

TORTYUR: Human Rights Violations During The Marcos Regime

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“One would often get kicked if the military did not like your face.”

-Bonifacio Salvador (PDI 1999, 16)

People say, not just the young, but even the people who lived through Martial Law said that “Marcos is the greatest president.” They remember fondly that life was not that hard at that time. Because President Ferdinand Marcos imposed discipline and everyone was afraid of him, there was peace and order. And those who became victims of torture, they are not so many anyway, and most of them are really rebels and communists, enemies of the state. Because little development happened after the 1986 People Power that toppled the Marcos dictatorship, people even blame that revolution for making their lives worst and imagine a return to an iron fist regime that would once again “discipline” the Filipinos for our damaged culture.

It seems that the bad things that made the Filipinos revolt in 1986 never happened and it seems that the propaganda worked. Imelda Marcos describes her husband’s regime, “It was a compassionate society, it was a benevolent leadership.” (Tiongson 1997) She also said, “Martial Law is the most peaceful democratic time in Philippine History.” (Malanes 1999, 16)

It was her delusion, and the regime’s expertise in information control made it the delusion of a large portion of the country’s population until today.

For the truth be said, it was actually the darkest period in recent history.

I. Martial Law and the Military

On 21 September 1972, Marcos declared martial law to “save the republic and reform our society.” A biography of the president justified martial law by saying that the society, “by its unresponsiveness to popular needs, had lost the right to exist.” (Department of Public Information 1975, 150)

To help Marcos achieve his disciplined new society, he launched a massive militarization campaign. Military membership grew from 55,000 in 1972 to 250,000 in 1984, and its budget ballooned from P 608 million in 1972 to \$ 8.8 billion in 1984. Military personnel, especially his Ilocano friends, were appointed to various posts in government and civilian bureaucracy (Nepomuceno-Francisco and Arriola 1987, 177). The president’s former military driver, the loyal Ilocano General Fabian C. Ver, was eventually appointed as Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. The military were given a free hand in implementing peace and order (Hamilton-Patterson 1998, 177, 301).

Despite seeming peace and order caused by Martial Law and the modernization of the military and constabulary (police), beyond the high walls of military camps and the lights and glamor of censored television and broadcasting, lies a dark face of Martial Law.

Some people said, there were horrible things happening inside the camps. President Marcos denied them at first but when they become too many he said they were only isolated cases, and dismissed them as “aberrations” (Aquino 1984, 2000, 88-89).

With such power and resources given to the military to “save” democracy, they were able to commit a number of human rights violations. And in stifling dissent, as Ninoy Aquino said, “in saving democracy, [Marcos] killed it.”

II. The Numbers: Hair-raising

Statistics on the extent of human rights violations were hair-raising. Danilo Vizmanos, a West Point-trained Navy Captain turned activist, estimates the extent of suffering under martial law: 7,000 victims of torture, 2,000 *salvaged* or summarily executed, 1,000 people disappeared (Malanes 1999, 16). His estimate is similar to the number of legal claimants of human rights violations against the Marcoses in the Hawaii case: 9,539 (Rosales 1999, 12)

In addition to this, the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines gives numbers to more specific incidences. In their record, from 1965-1986, the numbers were as follows:

- 2,668 incidents of arrests
- 306 total number of arrested individuals
- 398 disappearances
- 1,338 salvagings
- 128 frustrated salvagings
- 1,499 killed or wounded in massacres (Magsaysay 1999)

But Amnesty International, 1977 Nobel Peace Prize recipient and respected activist organization on global human rights, gives a not so conservative estimates in the whole Martial Law years: 70,000 were imprisoned, 34,000 were tortured, 3,240 were killed (Tiongson 1997).

The numbers vary and it would be impossible to account for everything since some victims and their families chose not to pursue it for fear for their lives. Despite the differences in statistics, these are not just numbers. Here are thousands of lives lost, and thousands of families destroyed. The human rights violations happened, and they were real.

III. Psychological & Emotional Torture: “What Loneliness Meant”

To the regime, it was the “Army with a heart.” But for the victims, it is far from the truth. Far from what they experienced.

For a VIP, someone from the opposition, a tycoon, or even some of their sons, detention might be the worst thing that can happen to them during Martial Law. But since these leaders inspire dissent, the regime would instill psychological torture such as isolation to instill fear or to shake one’s principle.

Senator Ramon Mitra was placed under solitary confinement for about a hundred days with “nobody to talk to, just by yourself.” He would be awoken at about 1:00 AM and be brought outside his cell to hear the sounds of gunfire, and then he was returned to his cell and told to relax. To keep his sanity, he would recite poems or sing songs, and the soldier at one point thought he was crazy (Delgado 1999, 14).

Senators Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino and José “Pepe” Diokno were the first ones to be arrested the night Martial Law was implemented. On 12 March 1973, nearly the fifth month of their detention, the two were blindfolded and flown to Fort Magsaysay in Laur, Nueva Ecija. Ninoy recounted,

They...placed me in a box. I had only my brief and my t-shirt. I refused to eat because I thought they were poisoning me. There was nothing in the room, barely nothing. And I had nothing to do but twiddle my thumb, and for the first time in my life I heard the ticking of every second, and I was counting every second into minutes, and as the minutes marched into hours, and hours into days and days into weeks, I knew what loneliness meant.

Nobody knew where they were, or if they were still alive. To be assured that they still had each other, Ninoy would usually sing *Bayan Ko* and Pepe would answer with the national anthem (Yap 1987, 42-43). Even their families suffered fear and humiliation in their incarceration, as President Noynoy Aquino recounted:

Yung mga kapatid ko, for instance, papapasok yan, bina-body search. So, dumating yung point, nagso-shorts sila, yung mga kapatid ko, para hindi na tinataas yung skirt. Minsan pinapatanggal pa yung mga blusa, kakapkin pa pati yung mga bra. Yung idea na para bang, siguro, pormal ang trato sa aming mga lalaki, ba't sa mga babaeng parang lalong hassle, iba siguro ng sitwasyon. Si Kris for instance, was born in 1971. By 1972, Martial Law. When she was of a mind na nakakapag-isip na, hindi niya alam na yung tatay pala naming nakatira sa bahay namin, akala niya ang talagang residence dun sa dinadalaw namin. Para sa kanya, pag horror figures, di ba tayo, kukunin ka ng tikbalang, ng kapre, lalo na nung bata ka, kay Kris, yung judge ng military tribunal, ang kinakatakutan niya. Sabi niya, yung may tangan ng gavel, “Yan ba mommy pupukpukin ako?” Parang ganun, talagang napaka-ubnormal nung upbringing niya. Nandun yung point na may parte na nag-smuggle kami ng isang article ng daddy, ...sa Thailand naimprenta, kung saan pinadala siya sa Fort Magsaysay. Tapos isinauli sa bahay lahat ng kagamitan niya, pati toothbrush. At yung pag ganung personal belongings ang isinasauli, parang ang dating sa iyo nun, parang itinanong pa yata ng nanay ko, “Bakit niyo isinasauli ito?” Sagot sa kanya, “E hindi na po niya kailangan ‘yan!” E bakit hindi na kakailanganin ang toothbrush, ibig sabihin parang patay na? (Aquino III 2004)

As senators of the republic, to be placed in this predicament is humiliating. The thought that God had left him made Ninoy extremely depressed during his solitary confinement (Aquino 1984, 139). The dictatorship may have thought that they had succeeded in breaking their spirits.

But of course, they were wrong. Ninoy referred to the Laur incident as a life-changing experience where he found his *faith* and his *God*, and continued to work for the dismantlement of the regime until he was felled by an assassin's bullet on 21 August 1983. Pepe Diokno, upon release, became a human rights lawyer and lived to see the ouster of Marcos on 25 February 1986.

IV. Physical Torture: Not Even For Animals

If you were not as lucky to be born with a silver spoon, like ordinary activists and even some innocent civilians, you get arrested without warrant, detained illegally, and be subjected under extreme physical torture. Even in prison, Sen. Ninoy Aquino collected cases of torture during the early years of Martial Law citing Amnesty International and the International Commission on Jurists in an essay entitled "Evidence Tortured Into Existence." (Aquino 1984, 2000, 89-105, 110-113)

Many of the cases of torture and illegal detention happened in undisclosed *safe houses* and military camps. In Metro Manila, detained activists joke about how they get locked in "ABC and back to B"—Camp Emilio Aguinaldo (Quezon City), Camp Bagong Diwa (Bicutan, Taguig), Camp Rafael Crame (Quezon City) and Fort Bonifacio (Taguig) (Cervantes 2006, 2010) or proceed to D—Death (Canoy 1980, 65). After a few days, they would be confined in the military hospital or detained and kept *incommunicado* for long periods of time.

Roland Simbulan, former Faculty Regent of UP, was an organizer of the Kabataang Makabayan at the Ateneo de Manila High School. He described the step by step process of being detained and tortured in military camps. In 1973, he was already a UP student when he was suddenly arrested and blindfolded by a Constabulary Security Unit (CSU) which he believed had been spying on his activities. His family was not informed of his whereabouts. In Camp Crame, he was questioned and tortured for four days:

Sina-psywar ka. Sasabihin nila, "magsalita ka na alam na naming lahat, isinumbong ka na ng mga kasama mo". "Eh alam niyo na pala lahat bakit nyo pa ako tinatanong?" Yun yung sasabihin ko.

Actually dumating sa point, yung pinaka-severe na torture, pinosasan ako tapos isinabit sa wall tapos ginawa akong punching bag yung sa harapan at likod ko. Nag-swing ako dahil ayokong suntukin niya ako, kaya yung paa ko napaganun kasi siyempre you want to protect yourself. Eh nakasabit akong ganun kaya lalong nagalit sa akin. I was almost unconscious eh dahil nung sinuntok ako ulit it was so hard (Simbulan 2006).

After being isolated, he joined other detainees in a cell. Its windows were covered with plywood. After a month, he was transferred to Fort Bonifacio where he talked with some farmers. Seeing him, Lt. Rodolfo Aguinaldo kicked him. He was detained for eight months at the Ipil Rehabilitation Center (IRC), named after a dormitory in UP to further insult the detainees. As a showcase for Marcos's visitors that these "enemies of the state" were treated

well, the IRC had double-deck beds. The detainees formed “chow groups” to become a support system for each other and for new detainees. He was once transferred to the Youth Rehabilitation Center (YRC), a misnomer for maximum security facilities (bartolina). He was again arrested for his involvement with the *Philippine Collegian* and was imprisoned in a Camp Crame stockade. All these he experienced before reaching the age of twenty.

The listings by Ninoy Aquino and Primitivo Mijares (Aquino 1984, 2000, 89-105, 110-113; Mijares 1976, 276-324) gives the names and faces to the different techniques of torture. Aside from deadly weapons, unassuming everyday items like water, pliers, thumb tacks, ball pens, flat iron were used to create constant and enduring pain that even time can hardly heal:

Electric Shock—one of the frequently used techniques. Usually, the electric wires were attached to fingers and the genitalia of the victim, as inflicted on Charlie Revilla Palma and Wilfredo Hilao. Sometimes, wires were attached to the arms and the head, just like what happened to Romeo Tolio. Other victims were Reynaldo Guillermo, Alejandro Arellano, Victor Quinto, Pedro de Guzman, Jr., Reynaldo Rodriguez, Julius Giron, Armando Teng, Santiago Alonzo, Romeo Bayle and Agaton Topacio.

San Juanico Bridge—the victim lies between two beds and if his/her body falls or sags, the victim will be beaten. This was just one of the many tortures inflicted on José Lacaba and Bonifacio Ilagan.

Truth Serum—administered at the V. Luna General Hospital. It made José Lacaba “talk drunkenly.” It was also administered to Victor Quinto.

Russian Roulette—the victim is forced to aim a revolver with a bullet at his/her own head and then pull the trigger. This was used to further terrify Rev. Cesar Taguba and Carlos Centenera while being subjected to other tortures.

Beating—another favorite technique where a group of soldiers would beat with “fists, kicks and karate blows” manacled victims. Almost all those who were tortured were subjected to this beating, among them Julius Giron, Macario Tiu, Eugenio Magpantay, Joseph Gatus, Rev. Cesar Taguba, Reynaldo Guillermo, Alejandro Arellano, Charley Palma, Victor Quinto, Pedro de Guzman, Jr., Reynaldo Rodriguez, Ma. Cristina Verzola, Julius Giron, Armando Teng, Romeo Bayle, Agaton Topacio, Reynaldo Ila and Ramon Casiple.

Pistol-Whipping—beating with rifle butts; one of the techniques endured by Reynaldo Guillermo, Roberto Sunga, Joseph Gatus and Nathan Quimpo.

Water Cure—another favorite technique. Huge amounts of water would be forced through into the victim’s mouth, and by beating would be forced out. This was applied to Guillermo Ponce de Leon, Alfonso Abzagado and Andrew Ocampo.

Strangulation—Done by hand, electric wire and steel bar to Carlos Centenera, and for two months his speech was impaired. Others who claimed to be strangled were Willie Tatanis, Juan Villegas and Reynaldo Rodriguez.

Cigar Burns—bonus you would get under torture. Received by Marcelino Tolam, Jr., Philip Limjoco, Charley Palma, Ma. Cristina Verzola and Reynaldo Rodriguez.

Flat Iron burns—Despite being old in his fifties, Cenon Sembrano's foot was heated with a flat iron. His foot became swollen and infected.

Pepper Torture—Meynardo Espeleta's bonus was a "concentrated peppery substance placed on his lips and genitals."

Animal Treatment—victims are manacled and caged like beasts. For three days, Leandro Manalo was caged inside a toilet handcuffed and blindfolded. Because of the experience he got viral hepatitis. For long periods of time, manacles were not removed from Alexander Arevalo, Manuel Daez, Marcelo Gallarin, Romualdo Inductivo, Faustino Samonte and Rodolfo Macasalabang, even if they ate, discharged their waste, took baths or slept. Food was given to them as if they were dogs, "shoved under the iron grilles." And they ate without even knowing what the food was because there were no lights in their cell. Inductivo, despite his old age, was mercilessly slapped and electrocuted under torture. Rev. Cesar Taguba was made to drink his urine. And Monico Atienza, in his nakedness was threatened to be fed to dogs.

Two of the many cases would best illustrate how many of these techniques were combined to produce cruelty at its worst.

Peter Villaseñor was brought to a camp in Bataan where he was tortured for nine nights and nine days. While he was hung naked from the ceiling, soldiers would flick his genitals and *walis tambo* was inserted into his urinary tract. Thumbtacks were also inserted into his fingertips. Bayonets were placed in his elbows and his mouth. Naked, he was made to sit on three blocks of ice. Electric shock was applied to his toe and his genitalia. A stone was knocked repeatedly on his knees. While his head and stomach were beaten, water drops were forced into his nose (Magsaysay 1999).

Satur Ocampo, director of a workers' union of a newspaper, was brought to a safe house. Manacled and blindfolded, soldiers poured cola drinks on him while being electrocuted, so as to cause more pain. His ears, nose, esophagus and head were slapped. His nipples and genitalia were burned. He was forced to eat manure and was threatened to be castrated or be killed. Brig. Gen. Thomas P. Diaz, First Police Constabulary Zone Commander, who didn't believe the torture exclaimed, "My God!" when he was shown marks on Ocampo's body (Aquino Jr., 1984, 2000, 100).

V. Sexual Torture: "It hurts more!"

Here are only some cases that illustrate that in a repressive regime, even women are not respected.

From 22 June to 4 July 1975, Lt. Rodolfo Aguinaldo placed ten women detainees in a small cell furnished with *tin cans* to hold their urine. One of them was pregnant. All became sick of a

respiratory infection that eventually spread to other detainees in the area (Aquino Jr., 1984, 2000, 97).

Etta Rosales, a teacher at the José Rizal College, was brought to a safe house in Pasig where she was tortured. She was stripped naked when she suffered the Russian Roulette, electric shocks, strangulation, and candle burns. Her torturers only stopped when she pretended to be dying. Years later, one of her torturers, Lt. Rodolfo Aguinaldo, even became her colleague at the House of Representatives (Magsaysay 1999).

Hilda Narciso was placed in a small room where she was raped. She was fed soup of worms and rotten fish. She would be awoken right after falling asleep in order to be tortured once more. “Yung torture, mental torture, ang sakit. Tapos yung sexual abuse, mas lalo na, dagdag yun. Physical torture baka sabihin ko pang... mabuti pang pinukpok na ako ng pinukpok kaysa ni-rape ako e.” Currently, she was the executive director *Claimants 1081*, a group that filed human rights violations against the Marcoses (Magsaysay 1999).

Judy Taguiwalo, a student activist and community organizer was brought to a military office in Iloilo. She was stripped naked as she was subjected to water torture. The next day, she fought a soldier attempting to mash her and make her sit on a block of ice. She still felt lucky she wasn't raped. She now teaches at University of the Philippines (Azarcon-dela Cruz 1999, 4).

Fe Mangahas, a historian and an active member of the faculty union of the University of the East, was arrested along with her husband-poet, Roger. Although she was just detained for one night, her husband stayed 19 months more. She described that night in Camp Aguinaldo where “people [were] walking around like zombies.” She confirmed the existence of a building called the “white house” where screams of women molested were regularly heard. To her, the thought of how long martial law would last was very difficult (Azarcon-dela Cruz 1999, 4).

Isabelita Guillermo was arrested with her husband Reynaldo. She unwillingly watched her husband's torture. Pregnant, she was threatened with rape and abortion. She was still under military custody when her child was born (Aquino Jr., 1984, 2000, 96).

Erlinda Taruc-Co, wife of a political detainee, was told that they would be fine in detention with her 5-year old son. The next morning they were separated from each other. While “blindfolded and handcuffed to a metal bed,” she was beaten and was molested. She suffered this for twenty-five days (Aquino Jr., 1984, 2000, 101, 102, Canoy 1980, 70).

Lualhati Roque, twenty-five years old, was “sexually abused and tortured” by constabulary elements. Despite her rheumatic heart ailment, she wasn't permitted to rest or given medical attention (Aquino Jr., 1984, 2000, 102).

Maria Elena-Ang was electrocuted, water cured, deprived of sleep, pistol-whipped and was subjected to “sexual indignities”. She was threatened that her relatives would also be harmed (Aquino Jr., 1984, 2000, 104).

Rape and other sexual indignities were meant to isolate the individual from his or her compatriots and the society. The violation of what they held sacred was so shameful that there could never be an actual count of how many detainees were raped or molested.

In some cases, the pain of wives and mothers almost destroyed their families. After her husband's detention, Fe Mangahas' marriage almost broke down, as she and her husband felt very estranged from each other. Her husband and son experienced health problems, and her career track as an educator at that time was ruined (Azarcon-dela Cruz 1999, 4).

Yet many of those women who suffered, like Rosales, Narciso and Taguiwalo strengthened their principles and are continuing the fight for what they believe up to now. Even Mangahas recovered and is now a board member of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines.

Women were not spared from the torture because patriotism does not choose any gender.

These are only some of the documented cases. The corroboration of the victims' testimonies tell not of aberrations but of a systematic way of violating human rights. According to Ninoy Aquino, these inhumane acts "tell a tale of premeditated violence, torture and dehumanization to break the human spirit, reduce men into whimpering animals...." (Aquino, Jr., 1984, 2000, 109).

Apart from causing physical damage, they aim to break the spirit.

Torture is used to extract confessions from people suspected to be involved in treason, insurrection and rebellion, or to make the victim implicate somebody. To do this to a small sector of our society is meant to scare the community at large. The desired effect of this kind of ordeal inflicted on political detainees was beyond physical. Unlike the wounds that are temporary and may heal in a matter of days, being subjected to such an extreme kind of pain traumatized the victims. They aim to break the spirit. But the spirit of freedom despite torture, soared among many of these freedom fighters who carried on fighting until victory was achieved in 1986.

But these were stories told by those who survived. Some did not live to tell their tales.

VI. *Desaparecidos*: They Never Came Home

Some of the political detainees never came home, even in a box, and disappeared without a trace. Task Force Detainees of the Philippines counted 398 during the Marcos years, 1965-1986 (Magsaysay 1999), although Satur Ocampo estimates "probably around 2,000" (Hamilton-Patterson 1998, 317). It is possible that many cases are still not accounted for.

Some cases at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani are: 27-year-old student organizer Emmanuel I. Alvarez who was abducted in Cavite in 1976; 22-year-old student activist Albert R. Enriquez who was abducted on his way home in Lucena City in 1985; 25-year old student community organizer and campus writer Ma. Leticia P. Ladlad of Tacloban who disappeared in 1975; 32-year-old union activist and human rights lawyer Hermon C. Lagman who was abducted in Bagong Bantay, Quezon City in 1977; 24-year old student organizer Mariano Lopez who was

arrested in Isabela in 1974; 24-year-old student organizer and campus journalist Rodelo Z. Manaog who was last seen in UP Los Baños in 1984; 29-year-old artist Manuel F. Ontong who was picked up by civilian agents at the Philippine General Hospital in 1975; 48-year-old sugar farm workers' organizer Florencio S. Pesquesa who was abducted in Alabang, Muntinlupa in 1979; 26-year-old student community organizer Arnulfo A. Resus who was believed to be abducted in Isabela in 1977; 45-year-old Redemptorist priest Rosaleo B. Romano who was abducted in Cebu City in 1985; 34-year-old Benedictine deacon Carlos N. Tayag who went missing in 1976; and 25-year-old activist Emmanuel R. Yap who was abducted coming from a family dinner in Quezon City in 1976 (Bantayog ng mga Bayani 1999, 16-29).

The most famous case would be that of former propaganda man of Marcos who defected in 1975 after quarrelling with Imelda's brother Benjamin. He testified against Marcos's graft, corruption and repression in the US Congress and published *The Conjugal Dictatorship of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos I*, which provided, not only an inside look at the dictatorship, but also his own account of the brutalities. While on his way to Manila, he disappeared, and was never seen again (Rempel 1993, 204).

Even innocent people were abducted and went missing. Four people identified with Rolando Galman, the slain suspect for the assassination of Ninoy Aquino, disappeared: his wife Lina Lazaro, his mistress Anna Oliva and her sister Catherine, and Galman's best friend and neighbor Rogelio Taruc (Nolasco 2008).

Without closure, the families of the disappeared bear the fear and the pain of loss of parents, children, relatives, or friends who never came home. One mother of a *desaparecido* still hopes, up to now, that her son will still come home (Azarcon-dela Cruz 1999, 4). Shortly after Tibo's disappearance, his widow suffered even more when her teenage son Boyet was found dead, brutally tortured, fingernails all removed and body mutilated with thirty-three ice pick wounds (Tiongson 1997).

VII. Murder!!!

Among the roughly three thousand killed during Martial Law, I only selected for this purpose the most celebrated cases with direct military connection. There are other political killings, but military involvement couldn't be established, such as the murders of Dr. Bobby dela Paz and Evelio Javier.

Liliosa Hilao, a writer of the student movement at the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila. In 1973, she was arrested, sexually molested and died in Camp Crame under constabulary custody. The military claimed she committed suicide by drinking muriatic acid in a men's bathroom. But the autopsy said otherwise. Her mouth became an ashtray full of cigarette wounds. Her mother recounted how much Lily's body was maltreated: They cut her body up with a saw up to her vagina, and they also cut her head. They took out her brain and stomach, tore them into pieces like "dinuguan," soaked them in muriatic acid and placed them in a pale and was brought to the wake in that manner. During her funeral, there was heavy military presence. She was 23, the first case of death under detention during Martial Law (Hilao-Gualberto 2007).

Murders were more likely committed in the countryside, where not so many would see.

Noel Cerrudo Tierra was a member of the Samahang Demokratikong Kabataan and the UP Nationalist Corps. He was a poet and a community organizer in the farms of Quezon Province and the slums of Quezon City. For these activities, he was arrested many times. His last detention was in a camp in Quezon where he was tortured and for two weeks was paraded around in several barrios “lugging a sack of rice, hands tied to a pole.” Then his body was found thrown in a basketball court. He was 21 years old (Bantayog ng mga Bayani 1995b, 6 at 11 at Bantayog ng mga Bayani 1999, 32).

Antonio “Tonyhil” Hilario was a member of the Samahang Demokratikong Kabataan and the UP Nationalist Corps. In 1971 with Marcos suspending the Writ of Habeas Corpus, he went underground. His hut was raided in Aklan killing two comrades including the pregnant wife of a farmer. He was hit in the chest and as he was being saved urged his companion to just leave him to continue the struggle. It was said that he was arrested, tortured, and after making him dig the graves of his comrades, he was shoved in also, burying him alive (Bantayog ng mga Bayani 1996, 7-8, 11). Another version from a family member suggests that he was shot before being buried. He was 26 (Hilario 2008, 128).

William Vincent “Bill” Begg was a Filipino-American seminarian who became a member of the UP Lipunang Pangkasaysayan. He was arrested during Martial Law for his participation in the underground movement at the Ateneo. He left UP to join the New People’s Army in 1974 and in 1975 was captured in a military raid in Isabela. He was tortured with “seventeen stab wounds, eleven gunshot wounds, a broken rib cage and smashed hands.” He was 24 (Montiel 2007, 15-28).

Emmanuel “Eman” Lacaba, is a very young poet and writer who wrote literary pieces on the Lapiang Malaya and the Rizalist Kapatirans of Mt. Banahaw. In 1974, he went to Mindanao to join the New People’s Army (Ventura 1997, 203-215). In 1976, he was wounded in a raid in Davao del Norte that killed two of his companions. He was captured alive with an 18-year old pregnant comrade. They decided to execute both of them firing at the young lady first and then shooting a .45 calibre bullet to Eman’s mouth and then to his chest. He was tied in his ankles and dragged like a pig to a common grave. He was 27 (Montiel 2007, 72-72).

Lorena Barros, a graduate of BA Anthropology at the University of the Philippines and an officer of the UP Writers Club, was a participant of the First Quarter Storm and the Diliman Commune as member of the Samahan ng Demokratikong Kabataan. In 1970, she became the founding chair of the Makibaka women’s organization (Gomez 1997, 53-63). She went underground during are Martial Law and was assigned to the New People’s Army in Quezon. In 1976, her hut was discovered; she was able to fire three times but her gun jammed. She fled to a deep ravine and was discovered the next day bleeding but still alive near a stream. She died in military custody en route to the military camp (Gomez 1997, 78).

Juan Escandor is a cancer doctor from the University of the Philippines Manila-Philippine General Hospital who organized the protest movement in Sorsogon and joined the New People’s Army. In 1983, the military claimed that they killed him in an encounter in Bohol Ave. and

Bayudan St. in Quezon City. But the residents said they did not hear a single shot fired that night. He was last seen with Yolanda Gordula, who disappeared without a trace. 52-days after burial, he was exhumed to be re-autopsied and the fact-finding team said he was shot at close-range and not in a shoot-out and there was evidence of torture: They found his skull filled with dirty rags, socks, briefs and plastic bags! His brains and other organs were all placed inside his stomach! One of his eyes was missing, his head and bones severely broken, and his body was filled with black marks of hematoma. Because of his commitment to the people, he was hailed as a doctor of the masses (Jamoralin 1997, 69-86, Escandor 2006).

Edgar “Edjop” Jopson was a moderate activist from the Ateneo de Manila who led demonstrations against Marcos during the First Quarter Storm; he even bravely negotiated with Marcos himself in Malacañang at the height of the siege of Mendiola on 30 January 1970 where he asked Marcos to sign a covenant not to run for a third term. Marcos famously replied, “Who are you to tell me what to do! You’re only a son of a grocer!” (Pimentel 2006, 43) Martial Law radicalized him and joined the New People’s Army. In 1979, he was captured, tortured and escaped by bribing his guard. In 1982, he was hunted and killed by a constabulary raiding party in Davao del Norte. Many claimed he was captured wounded but alive, and then executed. His body sustained nine bullet wounds in the chest, legs and right arm. Soldiers were overheard being amazed by his courage in the face of death (Kalaw-Tirol 1997, 172).

Military brutalities didn’t spare the clergy and laypersons which the regime believed were sympathetic to the communists (Hamilton-Patterson 1998, 328). **Fr. Zacarias Agatep**, an organizer of farmers’ cooperative was shot and killed by military men while defending the lands of his parishioners, which they held sacred. They believed he was a communist guerilla and they placed a bounty of Php 260,000.00 on his head “dead or alive.” (McDougald 1987, 153). The Italian priest **Fr. Tulio Favali** was shot point blank by para-military forces in 1985 (Bantayog ng mga Bayani 1995a, 8). His killer tasted his brain (Promotion of Church People’s Rights 1989, 236).

Marcos’s proposed Chico River Dam Project angered the ethno-linguistic groups of Mt. Province and Kalinga whose ancestral lands would be affected. They fought, despite the soldiers’ threatening guns, and won. The price of victory: people arrested, detained and killed (Malanes 1999, 16). Their leader **Macli-ing Dulag** was killed by soldiers when they shot up his hut. Also, Tingguians and some Cordillera ethnic groups protested the operation of a crony paper mill that would eat up 200,000 hectares of their land. In the process, many were arrested, detained and killed (Baron and Suazo 1986, 93). These incidents show the regime’s disrespect to tribal land and tradition, and the military’s disrespect to human dignity and life.

In Abra, when soldiers kill people, “they frequently cut off their heads.” One time, a priest who went to the hills and a couple of women rebels were ambushed, killed and their heads cut off. The heads were brought to different villages to be exposed and to threaten the people. The heads were then buried separated from the bodies. A constabulary sergeant took responsibility for this (Zich 1986, 112-113). Among the Bantayog martyrs, **Resteta Fernandez, Soledad Salvador and Nilo Valerio** were beheaded (Bantayog ng mga Bayani 1999, 32).

In a BBC documentary, Sen. Pepe Diokno featured a young girl remembering how her village was raided by soldiers and how they were shot. Her mother covered her and when the shooting stopped she was covered with her mother's blood and brains. She saw how her brother was cut in half. Another boy climbed a coconut tree when the raid happened and from it he saw how her father was stopped by soldiers, they tied to his feet, and his head turned sideways. Then they cut his head, played with it and pushed it with a stick to a coconut tree and covered it with leaves. The boy wanted to avenge his father's death, he said "Even a small chick can grow into a fighting rooster." This incident was known as the **Las Navas Incident** (Diokno 1983).

On the eve of the anniversary of martial law in 1985, 7,000 people gathered peacefully in front of the Escalante Municipal Hall in Negros to protest the dictatorship. To their shock, combined government troopers and para-military men fired on them, leaving 21 dead and 42 injured. This incident went down in history as the **Escalante Massacre** (Gomez 1999, 14).

As in the dark days of colonialism, the brutality of the murders aim to instil fear for those who were fighting for a more democratic society. They had become commonplace, as Fe Mangahas described, "Every week, someone we knew was being buried." (Azarcon-dela Cruz 1999, 4).

VIII. Conclusion

A lot of people remember fondly the peace and order brought by Martial Law, but at what cost? Even criminals have to be treated humanely by law, so are political detainees even if they are considered "enemies of the state."

President Marcos, the master of information control, was able to hide these stories from many people. Yet many knew about these incidents but kept silent. They had surrendered their freedoms to a tyrant to keep their lives from falling apart.

If we believe Marcos's public pronouncements, we can assume he did not know anything. "No single case of maltreatment is to me permissible. One solitary victim is enough to arouse my anger." (Aquino 1984, 2000, 117). In another interview he boasted, "No political prisoners, nobody is imprisoned because of his political belief." Later, Imelda Marcos claimed, "*wala kaming human rights violations dito sa Pilipinas.*" (Tiongson 1997).

Yet, interviewed military officers and men admitted of the harms brought by martial law to the country, but they don't assume responsibility because they were just "following orders." (Tiongson 1997)

So who could be responsible? Military officers and men who committed human rights violations are responsible because they abused their authority and followed unlawful orders. President Marcos too was responsible for militarizing the country and for not letting anyone pay for these violations, even if he did not know about these incidents. And despite censorship, these incidents were documented and reported even by various international human rights organizations. It is impossible for him to have no knowledge of these violations. Therefore, he lied about them.

In a healing gesture, Armed Forces of the Philippines recognized the military's responsibility for the crimes of Martial Law in its 2005 Code of Ethics:

The AFP recognizes and resolves to correct misdeeds of some of its members who sacrificed national interests for individual gains, committed graft and corruption, perpetuated the ill effects of Martial Law...

These misdeeds tainted the good image of the organization. Therefore, the AFP, recognizing these shortcomings and misdeeds vow to evoke from its members the will to put the interest of the country and the service above self, to enhance solidarity, to promote professionalism, and to inculcate vigilance and preparedness against all threats to the Republic (Cardenas, Obidos and Ramos 2011, 18).

Filipinos hurting and killing fellow Filipinos. The brutal side of the Marcos dictatorship brought us shame. Also, many of the victims of these human rights violations were young people and student leaders. Among the Bantayog heroes and martyrs in 1999, 44 died at the age of 21 to 30 years old, 6 died at the age of 15 to 20 years old. Also, most of them were intellectuals and many excelled in academics (Bantayog ng mga Bayani 1999, 30-31).

The corruption in all levels of Philippine society today is an example of what happens to a country forty-years after wiping out many of its dreamers and idealists.

Human rights violations and the repression of dissent is the number one evidence that there was no democracy in the Philippines during the Marcos dictatorship.

And if we forget about the brutalities, and if we forget these martyrs, another dark era will be experienced by our children and grandchildren. We will only continue to remember as a people if we will all be storytellers of our history, to our friends, to our family, to our children and grandchildren. In doing so, we secure their future. For in learning history, we can avoid repeating its tragedies.

Never again, never again...

11 June 2012, 1:15 AM

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