay should be published only after the 2022 presidential elections wherein Marcos, Jr. is a leading presidential candidate, and that the Filipino people subsequently elected him without a touch of influence whatsoever from this journal article. I also share a bunch of criticisms against the administration of Marcos, Sr. For instance, between the period of 1977 to 1983 in which Joma Sison and Senator Ninoy Aquino had already been captured, Marcos, Sr. could have humbly stepped down from the people's palace by allowing a democratic election immediately. His declaration of a snap election in 1986 was too late, and he had stayed in power for too long even when the threat of insurgencies and rebellion had dwindled. Prolonging his office for the longest duration is no doubt an act of authoritarian leadership, regardless of the impending communist insurgencies' threats. Other potential leaders such as Jovito Salonga or Juan Ponce Enrile could have taken their lead as well. We could not blame our present generation's 'hangover', over-extended remorse, or nostalgic feeling of Martial Law. Understandably, we simply cannot easily let go, because the Marcoses may have their share of abuses of power and usurpation of authority.

I would also argue that this is neither a historical revisionism nor a distortion of history. We are simply here trying to make sense

the Philippines, see Menelito Mansueto, "Miranda Fricker's Epistemic Injustice: An Attempt at Appropriation of Philippine Social Realities," *Social Ethics Society Journal of Applied Philosophy*, Special Issue, October 2022, 55-88.

again of the unfolding events in the past in a new light, to give a new meaning to the non-dominant narratives already put aside. How can we be charged with historical revisionism if Philippine history has already been distorted in the first place? At times, historical revisionism is simply an accusation hurled by people who want us to subscribe to their simplistic version or their favorable interpretation of Philippine History. But often, there is a need to supplant the ellipses to make sense of the brutal lies, the need to connect dots with perpendicular lines, if I am to speak figuratively. That is something I would like to refer to as “critical historicism.”⁵ According to Benedetto Croce, all history is essentially about looking at the past through the lens of the present and in the context of current issues. Croce himself was repulsed by the empiricist tradition in the interpretation of history which tends to look at history from an objective point of view.⁶ Hence, the charge of historical revisionism is true in the sense that there is indeed a need to re-examine historical events in the light of new evidence and reinterpretation. This is, in fact, an important aspect of historical scholarship. History needs the right perspective as well as critical, if one is unable to connect historical personalities into a wider network of relations and power, the cold “facts” become futile, they cannot speak for their selves.⁷ Ironically, some prominent historians

⁵ Critical historicism, also referred to as new historicism, is a postmodern approach to the interpretation of social history. This method is observed in many of Michel Foucault’s works in which he incorporated his genealogical analysis and archeological techniques to the archival historiographic tasks, an approach that digs into the underlying relations of power structures in any society. New historicist thinkers do not believe in any fixed interpretative value attached to so-called historical facts. A more extensive discussion on critical historicism will be found in the latter part of this essay, I will integrate a discussion on Edward Hallett Carr’s very important book, “*What is History?*” as well as Lynn Avery Hunt’s “*History: Why It Matters?*”

⁶ Benedetto Croce, *Theory & History of Historiography*, trans. Douglas Ainslie. (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1921), 27-49, 51-62.

⁷ This rendition of Philippine history coincides with what is referred to in Philosophy as the postmodern definition of truth. Truth in postmodernism is interpreted as subjective and relative, it denies the universality of truth. The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche is often regarded as the progenitor of this idea in his notion of truth as ‘perspectivism’. See Romualdo E. Abulad, “What is Postmodernism?” in Romualdo E. Abulad and Alfredo P. Co, *Two Filipino Thomasian Philosophers on Postmodernism*, ed. by Romualdo E. Abulad (Manila: UST Publishing House, 2004), 32-33. See also Romualdo E. Abulad, “The Future of Ethics: A Postmodern View,” in

and Philippine History scholars in the country perhaps took themselves as the absolute authority of historical interpretations, and forbids the public of an alleged “distortion of historical facts.”⁸ However, they somehow need a little philosophy and a critical analysis to make sense of historical “facts.” Some group of historians needs to examine whether they have not become guilty as well of “partisan distortion,” or, in this case, the non-correction or non-integration of relevant topics towards a holistic approach in Philippine history textbooks. Let me cite one instance. While we in the Visayas and Mindanao are forced to learn the Tagalog-based Filipino language or the history of the Tagalog down our throats, there are only a very few accounts, for example, of Mindanawon heroes in the national historical works. How unfair is that? Let me know if you ever happened to come across these names, such as Amai Pakpak, General Vicente Alvarez, Datu Uto and Datu Ali, Capitan Daligdig, Simeon Ledesma, Rufino Deloso, brothers Simeon and Wenceslao Gonzales, Apolinario Pabayo and Apolinar Velez, Vicente Roa, and Nicolas Capistrano.⁹ These names are so strange, huh? Have you ever heard of them in your high school

Abulad and Co, *Two Filipino Thomasian Philosophers on Postmodernism* (Manila: UST Publishing House, 2004), 122-23.

⁸ Jane Bautista, “Partisan historical distortion scored,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, May 23, 2022. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1601175/partisan-historical-distortion-scored?fbclid=IwAR1eU3xG5ee9Bu05SoLYMptsW9hJgAGI7Sy41MWBdg-Pc18t4bf-MLH4Zg#ixzz7U4o0leD3>

⁹ Allow me a brief introduction of these beloved Mindanawon heroes, beginning with Amai Pakpak (Datu Akadir) is a Maranao who fought in Marawi and defended Fort Marawi against the Spanish troops in 1891 (led by General Weyler), and in 1895 (led by General Blanco). General Vicente Alvarez retrieved Zamboanga from the occupation of Spanish troops led by Spanish Generals Montero and de los Rios in 1899. Datu Uto fought against the Spanish authorities as early as 1880 to 1886 in Cotabato. Also, Datu Ali defended Cotabato from American forces by organizing a violent opposition consisting of around 5,000 men. Capitan Daligdig led the Lumads of Oroquieta to a series of attacks and raids against American garrisons. Simeon Ledesma organized an early counterforce against Americans in Misamis Occidental. Rufino Deloso organized the uprising against Americans through a series of assaults in 1900. Simeon Gonzales, together with his brother Wenceslao, led the military command against Spanish forces from 1898 to 1899 in Surigao. Capitan Apolinario Pabayo waged assaults against American troops by directly attacking the barracks of the American forces. Apolinar Velez led the uprising against Americans in Bukidnon. Capitan Vicente Roa fought against Americans in Misamis Oriental. General Nicolas Capistrano led the uprising in Cagayan. See Rufus B. Rodriguez, “The Philippine Revolution in Mindanao,” *Recollectio: annuarium historicum augustinianum*, 2002-2003, No. 25-26, 99-112.

History class? Up until now, the Moros of Mindanao still suffer from the stigma attached to their identities as Moros, from the derogatory connotation of their cultural identification being wrongfully associated to be “raiders” or “pirates,” disregarding their contribution to the resistance against the colonizers who dared occupy Mindanao. If we are really to become a “one nation,” why are the Mindanawon heroes’ stories not relevant to the Tagalog and the whole country, especially since these heroes fought the same common enemies – the colonizers – during the Filipino-Spanish and Filipino-American wars?¹⁰ The absence of a widely read public textbook that tackles their lives and heroism has made these heroes unsung and unknown. Already, one can see that ‘historical truths’ –so-called ‘facts’ are likewise “contested” or to be argued nationally to gain recognition.¹¹ It is argued, however, that the initial motivation of their heroic cause was merely religious oppression and not necessarily about nationalism, but even so, perhaps history will become relevant anew if it becomes truthful to its discourse by including some narratives of these unsung heroes. The lack of exposure to these neglected counter-narratives of history could result in ‘cancel culture,’ the followers of the dominant narratives think of everybody else who disagrees with them as ignorant and instead accuses the rival person of being a purveyor of ‘fake news’. The non-dominant narratives will then face the danger of being excluded from the totality of the national discourses.

The second premise to which this essay would presuppose is the dread of *Illustrado* politics or similar wealthy or opportunist politicians or elitism in the country. It is best expressed by Christopher Ryan Maboloc in one of his articles, and I quote “...Philippine society simply saw the emergence of an elite class of *Illustrado* politicians who would then govern the country for decades. The children of the same people will perpetuate the dynastic order of politics in the country.”¹² And I can say that one of these *Illustrado* politicians, or at least descendants of these very wealthy and landed

¹⁰ Presidential Decree No. 1413, s. 1978, Declaring the Theme “Isang Bansa, Isang Diwa” as the National Motto of the Republic of the Philippines, and incorporating it in the National Seal.

¹¹ Nathan Gilbert Quimpo, “Review: Oligarchic Patrimonialism, Bossism, Electoral Clientelism, and Contested Democracy in the Philippines,” *Comparative Politics* 37, No.2 (January 2005): 242.

¹² Christopher Ryan Maboloc, “The Patchwork State,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, March 15, 2018. <https://opinion.inquirer.net/111742/the-patchwork-state>

political families, is Jose Maria Sison himself. There is no exception to Joma, who is himself a scion of the landed elites of Northern Luzon.¹³ He descended from the same political clan as Bingbong Crisologo and Chavit Singson.¹⁴ Joma Sison is a by-product of education at two Philippine elite Catholic schools: Ateneo de Manila University and Colegio de San Juan de Letran. Then because of his elite background, there is no doubt that he can easily go along with the scion of another rich political family. I am referring to Ninoy Aquino – He began his career as a promising journalist and gained prominence as a war correspondent for Manila Times during the Korean War.¹⁵ Later, he was tasked by Pres. Magsaysay to be his negotiator for the surrender of Huk leader Luis Taruc in 1954.¹⁶ Ninoy had successfully fooled Luis Taruc into surrendering with the promise of benefits, life-long pensions, and financial assistance to the Huk veterans.¹⁷ Taruc was

¹³ Jose Maria “Joma” Sison descended from the highly political clans who were the landowning elites of Ilocos Sur, Pangasinan, and Pampanga, such as, the Serranos, the Sisons, the Crisologos.

¹⁴ Vincent “Bingbong” Pichay Crisologo, 1st District of Quezon City, House Representative, 2004 to 2013, and 2016 to 2019. Luis “Chavit” Crisologo Singson, a wealthy Filipino businessman who served as governor of Ilocos Sur for numerous terms from 1972 to 1986, 1992 to 2001, 2004 to 2007, and 2010 to 2013.

¹⁵ Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino, Jr. helped his father-in-law, the wealthy Jose Cojuangco, Sr., to obtain the Hacienda Luisita. Ninoy was then conferred a Legion of Honor Award with the rank of Commander by then-Defense Minister Cabahug for convincing Taruc to surrender. [One might be tempted to compare the similarity of relations of Pres. Magsaysay and Ninoy to that of Pres. Duterte (PRRD) and Sen. Bong Go. Senator Go is also a descendant of a wealthy family in Mindanao.] Ninoy used his connections to President Magsaysay. Ninoy helped enhance Magsaysay’s public image by being the latter’s presidential emissary and trusted assistant, as well as negotiating a settlement with Huk leader Luis Taruc. Pres. Magsaysay approved the necessary loans to acquire the Hacienda Luisita using government funds. See “Hacienda Luisita Timeline,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, April 25, 2012. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/182081/hacienda-luisita-timeline>

¹⁶ Luis Taruc is a Filipino peasant reformer and revolutionary leader of the Hukbalahap movement against the Japanese invasion in 1942 and subsequently won a seat in the House of Representatives in 1946. He authored two important books, “He Who Rides the Tiger” and “Born of the People” while serving his sentence in prison. The communist insurgents’ leader was, in fact, later given a presidential pardon by Pres. Marcos, Sr. See Luis Taruc, *He Who Rides the Tiger: The Story of an Asian Guerilla Leader* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967).

¹⁷ I will no longer discuss extensively the background of the Huk rebellion as this is quite a long story and this is another case of neglected heroism, for instance, of Luis Taruc and the Hukbalahap. However, the unfortunate fate that Taruc suffered under the Roxas administration is worth looking back at.

betrayed by Ninoy, as Taruc got to serve a sentence of twelve (12) years until given a presidential pardon under the Marcos, Sr. administration.¹⁸

The Case of Luis Taruc and the Lava Brothers: True Freedom Fighters, Real Socialists/Communists¹⁹

The Huks were closely identified with PKP (Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas), the original pro-Soviet communist party in the Philippines, led by the Lava brothers.²⁰ The most notable among the brothers was—Dr. Jesus Lava. Lava and Taruc were part of the Democratic Alliance congressmen who opposed the passing into law of the Bell Trade Act & parity rights, which they thought were pro-American policies, because of their opposition, they were forcibly removed from Congress and arrested by Pres. Manuel Roxas. Soon after, the two congressmen went into hiding back to the underground as rebels. Pres. Roxas was the founder of the Liberal Party (Partido Liberal ng Pilipinas), through the support, encouragement, or endorsement of American General Douglas McArthur. What I am simply trying to establish here is that Ninoy is shown to have had close connections with the rebel group even before he met Joma Sison, also noting the fact that the Hacienda Luisita, a 6,453 hectares agricultural land which has now become a private asset of the Cojuangco-Aquino, became the nesting and breeding ground of the rebels for many years.²¹ We shall see how Ninoy was instrumental in the formation of what was later to become the CPP-NPA. The hacienda plays a vital role in Ninoy and the CPP-NPA's eventual alliance. In 1973, Marcos had an interest in Hacienda Luisita to be included in his Agrarian Reform

¹⁸ A similar cycle will be seen later as Joma Sison received a presidential pardon from Ninoy's wife, Mrs. Corazon Aquino in 1986.

¹⁹ Luis Taruc was, in fact, a socialist. He was inspired by the founder of the Socialist Party of the Philippines – Pedro Abad Santos.

²⁰ See Jose Y. Dalisay, Jr, "The Lava Brothers: Blood and Politics," *Public Policy*, July/September 1998, 87-112.

²¹ To make sense of how wide the Hacienda Luisita is, imagine the size of Mactan Island in Cebu, where one can also find Lapu-Lapu City. The island is known for the famous Battle of Mactan between Lapu-Lapu and Magellan. Mactan Island exceeded about 547 hectares more if compared to the size of Hacienda Luisita, I just brought up these places here for comparison. The Vatican City in Rome needs to be multiplied 146 more times to equal the size of Hacienda Luisita.

Program to be subjected for distribution to the tenant farmers.²² These could probably cause Ninoy Aquino to dismay, being the eventual heir to the asset mentioned above.

Whereas Ninoy is bejeweled with awards, praises, and recognition, Luis Taruc had to suffer in silence. Dr. Jesus B. Lava had ridiculed Taruc's surrender. It is to be recalled that during Pres. Roxas's administration, both Lava and Taruc suffered persecution both from the Philippine government and the American troops. Upon the return of Gen. Douglas McArthur to the Philippines in 1944, the Americans were distrustful of the Hukbalahap fighters.²³ Whereas the Americans left the Filipinos behind during the Japanese occupation, it was only the Hukbalahap who dared to fight against the Japanese forces and liberated the Filipinos from the foreign invaders. The famous line "I have returned" in McArthur's speech needs to be (re)interpreted in context. The Americans did not return to help the Filipinos against the Japanese during the war, but instead, McArthur perpetuated the neoliberal agenda of the Americans upon his comeback.²⁴ The historic landing of McArthur in Leyte had only served as another distortion of Philippine History. The "I have returned" speech should not have clouded the "I shall return" promise, a promise which never really came. They only returned when the war in the Philippines was already over, and after the Japanese forces had left. More so, the return of the Americans made life a living hell for the Huks. The return only led to the holocaust of the Huks. To be recalled

²² The hacienda was originally intended for distribution as part of the conditions of President Magsaysay upon the approval of Jose Cojuangco Sr.'s loan to use government money through the Central Bank. Many years have passed, and the hacienda has not been distributed to the tenants and farmers, with the Cojuangcos insisting on legitimacy, and finding legal means to prevent returning or redistributing the lands back to the farmers. See "Holding on: A Hacienda Luisita timeline from the Spanish to the Noynoy eras," *GMA News Online*, August 18, 2010. <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/198854/holding-on-a-hacienda-luisita-timeline-from-the-spanish-to-the-noynoy-eras/story/>

²³ *Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon* (National Troops Against the Japanese), in short, Huks or Hukbalahap.

²⁴ The American forces' return to the Philippines only added more insults to the existing injury caused by the Japanese. The ideas Naomi Klein discussed in her book, *The Shock Doctrine*, will surely apply to the case of the Philippines after the Japanese war in its relationship with America. Americans only took advantage of our vulnerability after the Japanese war, the reason for them to add more exploit, more "shock," to the already shattered country. See Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (Picador Books, 2008).

was the gruesome massacre of Hukbalahap's Squadron 77 in Bulacan, wherein many Huk members died.²⁵ Taruc is the Huk Commander who deserved recognition for his valor and heroism for the country during the Japanese occupation, he is a real combatant and revolutionary, even more deserving as compared to the vicious attribution of Ninoy as a hero after the latter's assassination. But sadly, in the case of Taruc, he eventually becomes an unsung hero. These very unfortunate fate of the Hukbalahap fighters had led Dr. Jesus Lava to declare later in an interview with Jose "Butch" Dalisay, Jr. that, "The greatest violator of human rights was Roxas, the founder of the Liberal Party (LP), more than Marcos and all the presidents put together."²⁶ Dr. Lava, however, was arrested in 1964, which is the reason there was a period of inactivity of the PKP, leading to Joma's re-establishment of the rebel group through the CPP in 1968.

Ninoy and his Alliance with Joma Sison and the NPA

A young historian from the De La Salle University – Lisandro "Leloy" Claudio – conducted a series of interviews with key informants for his dissertation on Ninoy in Hacienda Luisita and came up with these findings which he published in GMA News. According to Claudio, "In my interviews, several of my respondents told me that there was a significant Communist presence on the hacienda because of an informal alliance between Ninoy Aquino and the CPP-NPA. According to some accounts, Ninoy, who was the hacienda's first administrator, allowed NPA rebels to hide in its sugar cane fields."²⁷ We shall see later that the result of Leloy's legwork and research could easily fit with what was accused of Ninoy by the military court upon the latter's

²⁵ In February 1945, Hukbalahap's Squadron 77 consisted of 109 veteran guerrillas who were surrounded, shot, and buried in a mass grave in Malolos, Bulacan, Philippines.

²⁶ Jose Y. Dalisay, Jr., *The Lavas: A Filipino Family* (Mandaluyong City: Anvil Publishing, Inc., 1999). See also Jose S. Arcilla, S.J., "The Lavas: A Filipino Family (A Review)" *Philippine Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (1999), 435-436.

²⁷ Lisandro Claudio, "Ninoy networked with everyone, Reds included," *GMA News*, August 18, 2021. <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/specialreports/198820/ninoy-networked-with-everyone-reds-included/story/>

arrest during the Martial Law rule. We shall try to connect these two accounts as we move along with the discussion.²⁸

Still from Leloy Claudio's account based on his email correspondence with Joma Sison who at that time was residing in the Netherlands, Joma Sison was then quoted saying, "I became friends with Ninoy in late 1967 through his young Senate aide Raul Roco who was then my neighbor in Sta. Mesa Heights. Ninoy had come to my house, but I was not home. Raul eventually brought me to Ninoy's house on Times Street." Joma still vividly recalls that while "Cory [Mrs. Aquino] served coffee," Ninoy proposed to him that they launch a joint hunger strike against Marcos to demand reforms.²⁹

Another interesting source of information could be Kumander Dante himself, also known as Bernabe Buscayno in real life, who was then a renegade Huk commander who was recruited by Ninoy to join Joma after the re-establishment of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), and the co-founding of the New People's Army (NPA). Buscayno told an *L.A. Times* reporter, Bob Drogin, in 1989 that "It was Ninoy who made Sison and me talk [or meet]."³⁰ Kumander Dante also narrates that Ninoy would take Joma to the Hacienda Luisita where two of Ninoy's aides or bodyguards would bring in the young Marxist Joma Sison to the Huk leader Buscayno. Still from Buscayno's account, the NPA had never attacked the Hacienda Luisita because of the Huks and NPA rebel army's ties with Ninoy.

For brevity's sake, I would no longer narrate in toto or present in chronological order the events that transpired since the establishment of the CPP-NPA in 1969 until the events that occurred

²⁸ Who was Leloy Claudio's presidential bet in the 2022 national election? It is not Marcos, Jr. His post-election publications in 2022 and onwards could manifest it all in which he lambasted the popular majority vote or landslide victory of Marcos Jr. See Lisandro E. Claudio, "Philippine Elections 2022," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 44, No. 3, December 2022, 382-388. To point this out is very significant to show that the depiction of the CPP-NPA/Hacienda Luisita in Claudio's accounts is not biased, considering in fact that these accounts do not come from a pro-Marcos loyalist, apologist, defender, enabler, supporter, or propagandist, but instead the contrary. It comes from a historian who is in good faith diligently does his job as a true-blue historian and academic.

²⁹ Lisandro Claudio, "Ninoy networked with everyone, Reds included," *GMA News*, August 18, 2021.

³⁰ See Bob Drogin, "Ex-Rebel 'Commander Dante' Enlists in a New Revolution," *Los Angeles Times*, October 28, 1989. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1989-10-28-mn-692-story.html>

in EDSA of 1986, but I will mention some of these events along the way, based on a strategic or analytic sequence or order. I will go back to these matters in my discussions below with regard namely: the Plaza Miranda bombing, the eventual capture of Joma and Ninoy, and the Victor Corpuz confessions, among other crucial details. My interest at this specific juncture is only to show the continuing correspondence of Ninoy with the CPP-NPA under a new leader Kumander Bilog, also known as Rodolfo Salas in real life, who stood as the CPP Chair and NPA Commander after Joma's arrest in 1976 up to 1986 upon Joma's release or pardon. Salas was Joma's successor and remained the NPA Commander at the time of Ninoy's assassination and death in 1983. When asked about Ninoy's involvement in the NPA of Hacienda Luisita, Salas narrates, "Ninoy protected us in there. So, we were able to organize the [farmer] unions in Hacienda Luisita."³¹

Ninoy in the U.S.A.

Salas also narrates that in 1980, Ninoy's cousin, a British citizen named Julie Figueroa had served as the mediator between Ninoy and Salas, as Figueroa had the privilege to travel back and forth to the U.S. and the Philippines without being suspected by the Marcos government during the Martial Law years. Salas notes that his communications with Ninoy via Figueroa were mostly "verbal for security. But sometimes we would write short notes. Ninoy was very careful then." When asked with regards to their topic of correspondence, Salas answered that he and Ninoy discussed "how to overthrow the dictatorship?"³² At this point, it is very interesting to speculate on how Ninoy and Salas would "overthrow the dictatorship" if Ninoy was undergoing a triple bypass surgical operation in the United States. What was Ninoy's plan? In the first place, if Marcos was that cruel, why would he allow Ninoy to be operated in the United States? Ninoy could have rotten in prison if Marcos had willed to, but he was allowed to be operated in the U.S. only to be assassinated in the public eye some three years later in broad daylight in front of the

³¹ Claudio, "Ninoy networked with everyone, Reds included," *GMA News*, August 18, 2021.

³² Claudio, "Ninoy networked with everyone, Reds included," *GMA News*, August 18, 2021.

international media. How stupid is Marcos as president?³³ Hypothetically, imagine who would be blamed if in case Ninoy had not survived the surgical operations. I supposed that Marcos's haters would still have a reason to blame Marcos, Sr., maybe by alleging him to have arranged a conspiracy of sorts.

The trusted surgeon who operated Ninoy in the United States is a family-referred physician. The doctor himself, Rolando M. Solis, M.D., is the one who fetched Ninoy from the airport upon his arrival in the United States. Based on personal accounts of Dr. Solis, he noted and observed that "Normally, the trip from the airport to the hospital takes only about 30 minutes. But it took much longer because Ninoy wanted to see where John F. Kennedy was assassinated. He was quiet and observant as I circled the site in downtown Dallas on our way to Baylor."³⁴ The question here is why Ninoy was deeply interested in JFK's assassination. Ninoy understands too well how a public servant is honored upon death as he witnessed Ramon Magsaysay's untimely demise in 1957. President Magsaysay died in a creepy plane crash in Mt. Manunggal, Balamban, Cebu.³⁵

Ninoy's Assassination: Theories and Speculations

Ninoy's untimely demise in 1983 remains one of the mysteries in Philippine History, despite both his wife and their only son eventually becoming the next president of the country. Were they both not powerful enough to solve the case, or did they just want it to remain that way –unsolved or unresolved forever?

³³ In the words of the popular radio and television host, Eddie Ilarde, who later became a senator under the Liberal Party, "I don't think Marcos is the mastermind because it's so stupid. For all the sins we attribute to him, *he is not politically stupid*" (emphasis mine). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S40GQ6bhWNk>

³⁴ Rolando M. Solis, "Heart-to-heart talks with Ninoy," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, August 21, 2011. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/44989/heart-to-heart-talks-with-ninoy>

³⁵ Nestor Mata, the lone survivor of the Magsaysay plane crash, wrote the book, *One Came Back: The Magsaysay Tragedy*, which describes the final moments of Magsaysay's death. Mata's description of the plane crash in his book had caused rumors and speculations that a bomb might be placed in the plane by the US CIA. See "Magsaysay Plane Crash," *GMA News Online*, December 16, 2008. <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/publicaffairs/content/139635/magsaysay-plane-crash/story/>

I would like to offer three hypothetical scenarios that could lead to our imagination. But to solve Ninoy's death, we could not help but think of the other guy, the alleged gunman who was also gunned down along with Ninoy on that fateful day of August 21, 1983. That 'gunned gunner' was Rolando Galman. To solve Ninoy's mystery murder, we need to point to the identity and motive of the gunman Galman. The three possible scenarios are as follows:

1. Galman was a "fall guy" to confuse the investigation.
2. Galman was a lone gunner intercepted by military men.
3. Galman was a hired gunner immediately silenced to cover up the mastermind.

Now, there is a need also to look at who could be the possible mastermind as juxtaposed to the three different scenarios mentioned above:

1. If Galman was a "fall guy" to confuse the investigation, we could point to Marcos, Sr., as the possible culprit. This is the dominant version believed by the Filipino masses. However, the problem with this narrative is that why would Marcos Sr. become so idiotic as to tarnish his own name? He had all the instances and opportunity to liquidate Ninoy away from the public eye in all that time that Ninoy had spent in Philippine prison or at Fort Bonifacio. To assassinate Ninoy with all the attention of the international community just does not make sense at all for a bar-topnotch President Marcos, Sr.
2. If Galman was a lone gunner intercepted by military men, we could point as culprits to Kumander Bilog of the NPA [including Ninoy himself]. This is the version initially believed by the Marcos, Sr. administration. Many indications could lead us to this view. First, the date of the assassination, which is August 21, coincides with the commemoration of the Plaza Miranda bombing in 1971. Ninoy believed it was his lucky day having been spared from those dreadful attacks. Also, because they succeeded in fooling the people that it was Marcos who masterminded the bomb attacks. We also cannot disregard or undermine the prior correspondence of Ninoy and Kumander Bilog through his cousin Julie Figueroa. This narrative also coincides with the number of gun wounds that Ninoy and

Galman had incurred on their bodies. After that single gunshot that killed Ninoy (Ninoy therefore had one gunshot wound in the head), a series of gunshots hit Galman after a momentary silence and action (Galman had 18 gunshot wounds in his body).³⁶ Galman was also suspected to have negotiated with the NPA.³⁷

3. If Galman was a hired gunman immediately silenced to cover up the mastermind, we could point to the result of the investigation by the Agrava Commission which points to Danding Cojuangco, Cory's uncle, as the culprit and mastermind.³⁸ Danding was a good friend of Marcos, Sr. There is also a known feud between Danding and Jose Cojuangco, Sr. concerning the ownership of the Hacienda Luisita. Based also on the findings of the Agrava Commission, it was through Danding's request that Rolando Galman be included as part of the military escorts who will fetch Ninoy to adjourn from the aircraft.³⁹

³⁶ AirForce Sergeant Pablo Martinez pointed to Rolando Galman as the lone assassin during the trials in the Agrava investigation. There is a side story, however, related to the manner Sgt. Pablo Martinez died in 2014. Ramon Tulfo was able to interview Martinez "several times" when the latter was still serving his sentence in the Bilibid prison. Are the cover-ups not over yet? See "Mon Tulfo's Column About Ninoy Aquino is Also a Learning Opportunity About History," *Esquire Philippines*, August 20, 2018. <https://www.esquiremag.ph/culture/lifestyle/mon-tulfo-inquirer-column-ninoy-aquino-a00203-20180820-lfrm>

³⁷ See Gregorio C. Brillantes, "Rolando Galman, the Other Body on the Tarmac," *Esquire PH*, February 27, 2017. <https://www.esquiremag.ph/politics/opinion/the-other-body-a1789-20170227-lfrm4>

³⁸ It was named after Justice Corazon Agrava who led the fact-finding investigation of the Aquino-Galman murder case. See Jodesz Gavilan, "LOOK BACK: The Ninoy Aquino Assassination," *Rappler*, August 20, 2016. <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/143594-look-back-ninoy-aquino-assassination/>

³⁹ To follow the mysterious death of Sgt. Pablo Martinez, see Marlon Ramos & Niña P. Calleja, "Soldier who provided leads on Ninoy Aquino slay dies in crash," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, May 9, 2014. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/600804/soldier-who-provided-leads-on-ninoy-aquino-slay-dies-in-crash>

Pawn-Queen Chess Game Theory: From the Playful Mind of Veteran Journalist Ramon Tulfo

In the year 2018, in the days before the commemoration of Ninoy's death anniversary, Ramon Tulfo released a commentary article in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, tackling the assassination of Ninoy Aquino. Based on Ramon Tulfo's accounts, "Ninoy was very sick. He had a triple coronary bypass in the US.... He knew his end was near." Tulfo continued to argue that there are "people in history who masterminded their own deaths to make themselves heroes in perpetuity." He cited as examples: Cleopatra, the Egyptian empress, who staged her death "to end the war between Octavian and Mark Anthony, with whom she had three children," and Socrates, who died by drinking the hemlock "to preserve his philosophy."⁴⁰ In Ninoy's case, he died "to forcibly end the Marcos regime."⁴¹

Simultaneously, in his blog, Ramon Tulfo published a cryptic article dated August 17, 2018, entitled: "Ninoy's Death and How to Manipulate People." In this blog, Tulfo claimed that Ninoy's assassination was therefore staged. He argued that Ninoy had known too much about his own death and assassination, including a very specific detail that his aggressor or assassin "would be shot in return." Based on the videotape and cassette tape recordings, Ninoy was telling the media right inside the airplane: "Be ready with your camera because this action can become very fast... in a matter of three or four minutes, it could be all over... and I may not be able to talk to you again after this." How could Ninoy have predicted his assassination? According to Tulfo, "The right phrase for Ninoy, given all of what he said before he died, is that he knew too much about his own death. In fact, he was preparing people to expect his death, like it was some spectacle." Tulfo also advanced the Pawn-Queen Chess Game Theory: "Just like in chess, the lowest piece - the pawn, can move forward and become a queen. To do that, you sometimes need to sacrifice other more powerful pieces. But when the pawn becomes the queen, the

⁴⁰ Ramon Tulfo, "Did Ninoy mastermind assassination?" *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, August 18, 2018. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1022513/did-ninoy-mastermind-assassination>

⁴¹ Ibid.

game really changes [fast]."⁴² Indeed, the pawn who turned queen was none other than –the widow, Mrs. Corazon C. Aquino. In the words of historian-political theorist Achille Mbembe, “The calculus of life passes through the death of the Other.” Ninoy, in this context, is the significant ‘other’, as Cory’s better half – the perpetrator of the presidential ambition, later to become the icon of the elite government, a perfect puppet of the American dream.

In what follows, let us discuss the Plaza Miranda twin-grenade blasts and the confessions of former NPA rebel, Lieutenant Coronel Victor Corpus.

Victor Corpus and the Plaza Miranda Bombing

Upon Victor Corpus’s arrest in 1976, his name was a hot topic that headlines in local tabloids and the national daily. This much public attention had led a movie producer to become interested in his life story. Indeed, a blockbuster film starring the late actor Rudy Fernandez was released a decade later in 1987 with the title, “Operation: Get Victor Corpus, The Rebel Soldier.” The film’s billboard had this caption: “This man had to be stopped from using his expertise for the NPA.” The film depicted Corpus’s arrest during his visit to his wife and children. But that movie’s depiction of his arrest as found in the script later made Corpus very unhappy inside, reason for him to write a personal letter to the film’s scriptwriter, Pete Lacaba. Corpus wrote to Lacaba, “My conscience is bothered no end, especially about that portion where you depicted my capture. I must confess that I lied to you...*The truth is: I surrendered* (emphasis mine). I kept this fact from you...for fear of outright liquidation.”⁴³ What were the reasons for Corpus’s surrender?

In his 1989 book, *The Silent War*, Corpus enumerated the reasons for his surrender, for the sake of brevity I will only mention here three of his reasons:⁴⁴

⁴² Ramon Tulfo, “Ninoy’s Death and How to Manipulate People.” *Ramon Tulfo Blog*, August 17, 2018. <https://www.ramontulfo.org/journal/ninoys-death-and-how-to-manipulate-people>

⁴³ Victor N. Corpus, *Silent War* (Quezon City, Philippines: VNC Enterprises, 1989), 11.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 12-15.

1. The Plaza Miranda Bombing. Being part of the CPP-NPA's Central Command, Corpuz was aware of how the bombing was being planned. But the nature of how it was to be conducted was not divulged to most of the Party members. Corpuz later skirmishes as to "Why did the Party leadership order the bombing where so many innocent civilians were killed?"
2. Death of Danny Cordero. After his crucial role in the bombing of Plaza Miranda, Danny Cordero's presence in the Party was put to a minimum until he was ultimately given a death sentence by the Party for no apparent reason. Corpus believes that "Danny - who was assigned to bomb Plaza Miranda - was forever silenced to keep the 'skeleton' in the Party's closet."
3. Joma Sison's P70,000 Worth Car. "Joma and some other members could afford to buy themselves one car each, with each car costing some P70,000... a motorcycle, and hiding on air-conditioned houses... while we on the frontlines, on the brink of starvation, and exposed to constant danger were allotted P50.00 a month."⁴⁵

In 1986, after the so-called EDSA Revolution, Victor Corpus, together with Bernabe Buscayno, and Joma Sison, were granted a Presidential Pardon by the Cory administration. President Cory had finally set these former rebels free.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Lt. Corpus also noted that "Joma saw in the electoral exercise a chance to create conditions for bringing about the revolutionary leap he [Joma] was aspiring for.... If a rally of the Liberal Party were bombed, the opposition would naturally point an accusing finger at Marcos. Marcos, in turn, would surely blame the Communist Party, and force him to take more severe repressive measures against us [CPP]. The greater the repression, the greater still would be the resistance, Joma contended. By our forcing the hand of Marcos to take more repressive measures...the so-called "moderates" would be pushed to join the armed struggle and thus swell our ranks. This was the "quantum leap" that Joma aspired to create through that incident at Plaza Miranda, which he hoped would solve the problem of too many firearms with too few men to use them. Such was the rationale for the Plaza Miranda bombing." The rebel group was at this point anticipating the arrival of firearms and ammunition from China in what was known as the Digoyo Point arms landing or MV Karagatan incident that truly occurred on July 4, 1972. However, the arms deal was fortunately intercepted by the government forces. See Corpuz, *Silent War*, 12-16.

⁴⁶ See Daniel Southerl and James Rupert, "Aquino Government Frees 4 Communists from Prison," *The Washington Post*, March 6, 1986. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1986/03/06/aquino->

Other CPP-NPA Former Party Members Had Spoken Out

Victor Corpus was not alone in telling the story of the Plaza Miranda bombing. Married couple Mario Miclat and Alma Cruz-Miclat, both prolific authors, were for a time Joma Sison's important delegation to China, for example, arranging the transport of support from the Chinese communist Mao Zedong, such as artillery and ammunition. The couple in many of their writings discuss their participation in the CPP and their journey in China. For example, Mario Miclat in *Truth in a Revolution: Notes from the Underground*, writes "The scheme was evil as it was idiotic: bomb a major political rally by the opposition Liberal Party (LP), and blame it on Marcos, a Nacionalista. Kumander Pusa (Benjamin Sanguyo), an NPA operative loyal to Ninoy, warned the senator not to attend the rally. He did not and was spared the agony of his colleagues who were maimed by the grenade explosions."⁴⁷ Mario Miclat also authored the literary work, *Secrets of the Eighteen Mansions*, wherein he revealed the dirty secrets of the rebel movement from terroristic tactics to comrade betrayals and summary executions.⁴⁸

Up and Close Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, Jr.

In an interview with Philippine Daily Inquirer in 2016, former Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile addresses a question to then outgoing President Benigno Simeon 'PNoy' Aquino III: "Who was Kumander Felman (Roberto Santos) to your late father? He served as bodyguard to your late father, while a principal commander of the CPP-NPA."⁴⁹ If that is the case then being guarded by the principal

[government-frees-4-communists-from-prison/7d01e984-a1b3-45f6-9df5-b7d0a2f7d656/](https://www.inquirer.net/ph/news/2016/02/26/enrile-hits-aquino-defends-marcos-years)

⁴⁷ Mario Miclat, "Truth in a Revolution: Notes from the Underground," in Melba Padilla Maggay (ed.), *To Be in History: Dark Days of Authoritarianism* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2019), 60. See also Alma Miclat, "A Peek from Behind the Bamboo Curtain," in Melba Padilla Maggay (ed.), *To Be in History: Dark Days of Authoritarianism* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2019), 69-85.

⁴⁸ Mario Miclat, *Secrets of the Eighteen Mansions* (Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2011).

⁴⁹ See Christine O. Avendaño, "Enrile hits Aquino, defends Marcos years," in *Inquirer.Net*, February 26, 2016. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/768761/enrile-hits-aquino-defends-marcos-years>

commander, Ninoy must probably be somebody of a top rank caliber, somebody in the level of Joma Sison.

Ninoy was not arrested just because there was Martial Law and because Marcos was a plain evil dictator, but because Ninoy was seriously facing some serious allegations of violations under the Philippine laws. I can enumerate at least seven of these charges against him under the Military Commission No. 2 on August 14, 1973, in violation of the Anti-Subversion Law, R.A. 1700:

1. Aquino...gave P15,000 to (CPP-NPA) for the purpose of staging an NPA-sponsored demonstration in Manila which was in fact carried out in Congress, Malacañang, and the American Embassy on April 19, 1969....
2. Aquino in 1967 gave to Buscayno in Concepcion, Tarlac a .45 caliber pistol with magazine and ammunition to be used against the government.
3. Aquino in August 1967 in the house of Leonida Arceo located at Barrio San Francisco, Tarlac, Tarlac gave to Buscayno two .45 caliber pistols to be used against the government.
4. Aquino in October 1969 in Barrio Alto, Hacienda Luisita, San Miguel, Tarlac, Tarlac, gave to Commanders Arthur Garcia and Jose Buscayno two armored vests and a pair of walkie-talkies to be used against the government.
5. Aquino on November 1 and 2, 1965 in San Miguel, Tarlac, Tarlac, gave to Commander Alibasbas through Commander Danilo several firearms and ammunition that were taken from the house of Manuel Rodriguez, which were to be used against the government and in fact, the said firearms were recovered from Commander Alibasbas and his group when they were killed in Barrio Almendras, Concepcion, Tarlac.
6. Aquino in 1970 and 1971 at 25 Times Street, Quezon City provided shelter and medical treatment for Roberto Santos, (alias Commander Felman); Benjamin Sanguyo, (alias Commander Pusa); and eight other sick or wounded officers or members of the HMB and NPA.

7. Aquino, Buscayno, Peter Ilocano, and Puriok, as conspirators, were also charged with murder before Military Commission No. 2 in a charge sheet dated August 7, 1973. It was alleged that during the last days of November to December 2, 1967, they took Cecilio Sumat, a barrio captain of Motrico, La Paz, Tarlac, from his house and killed him in Barrio San Miguel, Tarlac, Tarlac (Criminal Case No. MC-222, pp. 76-77, Rollo of L-47185).

Up to this day, Ninoy, who sponsored the NPA, has remained in the Philippine currency through the 500-peso bill, a statue of him with his wife stands in Luneta beside Rizal's, an international airport in Metro Manila was named in his honor and a town municipality in Sultan Kudarat was named after him since 1989.⁵⁰ We do not commemorate President Magsaysay's death anniversary, yet we commemorate Ninoy Aquino Day, an honorable rendition usually attributed to national heroes duly given to the former Senator despite the clouded nature of his death. How could they have turned this nation into a fool? Their manipulative social engineering and mental construction of the public's mind continues in all spheres from the academic sector to the mainstream media, from societal structures and religious institutions to public infrastructures – Ninoy is such a hero, an assassinated hero!

The EDSA People Power Scenario and the Widow's Take-Over

How did the 1986 EDSA People Power begin? One can see that all this had nothing to do with Cory. But her or their supporters took this as an opportune moment to capture. However, precedent to the EDSA moment was a Snap Election which was contested by the incumbent president Marcos, Sr. and the late Ninoy Aquino's widow, Mrs. Cory.⁵¹ At this point, I shall temporarily leave the Snap Election

⁵⁰ To be fair to all political personalities, the Aquinos are not alone in this maneuvering strategy. Marcos Sr. also named a long highway in Antipolo after his father, the Dutertes as well have an entire barangay as well as streets in Davao named after them. Really smart voters do not look at the famous surnames, they go after credentials and credibility.

⁵¹ It is noteworthy to observe how a similar formula of 'necropolitics' was deployed during the rise of Leni Robredo to fame, wife of the late DILG Secretary Jesse

behind which I am going to return to later but let us first focus briefly on the military stand-off at Camp Aguinaldo, which is a few meters walk from EDSA. Then Minister of Defense Juan Ponce Enrile, who was joined by Gen. Fidel Ramos, a former Vice Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and Lt. Gringo Honasan, staged a *coup d'état* attempt to demand an explanation from the President about top-secret information of a military junta involving AFP Commander-in-Chief General Favian Crisologo Ver.⁵² This means that there surfaced a faction among the top AFP Generals and the Ministry of Defense. This also means that the military force on the ground, such as the tanks and helicopters, is not there to attack the people but to protect them from the potential conflict that may arise. And besides, the soldiers are also at a loss as to whose command or order to follow considering it is their top officials in a quarrel. The president simply denied the allegations of a planned military junta and asked these protesting persons of interest to peacefully surrender. The narrative that goes that the EDSA People Power was a “peaceful” or a “bloodless revolution” was not because the people and the rosary were more powerful than the guns, but simply because Marcos had ordered his men not to fire a single shot. There is a recorded television coverage of a heated altercation between Pres. Marcos Sr. and Gen. Favian Ver wherein Marcos had ordered the latter to “disperse the crowd without shooting them.”⁵³ The subsequent media reportage of 1986 and

Robredo, who ran as a candidate during the 2022 presidential election. Her late husband, Jesse, died in a plane crash in August 2012 somewhere on the shores of Masbate, where an underwater historical marker is now installed some 54 meters depth below sea level. This level of necropolitics is one of a kind. See Anne Beatrice V. Lagman, “Necropolitics: Death and politics as usual?” *Philstar.com*, July 16, 2021. <https://www.philstar.com/news-commentary/2021/07/16/2112975/necropolitics-death-and-politics-usual> See also Joahna Lei Casilao, “VP Leni looks back on Jesse Robredo’s underwater marker on his 9th death anniversary,” *GMA News Online*, August 18, 2021. <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/799912/vp-leni-looks-back-on-jesse-robredo-s-underwater-marker-on-his-9th-death-anniversary/story/>

⁵² “EDSA People Power Revolution,” *Amnesty International*, July 22, 2022. <https://www.amnesty.org.ph/2022/07/protestph-edsa-revolution/>

⁵³ See Margaret Claire Layug and Llanesca T. Panti, “Enrile lauds Marcos’s ‘restraint’ for bloodless EDSA 1; Saguisag says troops wouldn’t have followed,” *GMA News Online*, September 23, 2018. <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/668740/people-power-was-bloodless-because-of-marcos-restraint-enrile/story/>

onwards always tends to twist some perspective of the story to favor or hype the eventual victors of the EDSA scenario.

And speaking of 'crowd', it is the ill-intention of the Cory supporters to include the crowd despite the danger where they have asked the people to come out of the streets through radio coverage, particularly in the popular Catholic network Radio Veritas, where a dearly loved cardinal bishop can be heard summoning the people.⁵⁴ The Cory supporters simply ride on to the feud. Making that moment "theirs." This scenario only made the situation more complicated. The Cory supporters, fresh from an electoral defeat, not only reached EDSA but have also attacked the Malacañang presidential palace. The mob was indeed an irrational 'crowd,' 'they' have resorted to civil disobedience, a "herd" – the so-called "People Power."⁵⁵ Such an opportune time that the U.S. government suddenly appears in the picture. The rest is history which brought the Marcos family to Hawaii, instead of Paoay.⁵⁶

The Snap Election

Why were the Cory supporters so angry to take over Malacañang? The preceding incident can explain it –the Snap Election. Due to an unprecedented call for Pres. Marcos Sr. to resign after his alleged involvement in the assassination of former Senator Benigno Aquino, Jr., Pres. Marcos Sr. had decided to declare a snap election. At

⁵⁴ The Cardinal's insurmountable influence in the EDSA People Power prompted lawmakers to introduce the Principle of Separation of Church and State in the 1987 Constitution. If seen through the 1987 Constitution, the influence of the Cardinal to call out the people can be a lapse of duty on the part of the church leader.

⁵⁵ According to estimated reports there are about 100, 000 people (out of about 56 million total population across the country in 1986) who joined the EDSA Revolution. As compared to the 1.5 million annual attendance of devotees during the Nazarene procession. What percentage of the population is needed to account for representation on behalf of the entire Filipino nation?

⁵⁶ There's an account where Marcos had requested to be air-lifted to Paoay in Ilocos Norte, but instead, under Mrs. Cory's request, the whole presidential family of Marcos, Sr. was brought outside the country to Guam, then to Hawaii. Cory allegedly called up US Ambassador to the Philippines Stephen Bosworth for the intervention, based on the accounts of Juan Ponce Enrile and former Associate Justice Cecilia Muñoz Palma. See Monina Allarey Mercado and Francisco Tatad (eds.), *People Power: The Philippine Revolution of 1986: An Eyewitness History* (James B. Reuters, S.J., Foundation, 1986), 101, 318.

such a crucial point, the Martial rule had already been lifted five years earlier in 1981. The call for a special election through Batasang Pambansa Blg. 883 was signed by Pres. Marcos and was set to be conducted on the 7th day of February 1986. The snap election was designed to be competed only between the top two highest national positions – the president and vice president, there were no other positions to be elected in that special election. This was to focus only on the top national positions, remove the interests of local politicians, and ensure a speedy election count. Since the enactment of the 1973 Constitution following the Martial rule, the country has been under a parliamentary form of government wherein the prime minister and president were chosen under a national assembly. The snap election was the first election since 1971 that directly involved the participation of the people.⁵⁷ The election was to be contested between tandems of administration candidates Ferdinand E. Marcos, Sr. (Pres.) and Arturo Tolentino (VP) under Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL), against opposition candidates Corazon C. Aquino (Pres.) and Salvador ‘Doy’ Laurel (VP) under Partido LABAN (LAKas ng BAYan). Two months after Ninoy’s assassination in 1983, Jose S. Conception, Jr. organized the National Citizen’s Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL), which could serve as a citizen’s counterpart to the official tally of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) count, with the vision to ensure a “free, orderly, and honest” counting of votes with more than 250, 000 members all over the country listed as volunteers. Although Marcos had won the election based on the official COMELEC count with 10,807,197 over Cory Aquino’s 9,291,716 votes, NAMFREL had a widely varying result that resulted in confusion and suspicions of fraud. Under the NAMFREL unofficial count, Cory Aquino had won the election with 7,502,601 over Marcos Sr. with only 6,787,556 votes. Both camps had declared themselves as winners and each had taken their Oath of Office as the 1986 Philippine President. As of February 15, 1986, Ferdinand Marcos was officially declared the winner of the Snap Election by the Batasang Pambansa. The next day, Cory Aquino had “called for a civil disobedience campaign marked by strikes and boycotts of media, banks, and other corporations that were owned by

⁵⁷ It is to be recalled that the last election in 1971 was a bloody one as manifested in the Plaza Miranda bombings, part of the reasons for the postponement of the national elections to a later date.

or supported Marcos and his cronies.”⁵⁸ Both Cory Aquino and Marcos Sr. gave their Inaugural Address on the same fateful day, February 25, 1986. On one hand, Cory took his Oath of Office in Club Filipino, an elite and exclusive members-only social club and recreational facility in North Greenhills, San Juan City, administered by Justice Claudio Teehankee Sr., and was attended by breakaway generals, Fidel V. Ramos and Juan Ponce Enrile.⁵⁹ On the other hand, Marcos Sr. took his Oath of Office at the Malacanang Palace attended by both supporters and rallyists alike. But with the growing threats such as gunshots surrounding the presidential residency, the Marcos family was forced to leave through a backdoor at the Pasig River, then to Subic, where a US military aircraft brought the whole family to Guam. The Marcoses’ departure was advised and negotiated by the US Ambassador to the Philippines Stephen Bosworth with some alleged creepy intervention of Mrs. Corazon C. Aquino.

Post-EDSA Analysis and Martial Rule Reminiscence

Where were the communists at the EDSA Revolution? The answer is *nada*, nothing or nowhere –because post-struggle is beyond their concrete plans. They were caught off unguarded by the plans of the oligarchy and the oligopoly. The communists’ only purpose was to destabilize the government, which they were very successful in, but they had no real and concrete plans beyond that. Besides, they wrongly thought that the newly [unconstitutionally] installed 1986 President Cory Aquino was their ally, due to their long history of allegiance back in the Hacienda, and this instead could have favored them. But they were soon all betrayed in the Mendiola massacre where the hacienda farmers were killed. They were used and caught off-guard by the oligarchy’s agenda. The use of “communism” in the CPP-NPA’s revolutionary movement and tagline is a misnomer. It

⁵⁸ “EDSA People Power Revolution,” *Amnesty International*, July 22, 2022.

⁵⁹ Enrile later divulged that he regretted having made a deal with these oligarchs, headed by Jaime “Jimmy” Ongpin – the group accordingly betrayed the nation with their vested selfish interests in the presidential take-over (power grab) and that Cory was not herself when seated as President but was only a puppet to these oligarchs, that Cory knew nothing at all about governance. See Kaye Fe, “Enrile says Cory Aquino did not know anything about governance,” *Eagle News*, September 21, 2018. <https://www.eaglenews.ph/enrile-says-cory-aquino-did-not-know-anything-about-governance/>

serves only as a propagandistic press release. The word ‘terrorists’ is even more appropriate for them instead. Their actual activities include extortion from the vulnerable population to support their cause, however, only top leaders have benefited much from their external sources of funds. The NPAs are also guilty of taking advantage of the situation or condition of ethnic minorities in far-flung areas by exploiting the ethnic minority group’s education system through the insertion of Marxist and anarchistic ideology. The NPA’s destabilization plots only contribute to more poverty in the country as they ward off more potential investors in the country.⁶⁰ Going out of the country and investing abroad was instead preferred by Filipinos who wanted to stay out of trouble. The NPA’s extortion activities made these communists look like scums for SME businessmen, such as unnecessarily burning down pieces of equipment and resources of private businesses, not to mention the execution of ethnic leaders who refuses to lend cooperation. Thirty-eight (38) members, including women and children, of the Bagobo-Tagabawa tribe were massacred during a prayer mass in Brgy. Soong, Digos City, Davao del Sur on June 25, 1989, by the NPA headed by Kumander Bensar.⁶¹

My succeeding analysis (probably on another article) will partly shift its focus to Ninoy’s widow, who subsequently became the president of the Philippines, the legal heir of EDSA People Power who was unconstitutionally installed as President of the Republic of the Philippines.⁶² The presidential administration of Mrs. Corazon Cojuangco Aquino is the administration with the greatest number of military *coup d’état* in the political history of the Philippines. Should Cory be free from blame in the Mendiola massacre?⁶³ How come Cory’s

⁶⁰ See Frinston Lim, “NPA rebels ransack banana plantation in Compostela Valley,” *Inquirer.Net*, August 23, 2014. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/632041/npa-rebels-ransack-banana-plantation-in-compostela-valley>

⁶¹ See Che Palicte, “Remembering Digos City’s 1989 gruesome massacre,” *Philippine News Agency*, June 25, 2020. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1107101>

⁶² Cory Aquino was illegally and unconstitutionally installed as President as no provision in our laws could justify the NAMFREL as the basis for a winning candidate. Mrs. Cory was a dummy candidate of the oligopoly and not necessarily of the Filipino people, indeed there are more attendees of a Nazarene procession than the EDSA rally and this does not even constitute the whole country. Invoking a revolution and installing a new leader as easy as that could be a dangerous threat to the country’s democracy.

⁶³ See Nicali de Guzman, “The Bloody Mendiola Massacre Took Place 34 Years Ago Today,” *Esquire PH*, January 22, 2019. <https://www.esquiremag.ph/long->

cabinet officials consist of top officers in the NAMFREL?⁶⁴ What integrity and honor do they have in accepting such an offer or appointment? Was Cory under their strings?

The Plaza Miranda as a “Public Sphere”

At a certain period of Philippine history, the Plaza Miranda in front of Quiapo Church, was dubbed as the national “public sphere” for Filipinos during the 1960s for its strategic location being the center of commerce and trade, culture, religion, and politics, among others, having been situated at the heart of the old Manila. Political debates, such as Presidential debates are usually held in the area, as well as religious practices like the Nazarene procession. An Islamic Mosque also co-exist on the other side of the highway. The CPP-NPA, on the one hand, is partly to be blamed for the eventual death of democracy under Martial rule, they gave Marcos, Sr. a justifiable reason for its declaration. Marcos’s Martial Law, on the other hand, had successfully hindered turning this country into a communist State, wherein the major players of the communist movement were members of the Philippine government and even leaders of a major political party, with the support of communist China.

Some so many scholars have dared to become critics of the Philippine Presidents, who were legitimately and democratically elected leaders of the people. Still, I seldom hear of scholars who bravely stood firm and dared become a critic of Joma Sison, the Philippines’ most wanted who sought asylum in the NATO-protected Netherlands until the time of his death. F. Sionil Jose is the only one I know who courageously and openly lambasted Joma Sison’s 50-year

[reads/features/the-bloody-mendiola-massacre-took-place-32-years-today-a1729-20190122-lfrm2](https://old.pcij.org/stories/jose-concepcion-jr/)

⁶⁴ Was NAMFREL a truly independent citizens’ movement? Why did the NAMFREL officials subsequently become part of President Cory’s Official Cabinet Members? Jose Conception, Jr. became the Department Secretary of DTI, Jaime Ferrer became the Department Secretary of DILG, and Charito Planas won the post-EDSA vice-mayoralty race in Quezon City. See Vinia M. Datinguinoo, “20 Filipinos 20 Years after People Power: Jose Conception, Jr.,” *Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism*, February 2, 2006. <https://old.pcij.org/stories/jose-concepcion-jr/>

revolution as a “waste of lives.”⁶⁵ F. Sionil Jose is joined by journalist Rigoberto Tiglao in these critiques.⁶⁶ Our Philippine society needs more brilliant people who dare to expose these evil ways. It has become a byword today that former President Ferdinand E. Marcos was a dictatorial leader who went after the communists and oppressed so many political activists, but what is not often asked and discussed is “What is it in the first place which provoked Marcos to go after the Communists, the NPA and the political activists?” It was the NPA themselves who bombed or threw a grenade at a Liberal Party Rally in the Plaza Miranda in Quiapo sparing Ninoy who was their ally and co-founder of the NPA, and then wrongfully accused Marcos of having a hand in the bombings. There is bad blood on their hands as they destroy and sabotage the existing state of democracy. According to the words of former Senator Jovito Salonga who was Ninoy’s Party-mate in the Liberal Party, “I came to a conclusion that it was *not* Marcos responsible for the Plaza Miranda bombing *but was none other than Jose Maria Sison*” (emphasis mine). Senator Salonga himself lost his left eye from a grenade splinter and was severely injured from the Plaza Miranda grenade blasts.⁶⁷

I think it is really about time that we put an end and let go of this communist ideology here in the Philippines which has only caused more confusion and abuses rather than real salvation and emancipation, especially among our youths. It had only put their lives to waste. It is ironic when they call themselves progressives when, in fact, they oppose all forms of development in the country. Their only consistent and deceptive strategy is to destabilize the government. Their shoutouts or hashtag that says, “Never again!” could have been a lot more sincere if it included: “Never again NPA!” It is sad to see that the current president of this country in the person of Marcos Jr. seems to have not learned as well from how his father had fought against the communist terrorists. Similarly, the slogan “Filipinos are worth dying

⁶⁵ Francisco Sionil Jose, “Our People’s Army,” in HINDSIGHT, *The Philippine Star*, June 7, 2021. <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2021/06/07/2103597/our-peoples-army>

⁶⁶ See Rigoberto Tiglao, *Debunked: Uncovering Hard Truths about EDSA, Martial Law, Marcos, Aquino, with a Special Section on the Duterte Presidency* (Akropolis Publishing, 2018).

⁶⁷ See Jovito R. Salonga, *Journey of Struggle and Hope: The Memoir of Jovito R. Salonga* (U.P. Center for Leadership, Citizenship, and Democracy, 2001).

for,” usually attributed to Ninoy would have been a little bit clearer if it were more specific: “Hacienda Luisita is worth dying for.”

Too Much Democracy in the Philippines

The danger of overcriticizing government is that it will be used to manipulate the minds of our less educated folks in the urban as well as in the rural areas, such as the barrios in the remote and mountainous rural areas, or the filthy slums. These false and careless accusations and criticisms against the leaders of government can only serve as emotional fuel to entice these local folks to join the revolutionary communist movement such as the NPA. If the educated student body can easily be swayed or fooled to join violent student activism or protests, how much more are our brothers and sisters who were deprived of the privilege of a quality education? This could only result in more hatred and bigotry that can only perpetuate the decay of this nation. And such maneuvering will be very useful for the propaganda of communists. The lies, when repeatedly accused, may assume the status of truth. The CPP-NPA through its activism fronts, including the allied journalists, is preying on the vulnerable and those with weak wills. We should be wise enough to *not* allow this brutal evil of NPA to triumph. We should not let destruction rule.

The nature of political practice is indeed agonistic. I remember my father who wittingly added a Bisayan mnemonics on the term “politics” as *POL*hay’g *TIKaS* (or *POL*hanay’g *TIKaS*) or can be understood in English as “competitive cheating/ cheating competitively” referring to an electoral process itself or any corrupt and deceiving election practices from either or both political camps, such as vote buying and the like. Sadly, however, no concrete and serious punishments for violators of electoral fraud or political crimes are truly implemented by our lawmakers and government leaders. The term “radical” does not always necessarily imply “to revolt.” This interpretation is very much loaded with a Left-leaning bias. It could also refer to democracy’s foundational nature or root. Politics or democracy is naturally and essentially contested, henceforth referring to it as radical. In Chantal Mouffe, the very essence or root of democracy is not consensus but *agonism*. A form of agonism that is a

healthy kind, and not necessarily a consensus.⁶⁸ Therefore, directly contrary or opposed to Jurgen Habermas' notion of consensual agreement in the "public sphere."⁶⁹ Habermas may have idealistically associated the cessation of contestations with peace and order. However, for Mouffe, such consensus may have signaled the death of democracy.⁷⁰ The opposing and contrary views are essential to democratic growth. The absence of a conflicting critical opinion could rather mean fascism, reducing the political to "one-dimensional" if to borrow a term from critical theory (to use against itself).⁷¹ Most likely the characteristic of a real 'dictatorship' where there is no apparent critical opposition, such as Stalinism.⁷²

It is only in the opinions of an anti-Marcos and the typical gen-Z student –the so-called "woke" of our time, who browsed too much in TikTok or Korean telenovelas but read too little of Philippine History, unaware of their own biases and limitations, and have interpreted everything that has a relation to Marcos according to such biases –that Marcos is a bad leader while the Aquinos (or any of their successors or LP cohorts) are saints and heroes. So why do the Pia Hontiveros supporters (or the Leni Robredo pink movement supporters, for that matter, as well as the National Democratic Front of the CCP-NPA) think they are the most intelligent beings on the planet when their truth is just one side of the whole picture? They should also remind themselves how they have forgotten to see things objectively. The mental construct and social engineering had penetrated deep into their psyche. The Gen-Z who were hailed from chatbot AI had the gall to condemn people with opposing political views in their public social media posts, these mindless adherents of the so-called "cancel

⁶⁸ See Chantal Mouffe, *Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism* (Vienna: Institute for Advanced Studies, 2000), 13.

⁶⁹ See Chantal Mouffe, *Which Public Sphere for a Democratic Society?* (Theoria, June 2002), 55-65.

⁷⁰ This simply means that one does not need to fight with those people who have a contrary political opinion, but rather one needs instead to respect the opposing side or opinion. Radical democracy could simply mean "fair game" and not bigotry. We are all after the same truth and the prosperity of the same nation.

⁷¹ See Anna Marie Smith, *Laclau and Mouffe: The Radical Democratic Imaginary* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 119.

⁷² See Carlos Garrido, "The Relevance and Failures of Marcuse's One-Dimensional Man," *Hampton Institute, New York*, March 31, 2021. <https://www.hamptonthink.org/read/the-relevance-and-failures-of-marcuses-one-dimensional-man>

culture.” The problem in Philippine politics is that we picture questionable politicians as good, in the case of Ninoy and many of the LP cohorts, while we picture good and strong-willed political leaders as evil, in the case of FPRRD and Marcos Sr. The sovereign people see the infrastructures in the Marcos Sr. and Duterte administrations as concrete proofs of these politicians’ sincerity put into the people’s projects, unlike the LP folks who are good at lip service or photo ops. This can explain the landslide votes Duterte and Marcos, Jr. got during the elections. The people have learned to see for results, instead of empty talks.⁷³

Agonism Could Mean We Shouldn’t be Close-minded but Be Well-Rounded

Very few people, academics included, truly recognize that the affairs of the CPP-NPA are purely a matter of business. It has nothing to do at all with their supposed by-word (or ideology) which is communism. They were able to secure the support of the landed elites, such as the Aquinos of Tarlac (or the Florendos of Mindanao as the case may be) and many other businesses and tycoons operating inside the country by terrorizing them and threatening them with ambush and assassination or burning of real properties in cases of refusal or withdrawal of support of their so-called “revolutionary tax.”⁷⁴ Through this method, the rebels can earn internally or gain profit aside from their external funding from abroad through certain labor unions from the First World that share a similar ideology. Their extortion activities are their bread and butter. The money that they earn can also be used in turn to convince potential prospects to join the movement by attracting them to the potential profits or investments by learning about their business affairs or jack of trade.

⁷³ Masagana 99 Farmers’ Program is one example of Marcos Sr.’s excellent dedication to enhancing the agricultural industry particularly focused on the production of rice grains. See Paul John Caña, “What Was the Masagana 99 Program and Why Do Some People Want It Back?” *Esquire PH*, May 23, 2020. <https://www.esquiremag.ph/long-reads/features/what-was-the-masagana-99-program-a00289-20200523>

⁷⁴ The Florendos also owns 6000+ hectares of land in Mindanao. However, unlike the Aquinos, the Florendos are pictured to be allies or “cronies” with the Marcoses, and not as enemies. Hence, the Florendos are often subject to the NPAs’ threats.

The workers (who are either employed or occupants of the agricultural lands) of these exploited companies and their labor union leaders took advantage of these arrangements by using their backdoor affiliation or connections to the communist extortionists. The NPA rebellion has now plainly become banditry and terrorism. There is no more room for a real philosophy in violence, closed-mindedness, and lack of foresight.

Meanwhile, civil society groups through the National Democratic Front (NDF) use the human rights angle as an argument or a case in point and demand peace talks with the government through allied fronts (including student fronts). However, the onslaught of violence against government forces continues, attacking the military while being assured of a cease-fire agreement. That is how cunning and dangerous are the evil ways of these traitors as they circumvent the facts. Since they have “nothing to lose” (according to Marx), thus they employ unfair and desperate deceptive strategies to achieve their ends.

I can say something like that of Marx, “The moment anyone started to talk to me about objective history, I would giggle and roar with laughter.” Useless and aimless deceptive endeavors such as the NPA are truly a waste of the lives of fellow Filipinos while degrading the country's reputation and have even made more potential investors of the country back out of their original business plans. These communist terrorists are the true scum of this earth. These communists' fronts, disguised as civil society groups or even in the representative disguise as legitimate academics even at reputable universities worldwide, however, since they fail to convince people of their rotten arguments, they resort to attacking people with contrary opinions even on unmanly terms. Vice President Sara Duterte expresses her opposition to the move for more peace talks with these traitors. We do not need more peace talks with these rebels, whom VP Sara Duterte referred to as “devils,” we already know how filthy, cunning, and deceptive their moves are. We should learn from the past. We do not need to have a pact with the devils, as the current VP puts it, a “deal with the devil.”⁷⁵

⁷⁵ See Mikhail Flores, “Philippines VP says peace talks with communist rebels a pact ‘with the devil,’” Reuters, December 4, 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-vp-says-peace-talks-with-communist-rebels-pact-with-devil-2023-12-04/>

History as Perspectivism

Lynn Avery Hunt, who served as President of the American Historical Association in 2002 and was elected to the prestigious American Philosophical Society, suggested a proper understanding of how to make sense of “historical facts.” Hunt argues that “historical facts” will make sense only if they are “woven into a coherent story,” and that such a story must be as comprehensive as possible by considering both the “facts” (historical facts) and the “interpretation” (historical interpretation). The ‘interpretation’ should be able to question the ‘facts.’ In her words, “An interpretation cannot rely on the facts that fit; it has to stand the test of possible counterarguments.”⁷⁶ Hunt in this case sounds like Karl Popper in his Falsification Theory, where Popper argues the role of refutations, tests, and falsifications until proven otherwise. There is no such truth that cannot be proven false, or truth claims that are irrefutable. Popper warns us of such irrefutable claims.⁷⁷ However, to say that history is a matter of perspective does not mean that any historical claims will matter. It must withstand the test of time and the contradictory claim until a better argument truly emerges. This could also mean that the contradictory claims in history need not bother the leftists if they truly are concerned for the nation because it means we are all together as one in our quest for the ultimate truth. We reciprocate as one nation regardless of our different perspectives. Let the “unforced force of the better argument” prevail – the unforced force of the better historiographic argument.⁷⁸

The opinion of another historian-philosopher in the person of Edward Hallett Carr resonates with Lynn Avery Hunt’s view. For E.H. Carr, many of the historical facts have been neglected and put aside depending on their importance to the historian.⁷⁹ The historian cherry-picks the facts that are useful to his or her argument or those that fit his favored narrative. Historical facts can only have value or

⁷⁶ See Lynn Hunt, *History: Why It Matters* (Medford, MA: Polity Press, 2018).

⁷⁷ Karl Popper, “Science as Falsification” in *Conjectures and Refutations* (New York and London: Basic Books, 1962), 36-37.

⁷⁸ See Amy Allen, “The Unforced Force of the Better Argument: Reason and Power in Habermas’ Political Theory,” in *Constellations*, Vol. 19, No. 3, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2012, 363.

⁷⁹ Edward Hallett Carr, *What is History?* 2nd ed. (Penguin Books, 1964), 7-30.

significance the moment they are chosen, used, or emphasized. We can therefore infer that there is much of Philippine history that is left unsaid or unwritten. The facts may have value only depending on the intentions or motives of those who will eventually use them, or of such historical narratives.

Conclusion

Based on the above presupposition, the position that I stand on matters of history, in general, is that of relativism in historical truths. Following the cues laid down by E.H. Carr in his book, "What is History?" I argue that historical facts are purposely chosen or selected according to their importance to the historian. Hence, it is partly subjective on the part of the historian or scholar who believes such "facts." Inferring from that, the assertion is that many other things that occurred in Philippine History were taken for granted due to its perceived threats to their preferred version or narrative of Philippine History. Such a notion is prevalent among poststructuralist philosophers. There is Michael Foucault, for example, in his notion of discourse, argued on a decentered non-subject which is somewhat akin to Jaques Derrida's deconstruction of language (logocentrism). Paul Ricoeur emphasizes "narrativity" which is a contributive factor in finding meaning, social identity, and the human person's making sense of the world. Like Ricoeur, Lynn Hunt argues that amidst relativism, the search for historical "facts" is not futile as it is part and parcel of inclusivity in mankind's search for meaning and coherence.

I find it very amusing how the anti-Duterte critics are attacking and humiliating the scholars who support Duterte. It is a form of displaced emotion or transfer of target of their scrutiny. Why do they not file a case directly against Duterte instead? The former president is no longer under presidential immunity. What does it serve them scrutinizing for example the likes of Professor Maboloc? They have become anti-Maboloc rather than anti-Duterte. What the hail!

This article was purposely written to address the condescending attitude of the Leni Robredo supporters as manifested during FPRRD's presidential term, especially during the 2022 Presidential Election campaigns. They should be careful because no one has a monopoly on the whole truth. Instead of appearing intelligent, their actions have risked themselves appearing like a fool of their own self-conceived

and conceited ideology, or their uncritical version of the truth. Let the information in this piece be absorbed in their skull. I promise to write a sequel to this work wherein Philippine democracy will be examined closely through its relation to political media and media politics during the Martial Law leadership and post-EDSA era, particularly the role of a former Vice President who was also a Presidential aspirant, like Ninoy – Fernando Lopez’s ABS-CBN conglomerate. I shall also try to fine-tune my arguments already placed here but were not explained thoroughly due to the limitations of space.

References

- Abulad, Romualdo and Alfredo Co. *Two Filipino Thomasian Philosophers on Postmodernism*. Manila: UST Publishing House, 2004.
- Allen, Amy. “The Unforced Force of the Better Argument: Reason and Power in Habermas’ Political Theory,” in *Constellations*, Vol. 19, No. 3, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2012
- Arcilla, S.J., Jose S. “The Lavas: A Filipino Family (A Review)” *Philippine Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 3, 1999, 435-436.
- Avendaño, Christine O. “Enrile hits Aquino, defends Marcos years,” in *Inquirer.Net*, February 26, 2016. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/768761/enrile-hits-aquino-defends-marcos-years>
- Bautista, Jane. “Partisan historical distortion scored,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, May 23, 2022. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1601175/partisan-historical-distortion-scored?fbclid=IwAR1eU3xG5ee9Bu05SoLYMptsW9hJgAGI7Sy41MWBdg-Pc18t4bf-MLH4Zg#ixzz7U4o0leD3>
- Brillantes, Gregorio C. “Rolando Galman, the Other Body on the Tarmac,” *Esquire PH*, February 27, 2017. <https://www.esquiremag.ph/politics/opinion/the-other-body-a1789-20170227-lfrm4>
- Caña, Paul John. “What Was the Masagana 99 Program and Why Do Some People Want It Back?” *Esquire PH*, May 23, 2020. <https://www.esquiremag.ph/long-reads/features/what-was-the-masagana-99-program-a00289-20200523>

- Casilao, Joahna Lei. "VP Leni looks back on Jesse Robredo's underwater marker on his 9th death anniversary," *GMA News Online*, August 18, 2021. <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/799912/vp-leni-looks-back-on-jesse-robredo-s-underwater-marker-on-his-9th-death-anniversary/story/>
- Carr, Edward Hallett. *What is History?* 2nd ed. Penguin Books, 1964.
- Claudio, Lisandro, E. "Ninoy networked with everyone, Reds included," *GMA News*, August 18, 2021. <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/specialreports/198820/ninoy-networked-with-everyone-reds-included/story/>
- Claudio, Lisandro E., "Philippine Elections 2022," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Vol. 44, No. 3, December 2022, 382-388.
- Corpus, Victor N. *Silent War*. Quezon City, Philippines: VNC Enterprises, 1989.
- Criminal Case No. MC-223, pp. 71-75, *Rollo of L-47185*. Military Commission No. 2.
- Criminal Case No. MC-222, pp. 76-77, *Rollo of L-47185*. Military Commission No. 2.
- Croce, Benedetto. *Theory & History of Historiography*, trans. Douglas Ainslie. London: Goerge G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1921.
- Dalisay, Jose Y. Jr., *The Lavas: A Filipino Family*. Mandaluyong City: Anvil Publishing, Inc., 1999.
- Dalisay, Jose Y., Jr. "The Lava Brothers: Blood and Politics," *Public Policy*, July-September 1998.
- Vinia M. Datinguino, "20 Filipinos 20 Years after People Power: Jose Concepcion, Jr.," *Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism*, February 2, 2006. <https://old.pcij.org/stories/jose-concepcion-jr/>
- de Guzman, Nicaí. "The Bloody Mendiola Massacre Took Place 34 Years Ago Today," *Esquire PH*, January 22, 2019. <https://www.esquiremag.ph/long-reads/features/the-bloody-mendiola-massacre-took-place-32-years-today-a1729-20190122-lfrm2>
- Drogin, Bob. "Ex-Rebel 'Commander Dante' Enlists in a New Revolution," *Los Angeles Times*, October 28, 1989. <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1989-10-28-mn-692-story.html>

- “EDSA People Power Revolution,” *Amnesty International*, July 22, 2022. <https://www.amnesty.org.ph/2022/07/protestph-edsa-revolution/>
- Enrile, Juan Ponce and Nelson Navarro (ed.), *Juan Ponce Enrile: A Memoir*, ABS-CBN Publishing, Inc. 2012.
- Fe, Kaye. “Enrile says Cory Aquino did not know anything about governance,” *Eagle News*, September 21, 2018. <https://www.eaglenews.ph/enrile-says-cory-aquino-did-not-know-anything-about-governance/>
- Flores, Mikhail. “Philippines VP says peace talks with communist rebels a pact ‘with the devil,” *Reuters*, December 4, 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-vp-says-peace-talks-with-communist-rebels-pact-with-devil-2023-12-04/>
- Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Jodesz Gavilan, “LOOK BACK: The Ninoy Aquino Assassination,” *Rappler*, August 20, 2016. <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/143594-look-back-ninoy-aquino-assassination/>
- Garrido, Carlos. “The Relevance and Failures of Marcuse’s One-Dimensional Man,” *Hampton Institute, New York*, March 31, 2021. <https://www.hamptonthink.org/read/the-relevance-and-failures-of-marcuses-one-dimensional-man>
- Geronimo, Jee Y. “Escudero: It’s not logical to support VP Binay again,” in *Rappler*, December 1, 2015. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/elections/114493-escudero-not-logical-support-vice-president-binay/>
- G.R. Np. L-58284 *Supreme Court, En Banc*. Manila. Republic of the Philippines. November 19, 1981.
- “Hacienda Luisita Timeline,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, April 25, 2012. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/182081/hacienda-luisita-timeline>
- “Holding on: A Hacienda Luisita timeline from the Spanish to the Noynoy eras,” *GMA News Online*, August 18, 2010. <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/198854/holding-on-a-hacienda-luisita-timeline-from-the-spanish-to-the-noynoy-eras/story/>
- Hunt, Lynn. *History: Why It Matters*. Medford, MA: Polity Press, 2018.

- "I Don't think Marcos is stupid eh!" – Sen. Eddie Elarde on Plaza Miranda Bombing, E! Juan TV, *YouTube*.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S40GQ6bhWNk>
- Jose, Francisco Sionil. "Our People's Army," in HINDSIGHT, *The Philippine Star*, June 7, 2021.
<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2021/06/07/2103597/our-peoples-army>
- Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. Picador Books, 2008.
- Lagman, Anne Beatrice V. "Necropolitics': Death and politics as usual?" *Philstar.com*, July 16, 2021. <https://www.philstar.com/news-commentary/2021/07/16/2112975/necropolitics-death-and-politics-usual>
- Layug, Margaret Claire and Llanesca T. Panti, "Enrile lauds Marcos's 'restraint' for bloodless EDSA 1; Saguisag says troops wouldn't have followed," *GMA News Online*, September 23, 2018.
<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/668740/people-power-was-bloodless-because-of-marcos-restraint-enrile/story/>
- Lim, Frinston. "NPA rebels ransack banana plantation in Compostela Valley," *Inquirer.Net*, August 23, 2014.
<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/632041/npa-rebels-ransack-banana-plantation-in-compostela-valley>
- Maboloc, Christopher Ryan. "The Patchwork State," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, March 15, 2018.
<https://opinion.inquirer.net/111742/the-patchwork-state>
- Maggay, Melba Padilla (ed.), *To Be in History: Dark Days of Authoritarianism*. Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2019.
- "Magsaysay Plane Crash," *GMA News Online*, December 16, 2008.
<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/publicaffairs/content/139635/magsaysay-plane-crash/story/>
- Mansueto, Menelito. "Miranda Fricker's Epistemic Injustice: An Attempt at Appropriation of Philippine Social Realities," *Social Ethics Society Journal of Applied Philosophy*, Special Issue, October 2022, 55-88.
- Mata, Nestor and Vincente S. Villafranca. *One Came Back: The Magsaysay Tragedy*. Philippine Publishers, 1957.

- Mbembe, Achille. "Necropolitics," in *Public Culture*, Libby Meintjes (trans.) 15, No. 1: 11-40. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/39984>
- Mercado, Monina Allarey and Francisco Tatad (eds.), *People Power: The Philippine Revolution of 1986: An Eyewitness History*. James B. Reuters, S.J., Foundation, 1986.
- Miclat, Mario. *Secrets of the Eighteen Mansions*. Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2011.
- "Mon Tulfo's Column About Ninoy Aquino is Also a Learning Opportunity About History," *Esquire Philippines*, August 20, 2018. <https://www.esquiremag.ph/culture/lifestyle/mon-tulfo-inquirer-column-ninoy-aquino-a00203-20180820-lfrm>
- Mouffe, Chantal. *Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism*. Vienna: Institute for Advanced Studies, 2000.
- Mouffe, Chantal. *Which Public Sphere for a Democratic Society?* *Theoria*, June 2002, 55-65.
- Mouffe, Chantal. *The Democratic Paradox*. London and New York: Verso, 2000.
- Palicte, Che. "Remembering Digos City's 1989 gruesome massacre," *Philippine News Agency*, June 25, 2020. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1107101>
- Popper, Karl. "Science as Falsification" in *Conjectures and Refutations*. New York and London: Basic Books, 1962.
- Quimpo, Nathan Gilbert. "Review: Oligarchic Patrimonialism, Bossism, Electoral Clientelism, and Contested Democracy in the Philippines," *Comparative Politics* 37, No. 2 (January 2005), 242.
- Ramos, Marlon & Niña P. Calleja, "Soldier who provided leads on Ninoy Aquino slay dies in crash," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, May 9, 2014. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/600804/soldier-who-provided-leads-on-ninoy-aquino-slay-dies-in-crash>
- Ricoeur, Paul. "Narrated Time" in *Philosophy Today*, 29 (4), 1985, 259-272.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Time and Narrative*, trans. By K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer, Vol. III. USA: The University of Chicago Press, 1985.
- Rodriguez, Rufus B., "The Philippine Revolution in Mindanao," in *Recollectio: annuarium historicum augustinianum*, 2002-2003, No. 25-26, 99-112.

- Salonga, Jovito R. *Journey of Struggle and Hope: The Memoir of Jovito R. Salonga* (U.P. Center for Leadership, Citizenship, and Democracy, 2001).
- Smith, Anna Marie. *Laclau and Mouffe: The Radical Democratic Imaginary*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Solis, Rolando M. "Heart-to-heart talks with Ninoy," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, August 21, 2011. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/44989/heart-to-heart-talks-with-ninoy>
- Southerl, Daniel and James Rupert, "Aquino Government Frees 4 Communists from Prison," *The Washington Post*, March 6, 1986. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1986/03/06/aquino-government-frees-4-communists-from-prison/7d01e984-a1b3-45f6-9df5-b7d0a2f7d656/>
- Taruc, Luis. *He Who Rides the Tiger: The Story of an Asian Guerilla Leader*. New York: Frederick A. Prager, 1967.
- Tiglao, Rigoberto. *Debunked: Uncovering Hard Truths about EDSA, Martial Law, Marcos, Aquino, with a Special Section on the Duterte Presidency*. Akropolis Publishing, 2018.
- Tulfo, Ramon. "Ninoy's Death and How to Manipulate People." *Ramon Tulfo Blog*, August 17, 2018. <https://www.ramontulfo.org/journal/ninoys-death-and-how-to-manipulate-people>
- Tulfo, Ramon. "Did Ninoy mastermind assassination?" *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, August 18, 2018. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1022513/did-ninoy-mastermind-assassination>