

INTRODUCTION: NEW FILIPINO AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP ON THE MARCOSIAN ERA

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We are publishing this folio of essays to revisit a flashpoint in Philippine history: Ferdinand Marcos's imposition of martial law on September 21, 1972, nearly fifty years ago. The repressive policies and the often-grandiose spectacles of Marcos's third-world fascism captured the imagination of the West, including the US. The so-called "Marcosian era" spanned over twenty years of rule, beginning with his ascension to power in 1969 and ending in his ouster during the 1986 "People Power" revolution, but the monumental figure of the Philippine dictator virtually embodied the late 20th century Philippines.

Marcos's martial law has had profound effects, not only on statecraft in the Philippines and the contours of the global cold war, but especially on the lives of over a hundred million Filipinos. Many Philippine-born persons scattered across the globe to escape militarization and other forms of state violence, and economic turmoil as well. Due to the massive labor export policy Marcos initiated to keep the domestic economy afloat after years of plunder and corruption, this historical episode is also symptomatic of the global emergence of the Philippines as the supplier par excellence of migrant service and domestic workers, entertainers, and other marginalized labor. Therefore, the period is also the take-off point of the increasing neoliberalization of the Philippine economy and its culture. The violent upheavals and structural transformations that were enabled and created during this phase of Philippine history reverberate and are still palpable today.

These writings represent the exciting scholarship on martial law being produced by Filipino and Filipina scholars located in the US. Without prompting from the editors, the contributors have decided to focus on the imbrication of politics and culture during the regime, inspired perhaps by the broader scholarly trend of investigating the neglected cultural dimensions of the Cold War in Asia.¹ The essays thus seek to understand the Marcosian era not as a discrete set of time and

1. Wasana Wongsurawat and Tuong Vu, eds., "Cold War Studies and the Cultural Cold War in Asia," in *Dynamics of the Cold War in Asia: Ideology, Identity, and Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), 3.

space but as part of the enduring legacies of centuries of colonial and postcolonial encounters and challenges, both local and transnational.

All but one of the authors represented here were born well after martial law had already ended (albeit mostly on paper) in 1981, but their commitment to studying its complex legacy is unassailable. Reflecting the diversity of these scholars' personal experiences, disciplinary orientations, and intellectual projects, this folio touches on a wide range of political projects and cultural productions tied to the famous epoch. We are thrilled to showcase this plurality of perspectives, subjects, and practices of scholarship to chip away at grand narratives and hitherto privileged perspectives on martial law.

A Sweeping Overview of Marcos's Martial Law

Facing the end of what should have been his second and final term, the charismatic politico from the North invoked the martial rule provision of the 1935 Philippine Constitution to initiate a series of political stunts and legal maneuvers aimed at controlling every branch of government and laying the groundwork for a lifetime presidency.² He oversaw the creation of a new charter that was designed to serve his every whim and cannily billed his personalist rule a "constitutional authoritarianism."³ Just as brazenly, he reserved the authority to make instantly binding laws (aptly labeled "secret decrees" by critics) despite already having a rubber-stamp legislature at his beck and call.⁴

Marcos's schemes to use government resources to harass his political opponents, muzzle the press, and enrich himself as well as his cronies were legendary. He placed the mass media under his thumb, shutting down unsympathetic venues or filling them with sycophants. He banned strikes and public demonstrations,⁵ even equating rumor mongering with treason.⁶ His henchmen rounded up scores of rival politicians, activists, academicians, and writers.⁷

Thousands were abducted, tortured, slaughtered, and disappeared. The regime became synonymous with violent extrajudicial killings, which the military ironically called "salvaging."⁸ The state-sanctioned violence, often perpetrated by the military, the police, and plainclothes members of Marcos's specially created inter-

2. Lewis E. Gleeck, *President Marcos and the Philippine Political Culture* (Manila: L.E. Gleeck, 1987), 70.

3. David A. Rosenberg, ed., *Marcos and Martial Law in the Philippines* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1979), 21.

4. Maria Serena I. Diokno, "Unity and Struggle," in *Dictatorship and Revolution: Roots of People's Power*, ed. Aurora Javate de Dios, Petronilo Daroy, and Lorna Kalaw-Tirol (Manila: Conspectus Foundation, 1988), 145.

5. P. N. Abinales and Donna J. Amoroso, *State and Society in the Philippines* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 207.

6. Rosenberg, *Marcos and Martial Law in the Philippines*, 264.

7. Rosenberg, 44.

8. Raymond Bonner, *Waltzing with a Dictator* (New York: Random House, 1987), 369.

nal security agencies, yielded hundreds of mangled corpses, each one calculated to sow fear among dissidents and citizens. Stories and photographs of these atrocities inundated the reports of human rights watchdogs, newspapers, and TV newscasts throughout the world.

The regime aided industry and lured foreign investors by depressing wages and stomping on workers' rights. To maintain the loyalty of cronies as well as big businesses and influential landholders, the government doled out lucrative contracts and franchises for pillaging the archipelago's vast natural resources.⁹ Marcos plied his cabal as well with generous loans guaranteed by the government despite the dim prospects of reimbursement.¹⁰ Those so-called "behest loans," funded by borrowings from foreign entities, contributed to the skyrocketing of the nation's debt and the economic cataclysm that ensued.

First Lady Imelda Marcos threw lavish parties and traveled extensively at the nation's expense. She flaunted her ultra-expensive jewelry and fashions during trips to upscale haunts like the Metropolitan Opera and Studio 54 in New York. She brought Hollywood celebrities like George Hamilton to Manila to attend her soirees and add to her glamour. Her lifestyle of jaw-dropping excess stood in sharp contrast to the hardscrabble existence of citizens whose immiserating poverty she and her husband's government exacerbated. Malnutrition plagued the country during the Marcoses' long tenure. It ranked as the seventh cause of death in 1973; by 1977, it had moved up to third place. It took a heavy toll on the most vulnerable in society. As Albert Celozza notes, "The number of underweight and malnourished children climbed from 69% in 1965 to 80% in 1982."¹¹ This chronic problem exploded in the media in the mid-1980s, when mass starvation gripped sugar farmworkers in the island of Negros Occidental.¹² Much to the dismay of a regime that loved touting its accomplishments in modernizing the nation, the crisis filled international periodicals and newscasts with images of severely emaciated children who resembled victims of the contemporaneous famine in Africa.

The US, terribly anxious about the spread of communism in Southeast Asia, played a key role in the Marcoses' ascent to power in the 1960s and supported him well after his turn to autocracy in the ensuing decades.¹³ Though some American presidents, diplomats, and bureaucrats occasionally took the regime to task for its corruption and dismal human rights record, cooperation best served the superpower's interests. Apart from the Philippines' strategic importance as a reliable ally

9. James K. Boyce, *The Political Economy of Growth and Impoverishment in the Marcos Era* (Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1993), 225.

10. Boyce, 320.

11. Albert F. Celozza, *Ferdinand Marcos and the Philippines: The Political Economy of Authoritarianism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1997), 129.

12. Gary Hawes, *The Philippine State and the Marcos Regime: The Politics of Export* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987), 86.

13. James Hamilton-Paterson, *America's Boy: The Marcoses and the Philippines* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999).

in the Pacific during the cold war, the former colony was also the site of the largest American military bases in the Pacific. Additionally, American corporations profited handsomely from operating in the archipelago, despite the regime's protectionist measures, demands for kickbacks, and other hurdles for foreign businesses. Critics of the Philippine strongman and US imperialism were not wide of the mark in asserting that the superpower propped up the Philippine dictatorship.¹⁴ Not surprisingly, given its record of pervasive meddling in Philippine affairs, the US also had a hand in the demise of Marcos's presidency. Ailing and increasingly unpopular at home, Marcos called for snap elections to be held in 1986 in an ill-fated attempt to show international creditors and bureaucrats that he still had the people's support.¹⁵ However, he was undone by his brazen cheating and the public's overwhelming support for his opponent Corazon Aquino, the widow of his slain political rival. Marcos's old pal Ronald Reagan, bowing to domestic and international pressure, withdrew his support for the regime at the eleventh hour. In the last days of the dictator's rule, as protesters closed in to expel him from the executive residence, the American president offered him exile in Hawaii. Marcos and his family loaded up one passenger plane plus an entire cargo plane with their loot, making off with a staggering payload of gold bars and cash.¹⁶ They lived in a posh suburb of Honolulu until his death.

The Marcoses inched their way back into Philippine politics soon after the dictator's passing, winning various seats in local and national offices while mostly fending off a barrage of lawsuits. In 2016, the country's current chief executive, the populist Rodrigo Duterte, claimed that the eldest Marcos child, Imee, a senator, helped bankroll his successful bid for the presidency.¹⁷ Citing humanitarian reasons, Duterte's government has illegally kept Imelda out of jail despite her conviction on graft charges in 2018.

Writing and Revising the History of a Dictatorship

Throughout his tenure and well after his death, Marcos and his regime received much attention from scholars, journalists, and writers based in the US, especially among Filipino emigres and US-born Filipino American activists. Writing from Berkley beginning in the 1970s, Walden Bello masterfully exposed US ties to

14. Gemma Almendral, "The Fall of the Regime," in *Dictatorship and Revolution: Roots of People Power*, ed. Petronilo Daroy, Lorna Kalaw-Tirol, and Aurora Javate de Dios (Manila: Conspectus Foundation, 1988), 219.

15. Almendral, 176.

16. Jean Thomas, *A History of the Customs Service in Hawaii, 1789-1989* (Honolulu: Department of the Treasury, United States Customs Service, Pacific Region, 1991), 49-50.

17. Paterno Esmaguél II, "Duterte Donor Imee Marcos Not in His SOCE," *Rappler*, October 11, 2016, <http://www.rappler.com/nation/politics/elections/2016/148841-duterte-imee-marcos-campaign-contributor-soce>.

the Marcos regime, among many other issues.¹⁸ David A. Rosenberg published his book on martial law also in the same decade.¹⁹

Studies and writings on authoritarianism in the Philippines reached new heights and showed a greater sense of urgency beginning in 1983, fueled by the assassination of Marcos's chief political rival, former Senator Benigno "Ninoy" S. Aquino, Jr. That same year, Hermie Rotea issued a lurid account of Marcos's affair with American starlet Dovie Beams, reviving a source of much embarrassment for the dictator.²⁰ In 1986, Lewis M. Simons, Pete Carey, and Katherine Ellison won the Pulitzer Prize for their widely disseminated exposés on Marcos's hidden wealth in the *San Jose Mercury-News*. A month before Marcos was deposed, and as he was struggling to quash rumors that he was stealing the snap elections he had called, the historian Alfred W. McCoy refuted the autocrat's claims about his World War II heroism in a damning piece for *The New York Times*.²¹ Soon after Marcos's ouster, McCoy and other scholars such as James K. Boyce, Albert Celozza, Gary Hawes, and David Wurfel, released comprehensive studies of various facets of his regime, shaping the way it would be viewed for posterity.

As with Bello, several Philippine-born intellectuals produced work on the regime for several decades. Epifanio San Juan, Jr. began publishing treatises on the dictatorship long before US academia learned to value progressive, humanities-based work on the global South. He still touches on the consequences of the Marcos years deep into his retirement. Luis H. Francia, Vicente Rafael, Ninotchka Rosca, and others continue to reference the dictatorship and its legacy in their writings as well.

Apart from scholarly articles, political tracts, and journalistic pieces, many more US-based authors published or performed nonfiction and fictive accounts of the martial law years, including memoirs, novels, plays, pieces for community newsletters, and performances at anti-Marcos protests. Since the turn of the century, several autobiographies by Filipino activists in the Philippines and the diaspora have seen print in the US. This body of life writings includes the collective reminiscences of the activist group Union of Democratic Filipinos, published in 2017 by the University of Washington Press.²²

The essays in this folio of *Alon* take studies of martial law in new directions. First, this scholarship benefits from the theoretical and methodological sophistication developed in academia in the past several decades. Intersectionality informs the framing and anal-

18. Walden F. Bello and Severina Rivera, *The Logistics of Repression and Other Essays: The Role of U.S. Assistance in Consolidating the Martial Law Regime in the Philippines* (Washington: Friends of the Filipino People, 1977).

19. Rosenberg, *Marcos and Martial Law in the Philippines*.

20. Hermie Rotea, *Marcos' Lovey Dovie* (Los Angeles: Liberty Publishing, 1983).

21. Jeff Gerth and Joel Brinkley, "Marcos Wartime Role Discredited in U.S. Files," *New York Times*, January 23, 1986.

22. Rene Ciria Cruz, Cindy Domingo, and Bruce Occena, eds., *A Time to Rise: Collective Memoirs of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP)* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017).

ysis of the projects represented here. The influence of cross-disciplinary fields such as ethnic studies, gender studies, and critical race theory shapes each work as well. The impact of postcolonialist and decolonial critique—foundational elements of both Filipino American studies and Filipino American cultural politics—is equally remarkable.

As one would expect of diasporic scholarly work, this folio demonstrates the benefits of a transnational perspective on the regime and its enduring consequences. For instance, two of the essays gathered here—authored by Karen Buenavista Hanna and James Zarsadiaz—deviate from the Philippine focus of much of the scholarship on the Marcos regime, turning instead to the global stage where political dissidents were living in exile and, along with their multiethnic community of allies and longtime members of the Philippine diaspora, working to bring change to the archipelago. Both scholars shed light on the circuits of common struggle and shared revolutionary aspirations uniting Filipinos and their allies across geographic, ethnic, and cultural divides.

Yet another outstanding aspect of these new works that is worth mentioning is their attention to untapped archives and historical sources. Some of those archives are located outside the Philippines and have been neglected in existing scholarship. These scholars' pursuit of innovative research agendas—whether in the form of revisionist accounts, counternarratives, or new scholarship about overlooked or marginalized subjects—has led them to fresh discoveries about, and defamiliarizing takes, on the Marcos regime. One may also attribute this predilection for pioneering research to the often-useful critical distance that Filipino American studies and transnational Philippine studies maintain from their counterparts in the archipelago.

Being outside Philippine academia—its politics, nationalist biases, dominant concerns, and potentially stultifying agendas—has had its share of other advantages as well for our diasporan and transnational authors. Due to their location, they mostly stay clear of well-mined Marcos-era subjects. Moreover, having studied Philippine history outside that country, they are even less invested in nationalist historiography and its “great men of history” lens than many scholars there. For these and other reasons, their work productively expands and diversifies the range of research projects on the Marcos era.

Finally, the above-mentioned theoretical sophistication of contemporary humanities and social science scholarship in the US fuels the bold interpretive work offered in these essays. Even when covering historical information in broad terms or discussing public policy during the Marcos era, the scholars in this folio never shy away from close reading, thick description, and the adventurous parsing of texts and speech acts. The richness of their analyses, historiographies, and ethnographies is itself a much-needed intervention in the scholarship on this epoch.

In This Volume

The first three essays in this folio deal with culture both as a privileged site of the authoritarian regime's non-military activities and an expansive ideological battleground for dissidents and ordinary citizens. To sell his vision of the "New Society," Marcos embarked on many large-scale projects, pervasive messaging campaigns (waged by an oversized Ministry of Information), and the suppression or co-optation of dissent. The regime was well known both in the Philippines and abroad for extravagant and, in many cases, fascistic cultural endeavors. These included expanding the capital city of Manila (and, by extension, the purview of the national government's direct control) from a small area to a vast territory of four cities and thirteen municipalities. The president placed Metropolitan Manila under his wife's control in 1976, appointing her as governor.²³ The First Lady spearheaded numerous public works projects and established cultural institutions in her new domain. She served concurrently as the nation's Minister of Human Settlements, giving her vast powers to oversee public housing and urban planning projects.

Imelda's most notable cultural projects included the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) complex, a suite of performing arts venues, convention spaces, and tourist venues built on reclaimed land. The complex included the Manila Film Center, the main venue for her Cannes-style Manila International Film Festival, and the site of a well-remembered catastrophe. Built on an impossible 7-month schedule, at least one of the center's levels collapsed during construction, burying workers in tons of quick-dry cement. Unwilling to miss the deadline, she allegedly ordered the construction to proceed, leaving some bodies that could not be hastily extricated permanently entombed within the structure.²⁴

As Josen Diaz notes in a contribution to this folio, the regime's cultural activities aimed to accomplish so much more than pacifying citizens and legitimizing the dictatorship to Filipino citizens and the international community. Diaz writes: "...the Marcoses' seizure of culture was more than an act of political repression. It was the purposeful and incisive reimagining of Filipino subjectivity within a global order that sought a more definitive articulation and presentation of the Filipino as a vessel of third world (re)production." This ideological project aimed, among other things, to form subjects who serve the interests of "Marcos's crony capitalist state" in more ways than they could imagine. As with other authoritarian governments from the era, the Marcos regime both overtly and subtly capitalized on prevailing anxieties about the "heating up" of the cold war in Southeast Asia, the economic recessions of the 1970s, and the recurring after-shocks of socio-cultural rebellions from the 1960s. Diaz succinctly

23. Manuel Caoili, *The Origins of Metropolitan Manila: A Social and Political Analysis* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1999), 150.

24. James Hamilton-Paterson, "Imelda's Grand Vision," *South China Sunday Morning Post*, May 22, 1994, 14.

captures the Marcos-era intersection of nationalist subject formation and geopolitics in the following question: “Entrenched during a period characterized by the unsettledness of decolonizing movements around the world, a widespread fear of leftist and communist insurgency, and the continuous growth and reconfiguration of capitalism as a way to mediate such uncertainties, what might it mean for a Philippine nationalism to develop within this set of global configurations?”

Christi-Anne Castro revisits the fraught debates surrounding the Marcos regime’s record of promoting and institutionalizing Western art music (that is, music from the Western canon). As she points out, the regime’s patronage of the arts continues to play a substantial role in the rehabilitation of the Marcoses’—and particularly Imelda’s—public image. Mrs. Marcos allocated public funds and wielded her considerable influence to extract private sector donations for the founding of performance venues, a school for the performing arts, and expenses for bringing international musicians and artists to the country. Ironically, those were the very same policies and activities that engendered fierce domestic and international criticism during their tenure. The regime’s critics derided Imelda’s arts programs for catering to elite audiences, perpetuating cultural imperialism, and steering public resources away from their impoverished country’s more urgent needs.

Castro’s theoretical and historiographic discussion considers the Marcos regime’s various programs for promoting Western art music in light of broader scholarship about the supposed universality of this form of culture, its enduring hegemony in the global South, and the role of music under dictatorships. Imelda promoted Western art music to disseminate the idea that the Philippines was a “modern nation deserving recognition from the West” and to project an aura of sophisticated cosmopolitanism around herself. This was a costly gambit, however, because the global standards for Western art music did—and still does—require heavy investments in certain kinds of spaces and long-term training and employment of performers, all of which the nation’s plundered coffers could ill afford.

Although the promotion of Western art music may seem bereft of propagandistic overtones and even innocuous in comparison to the regime’s censorship of Philippine music it deemed subversive or obscene, Castro avers that this was not the case. Patronage, she tells us, was “a form of control” for the Marcoses because it helped define the nation’s soundscape, set limits to the existence and reach of other kinds of music, and denied material support to musical artists not involved in Western art music.

Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns’ essay reflects on the rhetoric and phenomena surrounding Marcos’s best-known agricultural program: Masagana 99. Aimed at boosting the production of rice to 99 sacks of unmilled rice per hectare, the program granted collateral-free loans and technical assistance to farmers. With an accompanying (modest) land reform program and initiatives to establish more cooperatives, Masagana 99 comprised a 1970s Philippine iteration of the Green Revo-

lution schemes that the US began promoting throughout Asia in the 1950s to build food security and stem unrest in the countryside. As with other Green Revolution programs, Masagana 99 was at heart a counterrevolutionary affair designed to tighten the regime's hold on power and serve the diffuse interests of the politicians, corporations, and organizations that backed global anti-communism. For all its pro-poor posturing, however, Masagana 99 represented yet another conservative attempt to protect the interests of the landed elite by containing long-lived conflicts over inequitable access to land and oppressive working conditions in the nation's massive agricultural sector.

Burns touches on the cognitive dissonance between, on the one hand, Masagana 99's covert interest in subtending authoritarianism, transnational capitalism, and neoimperialism, and, on the other hand, the benevolent public image that the Marcos regime crafted to support the program. The publicity for Masagana 99 extended to urban spaces where the regime encouraged denizens to plant government-supplied seeds or raise fish in aquariums to take part in the food security effort. As well, teachers encouraged urban children to dress up as farmers and sing upbeat folk songs about rural life during school pageants. Burns recalls being one of the cherubs flashing a megawatt smile while singing such lines as "Planting rice is never fun/Bending over 'til the set of sun," utterly clueless that they were trivializing the punishing nature of agricultural work apart from being used for government propaganda.

Like other Marcosian projects that sought to instrumentalize social labor and culture, Masagana 99 was but another mechanism for the interpellation of Filipinos as subjects of a fascist security state. As Burns notes, the spectacles and soundscapes of idyllic rural life in the publicity for Masagana 99 "promoted the idea of a timeless collectivity and orality, around which a national self could cohere and stabilize; they also portrayed the image of planting rice as not simply a task, a form of mere labor, but rather as a patriotic act intrinsic to the building of a modern Philippines." Given the ubiquitous operation of cold war politics in the Philippines throughout Marcos's tenure, Masagana 99 and its associated spectacles likewise encouraged Filipinos to embrace their identity as global citizens in the so-called [anti-communist] free world.

The third essay turns to popular cinema, once fittingly described by film scholar Joel David as "the national pastime" of the Philippines, and to an internationally acclaimed filmmaker who boldly crisscrossed the domains of politics and culture.²⁵ Josen Diaz describes the insurgent energies of Lino Brocka's melodrama, *Insiang*, a film reshaped and initially blocked by government censors. In Brocka's slumland tale, a mother-daughter rivalry escalates when a female butcher takes home a strapping young man from the abattoir as her lover. They live and romance each other in the one-room shanty the butcher shares with her teenage daughter, whose name gives the film its title.

25. Joel David, *The National Pastime: Contemporary Philippine Cinema* (Pasig, Metro Manila: Anvil, 1990).

When the butcher's lover forces himself on the heroine, the trauma and long-suppressed rancor turn her into a fearsome teenage rebel.

Diaz reads the metamorphosis of the lass and others around her into violent, alienated beings as a knowing affront to the Marcos regime's "insistence of a Filipino subjectivity ruled by civic responsibility, spirituality, and humanity." The removal of the film's slumland characters "from the category of humanity"—their bestialization—testifies, like the period's subversive cultural productions, to the "distinct nature of authoritarian violence in the Philippines." For Diaz, the film's treatment of its iconic setting—the slums of Tondo—is central to the film's politics. Together with striking images of extreme poverty in the waterside shanties, the film's "bizarre narrative" of a homicidal oversexed mother running a household whose members end up destroying one another and their neighbors as well, belie the "Marcoses' narrative of uplifting the poor and transforming Philippine society." Though overt references to the Marcos regime, cold war geopolitics, and rapacious transnational capitalism are largely absent onscreen, their profound effects on Tondo's underclass arguably register in the film's grim content and spectacle.

The cultural terrain of *Insiang's* politics extended well beyond the Manila slums where the film is set. Brocka's melodrama was exported to the Cannes International Film Festival where the film, its star, and especially its director caught the attention of global film culture.²⁶ The warm notices for *Insiang* reportedly grated at Imelda Marcos while realizing her desire to reap international exposure and prestige for Filipino culture. The success of the film and the director in implicitly but effectively excoriating the Marcos regime before the foreign press and cineastes encouraged Brocka and other filmmakers to create more films of searing social criticism for local and international audiences.

The remaining two essays offer in-depth accounts of US Filipino campaigns against the Marcos regime. Building on the work of the previous generation of scholars and writers on what Barbara Gaerlan calls "anti-martial law movements," both articles offer intimate case studies of campaigns and collectives, focusing on their objectives, group dynamics, and ties to counterpart efforts in the Philippines.

Karen Buenavista Hanna's historical account of Marcos's martial law begins right at home. In this case, however, "home" refers not to the Philippines but the domestic spaces in the US that Filipino activists inhabited and shared with loved ones and the peers in their multi-ethnic circle of leftists. The first home Hanna writes of is the former dwelling of a Filipino Ph.D. student at UCLA and his two African American roommates, both ex-members of the Black Panther Party. Their home became the site of the Sunday Morning Group, a "radical multiracial study group" that read political tracts together and followed developments on progressive struggles throughout the US and nations like the Philippines, Nicaragua, and Palestine. The

26. José B. Capino, *Martial Law Melodrama: Lino Brocka's Cinema Politics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2020), 49–50.

weekly sessions had an impressive run of four years, but for some of its members the intellectual community, bonds of solidarity, and close friendships outlived the Marcos regime and even lasted a lifetime.

Hanna also writes about several homes occupied by activists from the Union of Democratic Filipinos (aka *Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino* or KDP), an organization that operated in several major US cities to organize transpacific resistance to the Marcos regime and promote socialism in the US. Some of its members lived in housing collectives that the organization established to provide flexible living options for transient, busy, or low-income activists.

For these communities of activists, the home was not just a private retreat but a domain of existence, action, and imagination that was co-extensive with the arenas of revolutionary struggle. Hanna's freighted coinage "revolutionary intimacies" refers to personal ties and interactions that are already enmeshed in the radical work of remaking society. Her pairing of "intimacy" with "revolution" is especially productive because the typically private realms of domestic life, sexuality, and gender are as integral to any revolution as the usually valorized fronts of struggle (such as politics, statecraft, the writing of history, etc.).

As in her other writings, Hanna thus touches on how these intimacies live up to their most radical potentials by accommodating nonnormative practices of sexual being, togetherness, and home founding. Her account throws the spotlight on some of the radical lesbians and out gay men that fueled the revolution. Hanna limns these rarely discussed narratives from oral histories she scrupulously collected from over a hundred Filipino activists and their allies. She interprets these life narratives in the light of feminist theory, critical race theory, queer of color critiques, Filipino history, and the history of left politics.

James Zarsadiaz also deals with transpacific political activism against the Marcos regime in his study of protest and solidarity campaigns mounted by entities affiliated with the United Methodist Church in and around Chicago. The essay relates that US Methodists launched an expansive campaign to recruit members from communities of color beginning in the mid-1970s. With the help of clergy and members of Filipino descent, the church's Chicago congregation converted more Filipinos from Catholicism than any other Asian nationalities in the area. Zarsadiaz attributes some of the congregation's success to its advocacy for justice and reforms in the Philippines. The congregation's Filipino pastors used their bully pulpit to criticize the Marcos regime and its international enablers (including the US government). Apart from sponsoring teach-ins, publications, rallies, and other politically inflected activities, the congregation participated in running higher-profile events, such as the Midwest appearances of Ninoy Aquino. The Chicago Methodists continued to grow its Filipino membership through the mid-1980s not only by sustaining its program of events on the Philippines but also by placing Filipino persons in leadership positions within their congregation.

Sifting through a rarely examined archive of church records, publications, and ephemera, Zarsadiaz weaves an absorbing tale of how one faith community in the Midwest managed to realize its organizational goals while also acting on what it saw as a moral obligation to denounce autocrats like Marcos. Similar to Hanna's observations about the ties between Philippine-focused activities and other multi-ethnic and internationalist concerns within the US, Zarsadiaz finds that the church's Philippine advocacy complemented concurrent programs on other international and domestic socio-political issues. This engagement with a plurality of concerns promoted an awareness of the ethico-religious implications of global citizenship as well as the intersectional nature of socio-political struggles in the US and elsewhere.

Though Zarsadiaz's essay focuses on transnational resistance to the dictatorship, it is also a rare microhistory of the Filipino American diaspora and a neglected piece of the history of religion in the US.

In building this issue around work by Filipino/a American scholars, our intent is not to argue for the specificity or superiority of work on the Philippines produced in the US but to create a venue for the kind of promising—and we think important—scholarship that tends to get marginalized in both countries. Few writings on the Marcos era by Filipino American scholars have seen print or have been republished in Philippine venues, possibly due not only to the scholars' outsider status but also because scholars based there have been slow to appreciate the diaspora's salient concerns. For instance, diasporan and transnational scholarship on such topics as transnational activism, the impact of martial law on the life and cultural politics of the Philippine diaspora, and diasporan cultural productions relating to the Marcos regime have been slow to gain traction in the Philippines. The fate of this body of scholarship reflects a broader pattern of indifference to academic writings about the Philippine diaspora. Such works have engendered a fair share of rejection letters and have been characterized as provincial or deficient by some Philippine-based publication venues and authors.²⁷ Mercifully enough, diasporan literary works on the Philippines have tended to receive a fairer hearing. Filipino American scholars writing about the Philippines have also faced indifference in the US, especially when their work has deviated from such established objects of study as immigration, diasporan history, and transnational cultural productions or when they have dipped into area studies, a field still dominated by white academics. As regards this indifference to the scholarly pursuits of academics of color within area studies, we have in mind the many Filipino Americans who have often found themselves shut out of presenting at Asian Studies conferences in the West.

27. Filomeno V. Aguilar, "Is the Filipino Diaspora a Diaspora?" *Critical Asian Studies* 47, no. 3 (July 3, 2015): 440–61; Lisandro Claudio, "For Filipinos Are Neither Iraqis nor Afghans nor Vietnamese: On the Hegemony of American Empire Studies" (Philippine and Filipino Studies: 40 Years Hence, Center for Philippine Studies, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, 2015).

Since 2016, when the Philippines began marking anniversaries of Marcos's martial law while living through the horror of Rodrigo Duterte's repressive and murderous populist regime, the importance of scholarly contributions of this kind has become more evident than ever. A greater understanding of authoritarianism, a renewed political commitment to resist it through various means including scholarship and acts of solidarity from every place that values democracy and social justice—these goals are especially vital today, and we hope this issue advances them in some way.

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