Memories of the anti-Marcos movement

The Left and the mnemonic dynamics of the post-authoritarian Philippines[1]

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***Abstract*: The Bantayog ng mga Bayani [Monument of Heroes] is a memorial centre in Manila dedicated to the memory of individuals who resisted the dictatorship of the late President Ferdinand E. Marcos. This article examines history as represented in this memorial centre. Through an examination of its museum and the debates concerning whom the Bantayog should honour as heroes, it analyses a key historical tension in the representation of the Marcos period: an ambivalence regarding the anti-dictatorship struggle of the organized Left. It also examines the class-based nature of historical memory in the Philippines, arguing that class positions inform who and what is remembered.**

***Keywords*: memory; class; the Left; Marcos; Bantayog ng mga Bayani; Philippines**

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The post-authoritarian Philippines remain haunted by the ghost of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos (president from 1965–86). More than 20 years after the bloodless Epifaño del los Santos Avenue (EDSA) People Power Revolution that overthrew the dictator, many Filipinos

[1] I would like to thank Kate McGregor, Jojo Abinales, Vera Mackie, Men Sta. Ana and Rommel Curaming for going through drafts of this paper. I would also like to thank Vince Rafael and an anonymous reviewer for their constructive reviews. Needless to say, errors in this piece are my own.

are still dealing with the trauma caused by the regime's brutality.[2] Activists and progressive journalists inevitably frame state-sponsored violence, high-level corruption and various other abuses of power by post-Marcos presidents as reminiscent of the dictator and his martial law regime.[3] They argue that if Filipinos are to preserve democracy, they must remember the time when a dictator took it from them.[4]

Discourses of remembrance of the Marcos period in the Philippines mirror the 'never again [*nunca más*]' trope in post-authoritarian Latin American states such as Argentina, Chile, Guatemala and Peru.[5] In these countries, this framework has strengthened efforts to discuss state violence and human rights, allowing the process of healing to be negotiated in public spaces. Human rights activists have linked the 'never again' battle cry (an injunction against collective forgetting) to the defence of

[2] According to historian Alfred W. McCoy, there were 3,257 cases of extra-judicial killings (more than the 2,115 killed in Pinochet's Chile) and 37,000 cases of torture during the regime; 70,000 were also incarcerated. See Alfred W. McCoy (1999), 'Dark legacy: human rights under the Marcos regime', in *Memory, Truth Telling and Pursuit of Justice: A Conference on the Legacy of the Marcos Dictatorship*, Office of Research and Publications, Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City, p 131.

[3] When President Fidel Ramos attempted to amend the constitution in 1997, ostensibly to run for a second term, former president and anti-Marcos icon Corazon 'Cory' Aquino compared Ramos to Marcos in a rally against Charter Change (Cha Cha). See *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (1997), '600,000 attend Rizal park rally: it was Cory magic all over', 22 September. Ramos's successor, Joseph Estrada, also drew comparisons to Marcos because of alleged privileging of crony businesses during his administration. See Australian Broadcasting Company Foreign Correspondent, *Philippines: Ghost of Marcos*, Foreign Correspondent, broadcast 12 November 1999. Most recently, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has been labelled 'Marcosian' for the repressive handling of dissent and protest under her administration. This was particularly pronounced when she declared a state of emergency in 2006, ostensibly in an attempt to stop a rebellion against her government. See *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (2006), 'Ramos: support for Arroyo "waning" 1017 "Marcosian"', *Inq7.net*, 25 February, Website: http://www.inquirer.net/specialfeatures/stateofemergency/view.php?db=0&article=0060225-67472; Gil Cabacungan and Lira Dalangin-Fernandez (2006), 'Arroyo declares state of emergency', 24 February, Website: http://www.inquirer.net/specialfeatures/stateofemergency/view.php?db=0&article=20060224-67295. There is also increasing fear that Arroyo will attempt to stay in power even after her term expires in 2010.

[4] See, for example, the articles of prominent columnist Conrado de Quiros. In particular, refer to Conrado de Quiros (2008), 'Japanese times, there's the rub', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 29 October, Website: http://opinion.inquirer.net/inquireropinion/columns/view/20081029-169002/Japanese-times.

[5] However, unlike in Latin American countries, this discourse has not generated the political will that has allowed many Latin American countries to discuss past violence in forums such as Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. See Michael Shifter and Vinay Jahawar (2004), 'Reconciliation in Latin America', *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol 11, No 1, pp 127–135 for a survey of the state of reconciliation movements in Latin America.

human rights, arguing that only through collective remembering and rejection of past violence can future violence be prevented.[6] However, while it is easy to reject authoritarian rule and human rights violations, it is more difficult to agree on issues concerning methods of resistance or what the post-authoritarian future should be. Put simply, a consensus on what to reject is easier to achieve than a consensus on what to espouse. What one espouses is contingent on specific interests associated with particular subject positions. Since these interests may come into conflict with one another, attempts at forging united mnemonic fronts may sublimate differences and occlude the identities of social actors during the time of dictatorship. As Oglesby notes in the case of Guatemala:

> 'Current notions of historical memory are conflated to mean the individualized experiences of victims of human rights violations. This sort of discourse emphasizes that the war produced victims, but it does not elucidate that in the majority of cases, these victims also had identities as social actors, as members of organizations (some revolutionary, some not) involved in projects of social change.'[7]

Thus, the trope of common victimhood, while creating a unified discourse, may obscure the fact that many of the victims were active social agents associated with specific social causes. Given this, it becomes imperative to ask: who are the 'we' that remember and who are the 'them' that we remember? These are difficult questions to address in the context of the anti-dictatorship struggle in the Philippines, for the 'anti-Marcos' grouping is a tenuous one. The anti-dictatorship movement included various factions of the Left, political oppositionists and the 'middle forces' (formerly apolitical middle class and upper class groups that joined the struggle mainly after the assassination of Marcos's arch-rival Senator Benigno Aquino), to name but a few.[8] The struggle also included Filipinos from various classes, from prominent business-

[6] For analysis concerning the link between collective remembering and human rights, see Elizabeth Jelin (1994), 'The politics of memory: the human rights movement and the construction of democracy in Argentina', *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol 1, No 2, pp 38–58.

[7] Elizabeth Oglesby (2007), 'Educating citizens in postwar Guatemala: historical memory, genocide, and the culture of peace', *Radical History Review*, No 97, p 79.

[8] See Patricio N. Abinales (1988), 'The left and other forces: the nature and dynamics of pre-1986 coalition politics', in *Marxism in the Philippines: Second Series*, University of the Philippines 3rd World Studies Center, Quezon City, pp 26–49.

men to unnamed peasants. These groups, though forming coalitions at various points, did not always see eye to eye.

In this article, I seek to analyse the politics of memory as informed by the different subject-positions of those who remember the anti-Marcos struggle, using the Bantayog ng mga Bayani [Monument of Heroes, henceforth referred to as the Bantayog] – a monument, museum and memorial park in Manila dedicated to anti-dictatorship heroes – as a case study. The Bantayog represents the most concerted effort at public memorializing of resistance to the Marcos regime, making it a crucial *lieu de mémoire* [site of memory][9] for the Philippine nation. In what follows, I situate the Bantayog within the political power structure that emerged after the EDSA Revolution, examining the monument's history in order to uncover the political forces that shape its discourse. I then proceed to locate the various historical tensions that operate within it, focusing first on representations of history in the Bantayog museum, and second, on the politics involved in the selection of heroes for the monument's 'Wall of Remembrance'. I suggest that the core tension is an ambivalence regarding the representation of the organized Left and its opposition to the Marcos regime. This tension concerns how to commemorate the contribution of the Left and Left-aligned movements, particularly organized labour, to the struggle against dictatorship. More importantly, this tension points towards a larger issue of the class-based nature of historical memory in the Philippines.

According to Quimpo, the term *Left* in the Philippines 'has been associated with communist, socialist, and social democratic (SD) movements, parties, groups, and currents'.[10] He adds that because of the country's colonial history, the Philippine Left has also opposed 'imperialism' and 'foreign interference' in the politics, culture and economics of the country. There is barely any consensus as to who constitutes the Centre and the Right, but the Left, currently and historically, has tended to view all major electoral parties as rightist.[11] During the Marcos period, the Left was largely identified with the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its National Democratic (ND) movement of mass organizations. The CPP and its ND movement were the largest and most consistent opponents of the dictatorship until they boycotted the

[9] This concept is theorized in the work of historian Pierre Nora (1989). See his seminal 'Between memory and history: *les lieux de mémoire*', *Representations*, No 26, pp 7–24.

[10] Nathan Gilbert Quimpo (2008), *Contested Democracy and the Left in the Philippines After Marcos*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, p 56.

[11] Quimpo, *supra* note 10, at p 56.

1986 snap election between Marcos and Corazon Aquino. The election, which saw widespread cheating from Marcos's electoral machine, paved the way for large-scale protests against Marcos, culminating in the EDSA Revolution. The exclusion from EDSA had two major effects on the Party. First, it sidelined the Party from the political power structure that emerged after EDSA. Indeed, EDSA became the means through which power was transferred from a dictator to elements of the old landed political elite, of which Aquino was a member.[12] Second, it intensified intra-party debates, particularly regarding the Left's role in electoral struggles and the wisdom of the sacred Maoist strategy of a 'protracted people's war' from the countryside – a strategy that lost appeal, given the success of a peaceful urban insurrection. These debates reached their climax in late 1992 when CPP Chairman Jose Maria Sison, writing under the nom de guerre Armando Liwanag, 'reaffirmed' the Party's Maoist orthodoxy and labelled dissenters 'counterrevolutionaries'.[13] This 'rectification movement' led to an internal Party split between pro-Sison 'reaffirmists' and anti-Sison 'rejectionists'.[14]

Since these events, the CPP has become a shadow of what it was during the height of the dictatorship.[15] As such, for those behind the

[12] Using the case of a squatter's area (slum) in Manila called Tatalon, Pinches, for example, argues that 'the people power that drove Marcos out of government was mainly bourgeois in practice and conception' and that the revolution 'strengthened the hand of conservative forces in the Philippines […]' Michael Pinches (1987), 'People power and the urban poor: the politics of unity and division in Manila after Marcos', in Peter Krinks, ed, *The Philippines Under Aquino*, Australian Development Studies Network, Canberra, p 87.

[13] Refer to Armando Liwanag (1992), 'Reaffirm our basic principles and rectify errors', *Kasarinlan*, Vol 8, No 1, pp 96–157.

[14] The best known account of the split is Joel Rocamora (1994), *Breaking Through: The Struggle Within the Communist Party of the Philippines*, Anvil Publishing, Manila. The debates that ultimately led to the split and the Party's decline are discussed in Kathleen Weekly (2001), *The Communist Party of the Philippines 1968–1993: A Story of its Theory and Practice*, University of the Philippines Press, Quezon City; Armando Malay (1988), 'The dialectics of Kaluwagan', in *Marxism in the Philippines: Second Series*, University of the Philippines 3rd World Studies Center, Quezon City, pp 1–21. The implications of this split are analysed in a chapter in Patricio N. Abinales, ed (1996), *The Revolution Falters: The Left in Philippine Politics After 1986*, Cornell Southeast Asia Program, Ithaca, NY.

[15] According to Weekly, the CPP was a serious threat to the government in 1985, with the government estimating NPA membership at around 24,000. According to Rutten, NPA membership dropped to 10,300 in 1993, while the latest government figure published in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* pegs the membership at 5,700. Weekly, *supra* note 14, at p 104; Rosanne Rutten (1996), 'Popular support for the revolutionary movement CPP-NPA: experiences in a hacienda in Negros Occidental', in Patricio N. Abinales, ed, *The Revolution Falters: The Left in Philippine Politics After 1986*,

Bantayog, the dilemma concerns how to represent a movement integral to the anti-dictatorship movement but excluded from the elite political consensus of the post-authoritarian Philippines. What is at stake in remembering the Left's struggle is not merely historical accuracy, but also an understanding of social contradictions that discourses from the Left force society to confront.[16]

The Bantayog's history

The origins of the Bantayog lie in the widespread surge of patriotism that occurred after EDSA. Immediately after the fall of Marcos in 1986, Dr Ruben Mallari came to the Philippines to celebrate the end of the dictatorship. Dr Mallari, a well known Filipino physician in California, was active in the anti-dictatorship struggle in the USA.[17] He was also the doctor of opposition Senator Jovito Salonga during the Senator's exile in the USA in the early 1980s. While in the Philippines, Mallari suggested to Salonga that he should form an organization to honour those who fought the dictatorship but died before the victory in EDSA. In response, Salonga immediately gathered a group to organize the Bantayog ng mga Bayani [Monument of Heroes] Foundation (hence the term 'Bantayog' is used to refer both to the monument and the organization behind it).[18] Among the initial members were Salonga, then Chairman of President Aquino's Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG), which was tasked with investigating Marcos's ill-gotten wealth, and Doña Aurora Aquino – mother of Senator Benigno Aquino.[19]

The Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation was set up to remind the Filipino people of the horrors of dictatorship. 'Never again' was their battle cry. According to Ramon Osmeña, the Bantayog's first executive director:

Cornell Southeast Asia Program, Ithaca, p 116; Joel Guinto (2008), 'Teodoro: Troops on guard vs "desperate" communist rebels', *Inquirer.net*, 31 March, Website: http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/breakingnews/nation/view/20080331-127453/Teodoro-Troops-on-guard-vs-desperate-communist-rebels.

16 Indeed, despite the fragmentation of the Left, various leftist groups remain at the forefront of challenging the traditional elite politics of the Philippines. For a book that maps the contemporary Philippine Left, see Quimpo, *supra* note 10.

17 Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation (2008), 'How the Bantayog came into being', in *Event Program of the Annual Celebration in Honor of Martyrs and Heroes*, Bantayog Memorial Center, Quezon City, 2 December, p 3.

18 Jovito R. Salonga, interview with the author, Pasig City, 24 January 2009.

19 Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation, *supra* note 17, at p 3.

> 'During the past regime, people were saying that we were a nation of 55 million cowards and one dictator. Very few people seem to realize that there were quite a number of men and women who fought for freedom. This foundation seeks to honour those who dared oppose the oppressive regime. At the same time, we wish to remind future generations that we should not let this happen again.'[20]

A concept paper for the Bantayog, which became the basis for its articles of incorporation, echoes this sentiment:

> 'For as we remember those victims of authoritarian rule, we shall become more vigilant about preserving our freedom, defending our rights and opposing any attempt by anyone to foist another dictatorship upon us.'[21]

The initial members of the Bantayog asked families of victims, civic organizations and the public to nominate martyrs as potential individuals to be honoured by the organization. Concomitantly, they set up a Research and Documentation Committee under Mrs Thelma M. Arceo to verify the nominations and to conduct independent research.[22] Mrs Arceo, mother of slain activist Ferdie Arceo, was the founder of a group called Mothers and Relatives Against Tyranny (MARTYR). The committee obtained its initial information from the files of this organization and Task Force Detainees – a human rights group that became prominent during the Marcos regime.[23]

Meanwhile, the organization attempted to acquire a site for the memorial. The government, under President Aquino, set aside a 1.5-hectare lot in the Metro Manila suburban district of Quezon City.[24] Aquino even donated a month's worth of her salary to the Bantayog. However, the organization eventually discovered that the Land Bank of the Philippines – a government bank – owned the property. This meant that Aquino had no authority to donate the lot. The Bantayog thought this would be an insurmountable obstacle, but Deogracias Vistan, then President of the Land Bank, gave the Bantayog a long-term lease at

[20] *Philippine Tribune* (1986), 'A memorial for the victims of tyranny', 30 November.
[21] Cited in Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation, *supra* note 17, at p 4.
[22] Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation, *supra* note 17 at p 4.
[23] *Philippine Tribune*, *supra* note 20.
[24] *Philippine Tribune*, *supra* note 20.

almost no cost.[25] Vistan currently sits on the Bantayog's Board of Trustees.

On 30 November 1992, the national day of tribute to anticolonial revolutionary Andres Bonifacio (Bonifacio Day),[26] the Bantayog unveiled a monument and a Wall of Remembrance, on which the names of an initial 65 martyrs were enshrined.[27] The 'Inangbayan' [Motherland] Monument is a 45-foot sculpture made of steel and brass. It is inspired by the theme 'from where our heroes fall, our nation rises' and depicts a fallen man – the hero who engages in national struggle – being raised by a woman who represents the Inangbayan.[28] Words from Jose Rizal, the most prominent anticolonial propagandist of the 1890s and the country's national hero, are inscribed on the base.[29] The text is from his final poem 'Mi Ultimo Adios' [My Final Farewell] and is written in English and Filipino:

> 'I die just when I see the dawn break
> Through the gloom of the night, to herald the day;
> And if colour is lacking my blood thou shall take,
> Pour'd out at need for thy dear sake,
> To dye with its crimson the waking ray.'

The initial criteria for placing names on the Wall of Remembrance were very stringent. The martyr should have died between 30 December 1965, when Marcos first took the oath of office, and 25 February 1986, the day Marcos fled the Philippines. He/she should have died or disappeared as a result of the following: military operations, protecting the ballot, speaking or writing against the injustices of the time, joining rallies and other acts of protest, or working with the poor and

[25] Jovito R. Salonga (2008), Speech delivered in the Paggunita at Parangal sa mga Iskolar ng Bayan sa Bantayog ng mga Bayani [Remembering and Paying Tribute to the Scholars of the Nation at the Monument of Heroes], Quezon City, 28 November.

[26] Bonifacio was the leader [supremo] of the Katipunan, the revolutionary group that launched the revolution of 1896 against Spain. The 1896 revolution was the first anticolonial revolution in Asia.

[27] Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation, *supra* note 17, at p 4.

[28] *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (1992), 'Monument rises today', 30 November.

[29] Rizal's place in Philippine history is a topic much debated by historians and nationalists. In the 1960s, Leftists denigrated Rizal for being a moderate and a reformer. Quibuyen, however, argues that the image of Rizal as a moderate and reformer was a fiction used by American colonialists to pacify Filipinos. Whatever the case, the use of Rizal's words was not surprising, given a general acceptance of his role as the 'First Filipino'. Floro Quibuyen (1999), *A Nation Aborted: Rizal, American Hegemony, and Philippine Nationalism*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City.

marginalized.[30] In 1993, however, the Bantayog Officers decided to honour as heroes those who had died after EDSA, but had struggled valiantly during the dictatorship. [31]

Board of Trustees member, Rafael 'Raffy' Paredes, himself a former underground ND activist, recalls that very few people visited the Bantayog when it consisted of only the wall and the monument. With only these two structures in the complex, there was barely anything to do in the Bantayog. He adds that neither were there any volunteers in the complex to assist visitors.[32] Things changed when, on 23 February 2007, the foundation inaugurated the Senator Jovito R. Salonga Building. The Salonga Building is two storeys high with 1,000 square metres of floor space; it houses the Bantayog Museum, a library, the Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco Auditorium, a multipurpose room and an administration office.[33] Alfonso Yuchengco, a prominent businessman and former ambassador during the Aquino administration, is the current Chairman of the Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation. He was a financial backer of anti-Marcos political oppositionists during the dictatorship.

Susan Macabuag, one of the key volunteers in the conceptualization and construction of the museum, says the Bantayog became a venue for student field trips after the opening of the museum. In the Philippines, museums are among the primary destinations for educational field trips, which largely explains the influx of visitors to the Bantayog.[34] When I interviewed Macabuag in early December 2008, she told me told that 7,000 students had already visited the museum.[35] When I left Manila in early February 2009, around 1,400 students had just visited the Bantayog in one day. Those students, in addition to a few other small visits before and after the holidays, raised the estimate to around 9,000 students. Macabuag notes that most of these students came from either public school or middle class private schools. Very few students from Manila's elite private Catholic schools and universities have visited

30 *Philippine Tribune*, *supra* note 20.

31 Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation, *supra* note 17, at p 4.

32 Rafael Paredes, interview with author, Quezon City, 6 January 2009.

33 Alfonso T. Yuchengco (2007), 'The chairman's report: twenty-one years with the Bantayog: August 21, 1986–August 20, 2007', Report presented to the *21st Annual General Membership Meeting*, Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation, Quezon City, Philippines, 24 August.

34 Most primary and secondary schools organize annual educational field trips for their students, and many young Filipinos get to visit museums and national parks through these trips.

35 Susan Macabuag, interview with the author, Quezon City, 3 December 2008.

the Bantayog.[36] Some volunteers suspect that this is probably because of these schools' aversion to the leftist leanings of the organization.

While I was on fieldwork from November to February 2008, the Bantayog volunteers were mainly busy cataloguing and sorting various documents and books for the library. Many former activists, human rights organizations and friends of the Bantayog had donated these materials. The aim of the organization is to turn the library into a hub of research on the Marcos period. Shortly after I left in February, the organization opened the library to the public.

The current Bantayog is a sprawling memorial complex at the heart of one of the busiest intersections in Metropolitan Manila. Apart from the Inangbayan Monument, the Wall of Remembrance and the Salonga building, the Bantayog complex also hosts the Bahay Bayani [House of Heroes] – a venue for small meetings of former activists and residents of nearby poor communities and the site of a free weekly clinic, an elegantly landscaped 'Reflexology Garden' and a 1,000-seat outdoor amphitheatre.[37]

As an organization, the Bantayog functions through the efforts of unpaid volunteers. These 29 volunteers (15 working in the museum and 14 in the library), along with three permanent employees, run the everyday affairs of the Bantayog. All the volunteers were activists during the dictatorship, most of them being affiliated with the ND movement at one point. All, save one, of the volunteers I met were women. One cannot, however, homogenize the volunteers. Some were high-level cadres, while some were more involved in the Party's mass legal organizations. Moreover – although this is not discussed for fear of creating rifts in the organization – some volunteers are associated with the Reaffirmists, some with the Rejectionists, while others have completely withdrawn from these debates.

Despite the marked leftist presence in the organization, Aquino-affiliated liberal board members such as Salonga, Yuchengco and Vistan remain at the centre of the organization (although Leftists such as Paredes and former CPP negotiator Carolina Malay hold seats on the board). As such, one can crudely see the Bantayog as an alliance between progressive nationalist politicians, anti-Marcos businessmen and the Left. This is a set-up that mirrors Marcos-era alliances that were often transient and unstable.[38]

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] Yuchengco, *supra* note 33.

[38] See Patricio N. Abinales (2001), *Fellow Traveler: Essays on Filipino Communism*, University of the Philippines Press, Quezon City, pp 195–228 for a discussion of the ideological basis for this alliance.

According to Macabuag, the Bantayog operates through seeking common ground between its various members.[39] This common ground is the battle cry of 'never again'. As mentioned earlier, however, the 'never again' slogan, while unifying, erases social conflict. One gets a glimpse of this tension in the Bantayog Museum.

Beyond EDSA: touring the Bantayog Museum

Tensions within the Bantayog coalition do not necessarily manifest themselves in open ideological conflicts or debates. At times, simple divergences in representation already point to different views and approaches to history. The Bantayog Museum, although approved and financed by the liberals on the board, is largely a creation of the leftist volunteers. The Chair of the Museum Committee, for example, is Carolina 'Bobbie' Malay, a prominent former cadre who was a member of the National Democratic Front (NDF, which is the CPP's front organization) panel that conducted peace talks with the Aquino administration in 1986. Moreover, leftist volunteers such as Macabuag created the museum displays and also serve as tour guides for students visiting the Bantayog. The Bantayog Museum, then, is an example of the Left attempting to represent history in the context of the post-EDSA elite consensus. During my fieldwork, I was able to join groups of secondary school students as Bantayog volunteers gave them a tour of the complex. The historical narrative of the Bantayog Museum is best understood within the context of this tour, as the tour places the various sites of the Bantayog (the monument, the wall and the museum) into a single discursive space.[40]

The volunteers seemed to be at their most enthusiastic when guiding students – all of them communicating an enthusiasm for a history in which they felt deeply embedded. The tour begins at the Inangbayan Monument, where the volunteer in charge discusses the symbolism behind the sculpture. According to the volunteer, the fallen man represents the hero who suffers for national redemption, while the woman raising him up represents the ultimate salvation that stems from the

[39] Macabuag, *supra* note 35.

[40] Yoneyama, for instance, demonstrates the role of the tour guide's narrative in ordering the spatial elements of a memorial site. See Lisa Yoneyama (1999), *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, and London, pp 112–147.

Inangbayan [mother country].[41] The guide also relates the monument to the quote from Rizal, which concerns the suffering one must go through for the redemption of the nation. At this point, some volunteers share the fact that they were part of the struggle against the dictatorship. A few mention that the Marcos regime incarcerated them. Every volunteer emphasizes the central message of the Bantayog of 'never again'.

The tour is thus framed by a symbol that not only feminizes nationhood, but also articulates it with religious tropes. The quote from Rizal, which describes a suffering and sacrifice similar to Christ's, together with the pietà-like form of the structure, represents national redemption in Christian terms. This is the narrative of the EDSA forces constituted by Aquino, her allies in the Catholic Church and the religious upper and middle class, who view the fall of Marcos as a result of both 'people power' and Marian intervention.[42]

From the monument, the volunteer leads the students to the Wall of Remembrance where she tells the students that the names on the wall are those of martyrs and heroes of the Marcos period[43] and asks which names are familiar to them. Most students immediately recognize the name of the late senator Benigno Aquino – one of the ultimate symbols of EDSA and 'middle forces' resistance to Marcos. The volunteer then directs the students' attention to the names of the oldest and youngest people on the wall. The oldest, Lorenzo Tañada who died at the age of 91, was a prominent nationalist senator and one of the few politicians respected by the Left. The youngest, Lorenzo 'Nick' Lansang, was a student activist from the ND youth group Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan (SDK, or Democratic Association of the Youth), martyred at the age of 18.

[41] This feminization of the national imagery and its articulation with religious notions of salvation in the context of people power is eloquently discussed in the work of Tadiar. See Neferti Xina M. Tadiar (2004), *Fantasy-Production: Sexual Economies and other Philippine Consequences for the New World Order*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City. See specifically Chapter 5: '"People power": miraculous revolt' (pp 185–224) and Chapter 6: 'Himala, "miracle": the heretical potential of Nora Aunor's star power' (pp 225–260).

[42] Along EDSA, for example, is the Shrine of Mary Queen of Peace (Our Lady of EDSA) – a towering bronze statue of the Virgin Mary. The shrine 'is dedicated to Our Lady who has miraculously interceded to oust the dictatorship in a peaceful and bloodless uprising that is now world renowned as the People Power Revolution of 1986'. See Shrine of Mary the Queen of Peace: Our Lady of EDSA, 'About the EDSA Shrine', Website: http://www.edsashrine.com/edsa/about-edsa.html.

[43] Most volunteers also make the disclaimer that the remains of the martyrs and heroes are not behind the wall.

The Wall of Remembrance follows the aesthetic of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC, which consists of black granite walls with 58,196 names inscribed on them. Sturken notes that the names on the war memorial 'are listed without elaboration, with no place or date of death, no rank, no place of origin'. The de-emphasizing of differences such as military rank 'allows the names to transcend a military context and to represent the names of a society'.[44] Similarly in the case of the Bantayog, some tour guides mention that no additional information is given concerning those honoured on the Wall of Remembrance in order to emphasize that the Bantayog is a 'united front' against forgetting. The flattening of differences brought about by a simple listing of names is consistent with the unitive logic of 'never again' – a logic that relies on unity in a common struggle.

After viewing the Wall and the Monument, the students spend the rest of the tour in the Salonga Building. In the building, the volunteers lead different groups to either the Museum or the Yuchengco Auditorium. Those in the auditorium watch an episode of Kasaysayan TV [History TV], a programme from an educational cable channel. The episode is entitled 'Panunumbalik Ng Demokrasya [The Return of Democracy]: People Power' and covers the chain of events from Benigno Aquino's assassination to the fall of Marcos in 1986. While the Left was not sidelined in the various calls for justice after the assassination,[45] the senator's death is more widely recognized in popular representations for mobilizing the 'middle-forces'. Moreover, since the rest of the programme covers the snap elections of 1986 and the People Power revolt – events that the Left boycotted – its narrative practically excludes the Left. In other words, the film represents mainstream memory – the popular view that emphasizes EDSA as the defining moment of the anti-dictatorship struggle. In this narrative, the heroes are not leftist guerrillas or student activists, but the Aquinos

[44] Marita Sturken (1997), *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, and London, pp 59–60.

[45] Lane, for example, argues that the NDs gained a new audience after the Aquino assassination through their involvement with the Justice for Aquino Justice for All (JAJA) movement, which was a broad coalition that united centre, left of centre and leftist forces. Through JAJA, the NDs were able to 'speak to supporters of other forces, at mass demonstrations and other rallies as well as to the mass of non-organized people who became involved'. See Max R. Lane (1990), *The Urban Mass Movement in the Philippines: 1983–87*, Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, p 4.

(representing the political elite), the Church, moderate socialists and nationalist professionals.[46]

The students witness a different story once the tour moves to the Museum. Even before entering, one notices a large mural on the staircase leading to the Museum. The work is by Art Castillo, who was a propaganda artist during the dictatorship. Covering the entire wall, from slightly above the floor of the first level to the ceiling of the second, it is a grand tribute to the leftist activist. At the foreground of the work is an activist leader leading a rally with megaphone in hand. Behind him are flags of various activist groups, the most prominent of which are those of the ND vanguard youth group Kabataang Makabayan (KM, or Nationalist Youth), the SDK and the Movement for a Democratic Philippines (a coalition of the Left and progressive politicians such as Tañada). Behind these flags are those of other anti-Marcos organizations such as Lakasdiwa [Strength of Spirit] – an initially social democratic group that shifted its allegiance to the NDs – and the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) – the centrist union once led by Edgar 'Edjop' Jopson. Jopson, a moderate who became a top ranking CPP cadre, was possibly the most prominent student activist of the 1960s.[47] Around the central figure are various scenes, mostly from the period leading up to the declaration of martial law: students protesting outside the gates of the presidential palace and the halls of congress, a group of countryside rebels studying a red book, a group of workers on strike, and other scenes of protest.

Upon walking into the Museum with the students, a 'memory bank' – a small rattan box where guests can drop notes containing their martial law stories – immediately caught my eye. The memory bank is consistent with what I surmised was the overarching goal of the Museum: to present the stories of various groups and sectors that fought the dictatorship. The Museum itself consists mostly of panels on walls that contain photos, documents or illustrations. A text written in Filipino

[46] Such groups are part of the elite dominant bloc in Philippine politics discussed in the work of Hedman. See Eva-Lotta E. Hedman (2006), *In the Name of Civil Society: From Free Election Movements to People Power in the Philippines,* University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu.

[47] Jopson was arguably the most prominent student activist of the Marcos period. Filipino–American biographer Benjamin Pimentel sees his story as resonating with many others of his generation. Many editions of Pimentel's biography have been released under different titles. See Benjamin Pimentel (2006), *UG: An Underground Tale: The Journey of Edgar Jopson and the First Quarter Storm Generation*, Anvil Publishing, Manila, for the latest version.

and English introduces each section of the Museum, offering a chronological narrative. Each section deals with specific events or groups during the dictatorship. The Museum also contains a few replicas (most notably a replica of a prison cell), artwork, and a significant amount of memorabilia.

The first section concerns the national situation before Marcos's declaration of martial law in 1972. Surrounding an image of Marcos and his family from his first inauguration are photos depicting different social ills and controversies plaguing Marcos's first two terms (1965–72), including the 'Jabidah massacre' perpetrated by the Marcos military.[48] In a corner behind this display is a life-sized photo of liberal opposition Senator Jose 'Pepe' Diokno leading a rally against suspension of the writ of habeas corpus – the privilege that allows detainees relief from unlawful imprisonment. The suspension of the writ enabled Marcos to arrest his critics.[49] From the beginning, it is evident that the Museum emphasizes the regime's violations of human rights and the public resistance this created. As argued earlier, human rights are essential to the 'never again' trope, as they unify the nation through a sense of common victimhood. The focus on human rights is therefore understandable in the context of the Bantayog as a unified front. What is surprising, however, is that this emphasis overwhelms representations of economic malfeasance during the Marcos regime – an issue that informs many discussions concerning the late dictator.[50] Not much attention is given to the corruption-ridden crony economy through which many of Marcos's friends and associates made significant fortunes – the system that turned many businessmen, including Bantayog Chairman Alfonso Yuchengco, into enemies of Marcos.[51] The Museum does

[48] In 1968, the Philippine military massacred Moro Muslims it had initially recruited to conduct insurgency operations in the then disputed territory of Sabah.

[49] The rally was organized by Diokno's Movement of Citizens for Civil Liberties (MCCL), an alliance of the National Democrats, Social Democrats and various civic organizations. Its rallies were attended by up to 50,000 people at a time. The organization warned of the imminence of martial law. See Petronilo Bn. Daroy (1988), 'On the eve of dictatorship and revolution', in Aurora Javate-De Dios, Petronilo Bn. Daroy, and Lorna Kalaw-Tirol, eds, *Dictatorship and Revolution: Roots of People's Power*, Conspectus Foundation Incorporated, Manila, p 23.

[50] See Belinda Aquino (1987), *The Politics of Plunder: The Philippines Under Marcos*, Great Books Trading, Manila, for research into the widespread corruption of the Marcos government.

[51] Thompson claims that it was Marcos's 'sultanism' – a form of personalistic rule in which the ruler exercises unrestricted power through threatening opponents and rewarding friends – that drove businessmen like Yuchengco and many of his businessmen friends to oppose the Marcos regime. An integral aspect of this sultanism was the

not narrate a story from the subject-position of the bourgeois businessman whose experience of the regime was framed more by its corruption than its human rights violations. The narrative is one of violence, political repression and resistance. Despite the large influence of anti-Marcos businessmen on the Bantayog, the Museum is framed by martial law experiences common to Leftists since the most brutal of Marcos state terror was targeted largely at elements associated, or perceived to be associated, with the Left.

Following the first display is one that depicts the brewing storm shortly before the martial law declaration, particularly police repression during the First Quarter Storm – a series of massive protests and subsequent acts of repression in early 1970.[52] This serves as a transition to displays about the Philippines under martial law – a period portrayed in all its brutality. Imprisonment appears as one of the salient experiences of the time. Possibly the most notable display is a life-sized replica of a military prison cell. Inside and surrounding the replica are prison memorabilia including books, correspondence and prison art. Not surprisingly, there are also many representations of military repression such as drawings depicting torture and photos of massacres in the countryside. A panel exhibiting artwork of children displaced from rural villages by military operations struck me the most, particularly one drawing in which a *bahay kubo* [straw house] has caught fire while soldiers shoot at it. The aim is ostensibly to shock the viewer out of complacency – to strengthen vigilance against potential future dictatorships.[53]

From the horrors of the regime, the museum moves to mapping the various anti-dictatorship opposition groups. From my conversations

crony-driven economy that privileged the businesses of Marcos's friends. Yuchengco's opposition to this system led him to become the largest financier of the Light a Fire Movement – an anti-Marcos urban bombing campaign organized by prominent politicians and businessmen. See Mark R. Thompson (1995), *The Anti-Marcos Struggle: Personalistic Rule and Democratic Transition in the Philippines*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, and London, pp 86–87.

[52] Journalist Jose Lacaba wrote an important first-hand account of the First Quarter Storm. See Jose F. Lacaba (2003), *Days of Disquiet, Nights of Rage: The First Quarter Storm and Related Events*, Anvil Publishing, Manila.

[53] Emphasizing horror and atrocity is a powerful tool, as seen in the case of the Nanjing Museum in China. Although the goal of this museum (to foment anti-Japanese sentiment) is very different from the Bantayog's, it shows the ability of graphic displays of violence to resonate with museum visitors. See Kirk A. Denton (2007), 'Horror and atrocity: memory of Japanese imperialism in Chinese museums', in Ching Kwan Lee and Guobin Yang, eds, *Re-envisioning the Chinese Revolution: The Politics and Poetics of Collective Memories in Reform China*, Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington, DC, pp 245–286.

with Macabuag, I learned that substantial research in various libraries went into documenting the different sectors and organizations that fought the dictatorship. University students who decided to work in the Bantayog for their summer practicum (internship) were tasked to aid in the immense research, which produced, among other things, a comprehensive diagram of the anti- Marcos opposition network. Apart from the opposition network map, there are three displays devoted to three specific sectors: workers, the professional class, women and indigenous people. Notably absent are the Muslim separatists in the south who, along with the CPP, mounted significant military resistance to Marcos.[54]

Predictably, the Museum tour ends with the Aquino assassination and the chain of events that culminate in EDSA. There is a huge tarpaulin photo of a 'justice for Aquino' rally. Beside it is a replica tank with the statue of the Virgin Mary on top of it, which represents the peaceful revolution of EDSA. The caption states:

> 'Realizing that Marcos had lost all support among Filipinos, his dictatorship's principal ally, the United States government, finally abandoned him. By this time, certain military officers were already plotting to seize power.
>
> Starting on February 22 1986, in what came to be known as the "EDSA People Power Revolution", a huge crowd gathered together in protest and despite the threat of guns and tanks, refused to disband. On February 25, Marcos fled to Hawaii USA where he later died.'

The displays representing the aftermath of Aquino's death and the EDSA Revolution are grand in scale, but sparse in detail and are less nuanced than previous ones, such as the list of opposition groups and the various photos from the First Quarter Storm. For instance, no mention is made of then General Fidel Ramos and Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, who, along with the officers of the militant Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM), initiated the military coup that led to calls for people to gather in EDSA to protect the soldiers. In the Museum's narrative, they are simply 'certain military officers' who were 'plotting to seize power'. This is not surprising since the groups in the

[54] For analysis of the historical roots of the Islamist struggle and the Communist insurgency in the southern Philippines, see Patricio N. Abinales (2000), *Making Mindanao: Cotabato and Davao in the Formation of the Philippine Nation State*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City.

Bantayog coalition are generally critical of this military faction. The Leftists are naturally wary of 'rightist insurrectionists'. The Aquino-affiliated board members such as Salonga and Yuchengco, on the other hand, are also unlikely to be sympathetic to this faction, since the RAM and Enrile launched various coup attempts against the Aquino administration.[55]

More intriguing than the exclusion of these military men is the absence of the Aquino campaign against Marcos and any detailed narrative of the four-day EDSA revolt. The Museum seems to assume either that visitors are already familiar with these events or that these are not important, given the larger picture of the struggle against Marcos.[56] EDSA is an afterthought in the Museum's narrative – a mere culmination of a protracted struggle of the masses and not the legacy of great political figures. I was told in an informal conversation by an anonymous source that certain board members felt uneasy about this treatment of EDSA. Indeed, EDSA was largely the victory of the elites and the 'middle forces' that prominent board members represent. For the Left, however, EDSA was a defeat of sorts because, as will be elaborated below, their absence from the revolt reduced their influence in post-authoritarian politics.

Thus, de-emphasizing EDSA allows the museum to recover the history of the Marcos-era Left, which led the anti-dictatorship struggle for most of those years. It serves as a refreshing contrast to popular and official representations of the period. It is in stark contrast, for example, to the official national line that celebrates the dates of Aquino's death and the last day of People Power as national holidays. The Philippines celebrate these days with various acts of commemoration, including TV, newspaper and magazine features about these events. People Power Day is celebrated with a public gathering at the People Power Shrine (a bronze statue of the Virgin Mary called Our Lady of EDSA, Queen of Peace) along EDSA, an event attended by prominent political figures of the time, such as former presidents Aquino and Ramos.

One cannot, however, claim that the Museum presents a history of the Left. For instance, Jose Maria Sison and the founding of the CPP are not mentioned, although a first edition copy of Sison's *Philippine*

[55] For a history of the coups against Aquino, see Alfred W. McCoy (1999), *Closer than Brothers: Manhood at the Philippine Military Academy*, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, and London, pp 259–298.

[56] Indeed, this is a safe assumption to make, as EDSA is usually discussed in Philippine history classes.

Society and Revolution – informally called the 'Bible of Philippine Communism' – is on display with other books from the period. Any mention of Sison, I suspect, would have been unacceptable to Salonga, who is very critical of the CPP Chairman.[57] Moreover, I learned informally that the volunteers themselves avoid discussion about Sison for fear of the RA/RJ split permeating the organization.[58]

Despite this, the students touring the Bantayog are shown two contrasting narratives. On the one hand is the documentary, which narrates the rise of the middle forces – events that largely excluded the Left. On the other hand is the Museum, which presents a sweeping overview of the resistance movement led largely by the Left. The Bantayog, as such, reveals an alternative history of the Marcos period that de-emphasizes prominent events such as EDSA and prominent people such as Cory Aquino. This framework presents the contours of a people's history of martial law, the representation of which is a long-term goal of the Bantayog volunteers.

Ostensibly, the Bantayog Museum fits within the unitary framework of 'never again'. The human rights angle of the Museum allows it to create a sense of common victimhood. Concomitantly, those who fought the regime, although representing different sectors, became united in a common anti-dictatorship cause. However, underlying this narrative is a tension between the leftist volunteers who seek to recover the lost history of a protracted struggle led by the CPP and the elite board that wishes to emphasize the victory of traditional hegemonic forces in EDSA. These divergent historical impulses, though largely sublimated in the context of the Museum, also surface in outright historical debates. This is best evidenced in the debate over the legacy of labour leaders Felixberto Olalia and his son Rolando.

Excluding Labour: the case of Bert and Lando Olalia

As discussed earlier, the granite wall of the Bantayog lists the names of heroes and martyrs of the anti-dictatorship struggle. As expected, many of the names on the Wall are those of Leftists, particularly bourgeois student leaders who joined the ND movement. The rise of student activism in the Philippines was, indeed, a salient feature of the Marcos era. Samonte notes that student radicalism intensified during the Marcos period – in stark contrast to the 'passive and benign Filipino student

[57] Salonga, *supra* note 18.
[58] See the introduction to this piece for a discussion of the split.

culture of the 1950s'.[59] This radicalization began in the 1960s when the newly formed CPP gained prominence through mobilizing student intellectuals, usually from Manila and from middle class backgrounds. Young student activists loyal to founding Chairman Jose Maria Sison constituted the Party's initial core. This was a very different approach from that of the CPP's predecessor and rival, the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP, Filipino for Communist Party of the Philippines), which was suspicious of self-taught 'petit-bourgeois' student radicals.[60] For Nemenzo, this feature of the new party allowed its influence in the countryside to eclipse the PKP. While the PKP had many peasant cadres who could organize their own villages, 'they could not be relied upon to pioneer in new environments'. By contrast, the CPP's versatile student cadres used their social science skills to create tailored messages that would address specific communities.[61] These intellectuals emerged as the prominent figures of the organized Left. The Leftists honoured by the Bantayog and most of the volunteers come from this group.

The Bantayog board has generally been open to recognizing the contributions of these middle class Marxists, despite initial concerns. According to Paredes, some board members in the early years of the organization were concerned that many of the Marxist heroes supported and engaged in armed struggle. He notes, however, that then Chairman Salonga defended these activists, arguing that armed resistance was a legitimate struggle during the time of the dictatorship. Since then, the board has generally refrained from questioning the legacy of Marxist student activists.[62] However, while there is consensus in the Bantayog

[59] Quirico S. Samonte Jr (1989), 'Philippines', in Philip G. Altbach, ed, *Student Political Activism: An International Reference Handbook*, Greenview Press, Lawrenceville, GA, p 157.

[60] Abinales provides a partial analysis of the CPP's intimate relationship with student politics. See Patricio N. Abinales (1985), 'The left and the Philippine student movement: random notes on party politics and sectoral struggles,' *Kasarinlan*, Vol 1, No 2, pp 41–45.

[61] Francisco Nemenzo (1984), 'An irrepressible revolution: the decline and resurgence of the Philippine communist movement', Work-in-Progress Seminar, Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, 13 November, p 70.

[62] Paredes, *supra* note 32. Salonga's defence of the Left is understandable. A progressive nationalist with centre-left sympathies, Salonga is one of the few politicians respected by the ND movement. In the 1992 presidential elections, shortly before the CPP split, a united Left threw its support behind his campaign. Though it ended in defeat, the Salonga campaign saw a return of the NDs to electoral struggle after the boycott of '86. See Quimpo, *supra* note 10, at pp 128–159 for a history and an analysis of the Philippine Left's involvement in national elections, including the Salonga campaign of 1992.

regarding the legacy of middle class student activists, there is considerable disagreement over the contributions of organized labour. Many of my respondents from the Left decried the absence of militant labour leader Felixberto 'Ka Bert'[63] Olalia and his son Rolando 'Ka Lando' at the Wall of Remembrance.

Ka Bert, who founded the ND-affiliated Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU, or May First Labor Movement) trade union in 1980, was regarded as the 'grand old man of Philippine labour' at the time of his death in 1983.[64] Olalia began his career as a labour organizer in 1920 at age 17 when, as a slipper-maker, he joined the Union de Chineleros y Zapateros de Filipinas. In the 1940s, he was an active member of the underground PKP and its anti-Japanese Hukbalahap rebels, although the Party expelled him twice due to disagreements with its leadership.[65] The Marcos government, which saw his labour organizing as a threat to the regime, imprisoned him twice.[66] He died in December 1983, aged 80, as a result of complications from a heart condition contracted while a prisoner of the Marcos regime.[67] Upon his death, his son Rolando took over the leadership of the KMU. The younger Olalia was a mainstream lawyer until his father urged him to join the struggle for the working class. Under his leadership, the KMU grew to represent over 800,000 workers. He also became the secretary-general of the Partido ng Bayan (PnB) or People's Party.[68] The PnB was the Left's attempt at forming a mainstream political party. Ka Lando was assassinated in November 1986, nine months after the EDSA Revolution. According to a *Washington Post* report, the Left blamed then Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile for the murder. Over 100,000 protestors marched during his funeral procession – the

[63] The word 'Ka' is short for 'kasama', which means companion. Placing 'Ka' before one's name is a working class expression of solidarity. CPP members also use this title to refer to one another. The word can be likened to the term 'comrade'.

[64] See Robyn Lee (1987), 'The heir apparent: *Kilusang Mayo Uno* and the radical tradition in Philippine labour', in Peter Krinks, ed, *The Philippines Under Aquino*, Australian Development Studies Network, Canberra, pp 103–114, for the relationship of the KMU to the history of radical labour in the Philippines.

[65] Jose P. Cortez (2003), 'Working class hero's centennial: remembering Ka Bert Olalia', *Philippine Graphic*, 28 July, pp 22–24; and Ferdinand C. Llanes (1992), 'Bert Olalia: Mga Tala sa Pook ng Kanyang Pagkahubog, 1917–1940', *Diliman Review*, Vol 40, No 1, pp 4–5.

[66] Isabel T. Olalia (2003), '6 decades on [*sic*] the life of Ka Bert Olalia', The Ka Bert Olalia Commemorative Society, 5 July.

[67] Llanes, *supra* note 65, at p 3.

[68] Zoltan Grossman (1986), 'Assassinated Filipino labor leader remembered', *Chicago Sun-Times*, 18 November.

largest political funeral since Benigno Aquino's in 1983.[69]

The board of trustees, where the banker Vistan and the businessman Yuchengco hold considerable influence, has discussed the nomination of the Olalias three times, each time deciding not to inscribe their names on the Wall of Remembrance.[70] Kathy Abrazado, a researcher and permanent employee of the Bantayog, has worked for the foundation since its inception. Her task is to gather information regarding potential individuals to be honoured by the Bantayog.[71] After the Bantayog accepts a nomination, Abrazado conducts research about the nominee and submits her findings to the board, which then serves as the final screening committee. Abrazado favours honouring the Olalias and has consistently pushed for their inclusion on the wall. She notes that some board members are extremely critical of the KMU and believe that its militant tactics of strikes and boycotts, both in the past and more recently, have harmed the country's economic growth.[72] Executive Director Quintin Doromal – a former commissioner under Salonga in the Presidential Commission on Good Government – explains that the board does not only consider the good deeds of a nominee, but looks at his/her contributions 'in totality'. In the case of the Olalias, Doromal says the board also took into account the 'damage to the economy and to other sectors' allegedly done by the two.[73] Economic damage in this case means damage to the business sector as the KMU's tactics were targeted against what it viewed as the unfair labour practices of corporations. As such, the issue of the Olalias pits the interests of the business community against those of organized labour.

The framework of 'never again' requires that the tension between business and labour should be de-emphasized in order to preserve organizational unity. As Chairman Emeritus Salonga points out, 'If there is a vigorous objection, we listen to that objection *para hindi mabuwag, hindi maging* loose *ang aming* organization [so that our organization

[69] Keith B. Richburg (1986), 'Thousands march in Manila; rebels say talks cancelled', *The Washington Post*, 21 November.

[70] Chit Estella (2009), 'Why the Olalias are not in the Bantayog ng mga Bayani', *Verafiles*, 1 May, Website: http://verafiles.org/index.php/focus/218-why-the-olalias-are-not- in-bantayog-ng-mga-bayani.

[71] Abrazado's research has become a good source of information regarding the lives of Marcos-era heroes. See, for example, Cristina Jayme Montiel (2007), *Living and Dying: In Memory of 11 Ateneo de Manila Martial Law Activists*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, which cites Bantayog research extensively.

[72] Kathy Abrazado, interview with the author, Quezon City, 6 January 2009.

[73] Quoted in Estella, *supra* note 70.

does not unravel and become loose]'.[74] The rhetoric of the board also manifests this tendency towards the erasure of political differences. Abrazado, for instance, notes that the board did not disapprove of the Olalias's nomination, but merely 'deferred' deliberation.[75] By 'deferring' the nomination, the board was able to play down the tension between business and labour through creating the hope of future reconciliation. But despite this possibility, the case of the Olalias is evidence of the divergent ways in which members of the Bantayog see the history of the Marcos period. As such, it is not simply a dispute over the legacy of two people, but evidence of the different political impulses that drive the quest for remembrance.

Representing histories of the Left

In my first week of fieldwork in the Bantayog, there was a short exchange concerning the Bantayog in an e-mail list of progressive economists and intellectuals that I occasionally participate in. After attending an event in the Bantayog, one of the list's members reflected on the many nameless and faceless heroes of the anti-dictatorship struggle. Reacting to this, Filomeno Sta. Ana, another former ND and progressive economist noted:

> 'Tila may bias ang Bantayog para sa burges at peti-burges at may diskriminasyon sa anakpawis. E kahit yung may pangalan tulad ni Ka Bert Olalia ay di pa kinikilala ng Bantayog.' [It seems like the Bantayog has a bias for the bourgeois and the petit-bourgeois and discriminates against the *anakpawis*.[76] Even a name like Ka Bert Olalia has yet to be recognized by the Bantayog.]
>
> 'At saka, bakit di fully transparent sa pagsalaysay sa buhay ng mga bayani ng Bantayog? Bakit di banggitin ang totoo na karamihan sa kanila ay mga Komunista? Disservice yan sa marami sa kanila na nag-alay ng buhay.' [And also, why is the Bantayog not fully transparent in the way it narrates the lives of the heroes? Why not mention the truth that most of them were Communists? This is a disservice to a lot of them who laid down their lives.] [77]

[74] Estella, *supra* note 70.
[75] Abrazado, *supra* note 72.
[76] The word *anakpawis* is used by many on the Left to refer to the working class. It is a contraction of the words *anak* [son] and *pawis* [sweat]. The word, therefore, literally means 'children of sweat'.
[77] Filomeno III. Sta. Ana (2008), Letter to electronic group of the Action for Economic Reforms, 2 December (quoted with permission).

Sta. Ana's observations proved to be very accurate. When I asked Abrazado if there was anyone on the Wall from organized labour, she only mentioned one name.[78] Paredes, on the other hand, related to me that conservatives on the board were 'afraid of the working class'.[79] It is also true that there is no acknowledgment of the Marxist orientation of many of the people honoured. The official write-ups of heroes associated with the CPP or the NPA make no mention of their involvement with these groups. The most that the Bantayog acknowledges is membership with ND-affiliated aboveground groups such as the SDK or KM, which were legal before martial law.

Naturally, these conservative positions are not those of the volunteers. As ex-activists, they are very conscious of what is left out in the official positions of the Bantayog, and have tried to rectify this in small ways. The inclusive narrative of the Museum, which places the struggles of the working class in a position of prominence, is the best evidence of this. I noticed, for example, a large picture of the old Ka Bert leading a rally the first time I visited the Museum. Nevertheless, the volunteers recognize that they are in coalition with people of different political leanings, and are, therefore, aware of the need for compromise. They find it unnecessarily divisive to label some of the people who are honoured, as Marxist. Paredes, for instance, notes: 'I'm not bothered at all that they're not mentioned as NPA or CPP members. What is important to me is that it's mentioned that they took up arms and that they died conducting armed struggle.'[80] Like the other volunteers, Paredes sees limitations in what they can push for in the context of a coalition like the Bantayog. In Sta. Ana's critique, however, the absence of the label 'Communist' is a betrayal of legacies of those honoured – a 'disservice to those who laid down their lives'.[81] By forgetting the ideology that informed the struggle of the heroes, the Bantayog performs symbolic violence not just towards national history, but also to the heroes of that history. Indeed, even if the organized Left was excluded from the post-EDSA government, it largely enabled the return to democracy under Aquino. As Pinches notes:

> 'From the late 1970s the main opposition initiative had been taken by the NDF. Its significance for the Aquino movement was fourfold.

[78] Abrazado, *supra* note 72.
[79] Paredes, *supra* note 32.
[80] Paredes, *supra* note 32.
[81] Sta. Ana, *supra* note 77.

> First, along with a number of Church bodies and civil rights groups it played a leading role in bringing the abuses and oppressive character of the Marcos regime to general public attention. Second, along with the Muslim secessionist movement, it partly exposed the regime's weakness to concerted popular opposition. Third, it was instrumental in establishing a practice of resistance and a system of mass based organisation independent of the state. Fourth, its own remarkable growth under the dictatorship of Marcos alarmed conservative forces within the elite and middle class as well as in the United States.'[82]

Though Pinches himself avoids using the label 'Communist' and does not name the CPP (opting instead to refer to the movement through its front organization), his point makes plain that a truthful history of the period requires an acknowledgment of the Left's struggle. It is within this context that Sta. Ana's observation may be best understood.

There are a number of reasons that explain the difficulty with representing the Left. First, as alluded to earlier, People Power displaced memories of the Left's struggle. Religious groups, liberals and social democrats sidelined the Left, resulting in a mainstream memory largely defined by these groups. For example, the most prominent monument along the EDSA strip is a statue of the Virgin Mary (Our Lady of EDSA),[83] whom the forces associated with Aquino (Coryistas) believe interceded on behalf of the people. The memorial configuration that emphasizes EDSA stems largely from what the CPP eventually acknowledged as the 'tactical blunder' of boycotting the 1986 snap election. The work of Dominique Caouette, for example, shows how the Left lost a crucial opportunity to build a tactical alliance with Aquino forces when the Party centre decided on a boycott. Dissenting Party members believed that such an alliance would have brought the Left closer to winning the Philippine revolution. As such, one can view the general exclusion of the Left's history from public history as a product of its political alienation in 1986.[84]

[82] Pinches, *supra* note 12, at pp 93–94.

[83] Tolentino says of the statue: 'It would mark the Catholic church's crucial role in mobilising the people, Aquino's coming into office through a people-powered "revolution", the middle-class stamp of approval for the "revolution", and the burgeoning business and real estate complex in the area'. Rolando Tolentino (2001), *National/Transnational: Subject Formation and Media in and on the Philippines*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, p 47.

[84] Dominique Caouette (2004), 'Preserving revolutionaries: armed struggle in the 21st century: exploring the revolution of the Communist party of the Philippines', PhD thesis, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, pp 428–437.

This general weakness of the Left may also explain why, despite tensions in the Bantayog, the members of the Left have remained a part of the coalition and why they have contented themselves with small acts of textual guerrilla warfare such as de-emphasizing EDSA or placing a large picture of Bert Olalia in the Museum. In the battle of memory, the Left is not in a position of power. Not only does it have to contend with the salience of elite memories of EDSA endorsed by official state machinery, but it also has to deal with economic reality. The Bantayog survives through the generosity of its benefactors, for example, Yuchengco and Vistan; the physical structures of the organization, which have allowed it to become a venue for student education, are a result of these businessmen's monetary support.

Second, the fissures within the Left prevent it from representing its own history. The bitter rivalry between the RAs and RJs – a rivalry that has resulted in the deaths of cadres[85] – makes collective remembering from the Left difficult. Certain events deemed integral by the RJs to the Philippine revolution are seen by the RAs as part of 'counterrevolutionary' tendencies in the Philippine Left.[86] Ironically, however, it is the restrictive setting of the elite Bantayog that allows the Left to create a semblance of a collective front. Since the Leftists in the Bantayog are united in resisting the mainstream memory of the board, the RA/RJ split is played down. As mentioned earlier, Bantayog volunteers almost never talk about the split. In fact, some of them are unsure as to each other's political inclinations within the Left. The Bantayog, as such, once again serves as an avenue where differences are sublimated.

[85] In January 2003, for example, a special unit of the CPP-NPA killed former NPA chief and prominent rejectionist Romulo Kintanar. CPP-NPA spokesperson Gregorio 'Ka Roger' Rosal claimed that Kintar had illegally abused his authority in the Party through engaging in kidnap for ransom operations and using 'dirty money' for personal gain. He was also blamed for attempting to 'to split and wreck the Party and revolutionary movement'. According to RA critic Nathan Quimpo, however, most of the accusations against Kintanar were false or applicable to current CPP leaders as well. For Quimpo, Kintanar was killed because he 'dared to oppose' the Party mainstream led by Sison. For these two positions, see Gregorio 'Ka Roger' Rosal (2003), 'It was absolutely correct to apprehend and punish Romulo Kintanar', *National Democratic Front of the Philippines*, 26 January, Website: http://members.casema.nl/ndf/archive/2003/archive0019.html; and Nathan Gilbert Quimpo 'Why Kintanar was killed – the real story', Philippine European Solidarity Centre, Website: http://www.philsol.nl/A03a/Kintanar-Quimpo-jan03.htm.

[86] The work of Weekly, for example, shows how different events in the history of the Left's resistance to Marcos can be read in different ways. See Weekly, *supra* note 14.

In this way, the split allows the board to keep the threat of an alternative Leftist history at bay. It would be difficult, for instance, for the Left to establish a new institution similar to the Bantayog, not only because such an institution would not have the kind of financial support that the Bantayog has, but also because the Left itself would be hard-pressed to unite behind a common history. Sison, for example, has written his own history of the Left's struggle, but it is one that endorses the RA line and is, therefore, unacceptable to rejectionists.[87]

Third, there is a general difficulty in representing the history of a largely clandestine movement. Marcos's declaration of martial law pushed the Left's mass organizations underground. For this reason, there are very few records of the activities of cadres during this time.[88] This is a difficulty even for research on prominent student activists. Abrazado explains:

> 'The information we need can't be found in the newspapers, but only through verbal sources. You have to conduct interviews. The problem is that even if you trace family members, you won't have all the information you need. It's like a jigsaw puzzle. Even when you've discovered something, you will still need to gather more information about the honouree. So you look for a sibling, a friend, until you complete the biography. Most of the time it's hard getting information about the honouree's political involvement. And that's actually the most important part! It's hard because the activities were UG (underground). Even if you talk to people from the UG, you can't just interview one person. Say you interview someone from the UG, he might not know everything about an honouree. If the honouree went to the mountains, that would be a different life altogether. It really is a puzzle. You have to complete it.'[89]

Fourth and, I argue, most importantly, the class-based nature of historical memory conditions any representation of the Left. At its most

[87] See Jose Maria Sison (1989), *The Philippine Revolution: The Leaders View,* Crane Russak, New York.

[88] Although, since the opening of the Philippine Radical Papers – a collection of documents from the underground movement in the University of the Philippines Main Library – the task of gathering information about the Philippine Left has become easier.

[89] Abrazado, *supra* note 72. This quotation was spoken mainly in Taglish (a combination of Tagalog and English). For brevity's sake, I have presented only the English translation.

basic level, economic necessity requires that the interests of elite classes be catered to. For example, certain volunteers told me informally that honouring the Olalias or acknowledging the Marxist backgrounds of certain heroes would risk benefactors withdrawing funds from the Bantayog. More profoundly, however, one must also examine memory as a class privilege. For those who do not come from middle class backgrounds, there are more hindrances to writing their history than the clandestine nature of the movement. In this respect, I was edified by my interview with board member and former NDF negotiator Carolina Malay. She prompted me to reflect on the class-based aspects of historical memory, forcing me to contend with the possibility of remembering being from a middle and upper class privileged background. It is best to quote her at length:

> 'Our group, the volunteers here, agreed that so much more work needs to be done. See, the selection of names to be put on the wall has been skewed in favour of individuals who belonged to middle class families, urban families, whose families appreciate so much the sacrifices that had been made. These are people who had higher education; these are people who lived in cities, whose parents had the time and status to affirm the principles that their children lived by. It's different when you are a peasant family or a worker family and you have to go about the business of earning a living. In the first place, you wouldn't keep records of your children's accomplishments or these families would have maybe tried to forget or try to keep a low profile so that they don't get into more trouble. It's very middle class this thing of memorialising. So we would like for research to be made to target ordinary people, ordinary families.'[90]

This class aspect of the Bantayog is very noticeable. In my fieldwork, I noted that seeing the names of their loved ones on the Wall of Remembrance constituted a profound moment of catharsis for the families of heroes/martyrs. This privilege, however, does not extend to the families of the unsung heroes that Malay refers to. Unveiling ceremonies in the Bantayog are middle class affairs. The attendees of the event were mostly former student activists who had returned to middle class lives, mainly in class-segregated urban Manila. Memory, as such, is a class privilege because it is upper classes that can publicly proclaim previous affiliations with revolutionary movements without fear of social

[90] Carolina Malay, interview with the author, Quezon City, 13 January 2009.

exclusion or government reprisal. The student activists from the 70s, now living lives of comfort, can deal with the trauma of the past from a certain distance.

From Malay's point of view, therefore, the Bantayog is more constrained by broader class and regional inequities in the Philippines rather than simple organizational limitations such as a conservative board. Current efforts at memorializing the Marcos era by the Left coalesce around specific groups and formations. Malay notes that the Bantayog's nomination system privileges certain networks of families and friends. For example, she observes that the SDK foundation, composed of former SDK members, has nominated and provided information about its own members. Since the SDK was composed mainly of middle class students, the SDK foundation is unable to provide information about grassroots cadres. Malay thinks that this problem may be difficult for the Bantayog to address, but she has not given up hope on the writing of a people's history of martial law. She reflects:

> 'For Bantayog to seek out those people [heroes excluded by the current nomination system] is really hard when I think of it. I personally know individuals who died heroically. I wouldn't know how to trace them now. [...] I didn't know their real names. I didn't know where they came from. It is a condition of anonymity in the underground. [...] We all lived and died together but we didn't know each other's names, except if we knew each other from way back. [...] But we have to make that effort. I do know that individuals are part of families. Everybody was related to everybody; you get that impression. You have entire families: brothers and sisters, parents and children, cousins and uncles were all involved. So we have to put family memories in. Furthermore, it wasn't just families, there were communities, especially in the rural areas. It seems that there are certain communities in our country that have consistently produced heroes, that have consistently fought together against the Spaniards, against the Americans, and then against the Japanese. They became Hukbalahab communities, and then they became NPA communities. I'd really love to see that kind of history being written. It's beyond ideology.'[91]

Malay alludes here to an internal difficulty within the Left of writing its own history because of the multiplicity of leftist struggles during

[91] *Ibid.*

the Marcos period. These histories are difficult to uncover because they occurred in different places and communities under different circumstances. To this extent, Caouette contends:

> '[…] under very broad ideological principles and declarations, the day-to-day activities of the revolutionary movement varied significantly from one region to the other and from one historical period to another. In a way, there was never one Philippine revolution but several revolutions on-going at the same time.'[92]

In the case of the Bantayog, the only revolution among these many that can adequately be represented is the one led by middle class activists.

More importantly, Malay's injunction is to write a history that addresses the symbolic violence of histories that render invisible the stories of those outside the loci of privilege in the Philippines, namely middle class circles and Metropolitan Manila. She also reflects on the continuity of revolutionary struggles in the Philippines – a form of nationalist historical thought that emerged in the 1960s and 70s. According to Ileto, the notion of a continuing 'unfinished revolution' to emancipate the masses became a popular trope for nationalist historians and the Left during the Marcos regime. He notes: 'The notion of "unfinished revolution" became established "in the mainstream", to serve as the rock upon which more elaborate edifices, such as Mao Zedong-inspired "struggle for national democracy", could be built'. [93] Malay's view of history, as such, is one informed by her own revolutionary struggle and the nationalist fervour of the 1960s and 70s.

But revolutionary history is outside the ambit of the 'never again' framework; the 'unfinished revolution' is one not merely against dictators but against entire systems of social domination. A people's history of martial law would not simply be a story of an anti-dictatorship struggle and a quest for justice, but also a story of political and social emancipation. It is perhaps for this reason that Malay doubts whether efforts to write and represent this history will come from the Bantayog. Her analysis, therefore, exposes the limits of 'never again'. In her proposed history, the 'masses' would not only be passive victims of a brutal regime, but active agents with demands that questioned the social

[92] Caouette, *supra* note 84, at p 708.

[93] Reynaldo C. Ileto (1998), *Filipinos and their Revolution: Event, Discourse, and Historiography*, Ateneo de Manila University Press, Quezon City, p 189.

structure. The communities she wishes to study, for example, are the very communities that have consistently fought for issues such as land reform – an issue that continues to plague the post-dictatorship Philippines.[94] Her people's history is too inconvenient a history to remember, for instead of healing the wounds of the past, it lays bare the violence of the present. This is the spectral threat that haunts the fascism of class-based consensus.

Conclusion

In this article, I have attempted to examine the dynamics of historical memory concerning the Marcos period using the Bantayog ng mga Bayani as a case study, looking at how the decline of the Left and the political context of post-1986 politics in the Philippines condition the historical representation of the anti-dictatorship struggle. Although the 'never again' framework unifies a nation through a sense of common victimhood and thus primes concerns for human rights, it also allows for the sublimation of conflicts that arise from this situation. Examining what is rendered invisible by 'never again' reveals a complex interplay between class positions and historical memory. In the context of a Third World country such as the Philippines, class inequities must be considered as integral determinants in the construction of historical memory.

The unravelling of the 'never again' framework and the recognition of its limits underscores the need for alternative collective mnemonic frameworks in post-authoritarian contexts. In places such as the Philippines, there must be a greater openness to alternative histories that threaten consensus and force engagement with difference. Ironically, dealing with the legacy of authoritarianism requires that authoritarianism should be de-emphasized, as a dictatorship is merely the end result of violent social tensions.

[94] Until now, for example, one of the most contentious issues that the Arroyo administration has had to deal with is the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme (CARP). Critics claim that landowners such as the Arroyo family prevent the implementation of compulsory land acquisition. See Solita Callas Monsod (2009), 'Where CARP failed, get real', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 23 May, Website: http://opinion.inquirer.net/inquireropinion/columns/view/20090523-206629/Where-CARP-failed.

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