

ANG MAMATAY NANG DAHIL SA 'YO

HEROES AND MARTYRS OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE
IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST DICTATORSHIP
1972-1986 (VOLUME 2)



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SSS-132

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**NATIONAL HISTORICAL
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WRITERS AND MANAGING EDITORS

Ma. Cristina V. Rodriguez
Carolina S. Malay

CHAIR, RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

Thelma M. Arceo

RESEARCHERS

Catalina Abrazado
Fernando V. Cao
Cristy Jean T. Cortez
Socorro Enderes
Karla Andrea Ipong

Meth Jimenez
Rojo Guerrero Mallari
Carrie Panaligan-Manglinong
Juan Perez III
Susan F. Quimpo

Agnes C. Rio
Ma. Cristina V. Rodriguez
Victoria Segui
Candy Yuzon Yee

ILLUSTRATIONS

Neil Doloricon

COVER AND BOOK DESIGN

Effy Calingao

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PAMBUNGAD

Pangalawang bolyum ito sa serye ng aklat tungkol sa mga Pilipinong nanindigan para sa kalayaan noon panahon ng batas militar. Sa pag-aalay ng kanilang sarili para sa dakilang layon ng kalayaan, marami sa kanila ay pinahirapan ng diktadurang Marcos; may tinortyur, pinatay, at dinakip na hanggang ngayon ay hindi pa natatagpuan. Ngunit ang mga buhay nila’y paalala ng kahalagahan ng kalayaan at pagmamahal sa ating bayan.

Hindi gaanong kilala ang mga matatatag na Pilipinong ito, at sa panahon ngayon kung saan sinusubukang baguhin o palitan ang ating kasaysaysan upang pagandahin ang diktadura ay lalo dapat malaman ang mga istorya ng kanilang buhay.

Sila’y inspirasyon para sa atin na hindi payagan muli ang diktadura o anumang bahagi o retaso nito sa ating kasalukuyang buhay bilang isang bayang Pilipino.

Maria Serena I. Diokno
Tagapangulo
Pambansang Komisyonang Pangkasaysayan ng Pilipinas

PAGPAPASALAMAT

Nais pasalamatan ng Bantayog ng mga Bayani ang lahat ng may iniambag sa pagbubuo ng librong ito -- at sa gayon ay tumulong na tiyakin na hinding-hindi makalilimot ang bansa, ni ang sino man sa atin.

Ang nakasulat dito ay hinango mula sa mga arkibo ng Bantayog ng mga Bayani, kabilang ang mga panayam sa mga kamag-anak, kaibigan at kasamahan ng mga martir at bayani, mga ipinagkaloob na mga dokumento't pagpapatunay, gayundin ang mga salaysay at banggit na lumabas sa iba't ibang publikasyon.

PAUNANG SALITA

Tatlumpung taon na ngayon mula nang itinaboy ng mga mamamayang Pilipino ang isang rehimeng tumanyag sa buong mundo dahil sa pagiging malupit, manloloko at magnanakaw.

Tatlumpung taon na nating sinisikap, mula noon, na buuing muli ang isang pangarap na bansa. Isang bansang may demokrasya't katarungan para sa lahat, may respeto't malasakit para sa maliliit, may dignidad at malaya. Bago pa mag-martial law, pangarap na natin iyon, isang binigong pangarap.

Alam natin na may mga nagnanais ibalik tayo sa pagkaalipin noong nakaraan. Nais nilang sila'y makabalik sa kapangyarihang labis-labis na inabuso para sa sariling pagpapasasa. Ipinapakalat nila ang mga kasinungalingan sa hangad na matabunan nito ang katotohanan ng nangyari noon.

Kaya nga't narito ngayon, upang manatiling sariwa sa alaala, ang buhay ng mga nagsakripisyo't nagdusa alang-alang sa mithing pangarap. Ito ay katotohanang di hinuwad na parang mga medalyang gawa sa tansan. At higit pa sa bilyon-bilyong ninakaw na yaman ang halaga ng buhay ng tunay na bayani.

Laman ng librong ito ang mga maikling kwento tungkol sa 140 kataong nabuhay at namatay nang lumalaban sa diktadurang matagal na nanupil sa bansa.

Sila ang mga itinanghal na bayani't martir, at pinarangalan ng Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation, sa mga taon-taong seremonya ginanap sa pagitan ng 2000 at 2014. Nauna na rito ang volume 1, na ang laman ay ang mga pinarangalan sa pagitan ng mga taong 1992 at 2000. May binabalak pang kasunod na volume 3 para sa mga taong simula nang 2015.

Bukod sa mga pangalang tinutukoy dito, marami pang iba na karapat-dapat tanghalin. Ang matiyagang pananaliksik, at pagpapakilala sa katotohanan, ay ginagawa at handog ng Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation para sa sambayanan. Lubos kaming nagpapasalamat sa National Historical Commission of the Philippines, na kabalikat namin sa makasaysayang tungkuling ito na sama-samang abutin ang pangarap nating lahat.

Wigberto E. Tañada
Tagapangulo
Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation

Ang isang bayan ay sinusukat ayon sa uri ng mga taong kanyang dinadakila.

A nation is measured by the quality of men and women it honors. Because of these heroes and martyrs, we can stand up with pride and work together, with heads unbowed, knowing that we are honoring ourselves and our nation, more than we are honoring them.

There is nothing we can add to their heroism and martyrdom. But there is much we can add to restore the good name and reputation of the nation for which they gave their all.

By our act of unveiling and dedication, we are proclaiming our resolve to keep faith with our heroes and martyrs, and our deepest conviction that this land of the morning, the repository of our hopes and dreams, is worth living for and dying for.

- EXCERPTED FROM THE SPEECH OF JOVITO R. SALONGA, CHAIRPERSON EMERITUS, BANTAYOG NG MGA BAYANI FOUNDATION, AND FORMER SENATE PRESIDENT, AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE BANTAYOG WALL OF REMEMBRANCE, NOVEMBER 30, 1992

NORBERTO H. ACEBEDO JR.



BORN

June 13, 1958 in Sta. Ana, Manila

DIED

February 25, 1985 in Compostela Valley, Mindanao

PARENTS

Norberto Acebedo and Andrea Hermoso

SPOUSE/CHILD

Yande Grace Nuñez / 1

EDUCATION

Elementary: Sta. Ana Elementary School,
Manila
Secondary: Manuel dela Fuente
High School, Manila
College: Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng
Maynila

Resistance to the Marcos dictatorship, after a short period of deceptive “peace and order,” came out into the open almost immediately after the declaration of martial law. By the mid-1970s, a new crop of militant students – those who had not been arrested earlier, or taken up arms against the regime – had sprouted on the country’s campuses. From there they spread out into the communities, organizing popular resistance and support for the broad democratic movement.

In 1978, because of the rising sentiments against his regime, President Marcos tried to get the upper hand by creating the Interim Batasang Pambansa¹ elections. Senator Benigno Aquino Jr., who was imprisoned soon after martial law was declared, led the opposition party, LABAN or Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, even if they knew that the dictator would not allow them to win.

But the real victory was won on the night before the voting. Ordinary citizens banged water containers, pots and pans, honked their horns, and made their anger heard at last in an immense “noise barrage.” Hundreds spontaneously poured into the streets and marched in many neighborhoods of Metro Manila.

Boyet Acebedo was among the leaders of the youth movement who laid the groundwork for that massive outburst of protest. As a

high school student, he had been tutored in politics by his two older brothers Roy and Nolito who were active in the underground. They had gone off to Mindanao in 1975 to organize peasants. Upon entering college Boyet enrolled in a chemistry degree course. He also plunged into activism. By 1979, he was already marked for arrest. The military raided the family residence in Sta. Ana looking for him, but neighbors helped him escape.

The youth movement of which he was an untiring organizer grew stronger among the universities and colleges in central Manila – among them Adamson, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (PLM), Feati, Lyceum, Mapua and Letran– where tuition fee increases and other school issues linked up with the political situation. One high point was the visit to the Philippines of Pope John Paul II, during which the open protest movement was able to bring its demands even to the international media.

Meanwhile, there was no news from Boyet's brothers in Mindanao. In 1981, he decided to look for them. In Davao City, he applied what he had learned as an activist in Manila – organizing, training, and mobilizing secret groups against the dictatorship. He was arrested, tortured and jailed in 1983.

The day after Boyet was killed during a military encounter in Compostela Valley in 1985, his wife Grace gave birth to their son.² ■

¹ The Interim Batasang Pambansa served as the national legislature under martial law from 1978 to 1984. It was established under the 1973 Constitution.

² The bodies of Roy and Nolito Acebedo have not been found.

ROY LORENZO H. ACEBEDO



BORN

August 10, 1951 in Sta. Ana, Manila

DISAPPEARED

August 1975 in Zamboanga del Sur

PARENTS

Norberto Acebedo and Andrea Hermoso

EDUCATION

Elementary: Sta. Ana Elementary School,
Manila
Secondary: Villamor High School,
Sta. Ana, Manila
College: Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng
Maynila

Even before martial law, Roy Acebedo was already a student activist, together with his brother Nolito, at the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila in Intramuros. Both of them were active in the important political events of the early 1970s including the First Quarter Storm,¹ the Diliman Commune,² and many protest actions before and after the prelude to martial law that was the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.

Yet Roy Acebedo did not neglect his studies. While working on a degree in mathematics, he also excelled in extracurricular activities as member of the PLM student council, and the Pambansang Samahan ng Inhenyerriya at Agham, an organization of students and teachers in engineering and the sciences.

When martial law was declared in September 1972, Roy Acebedo was blacklisted by the authorities along with other student leaders. Evading arrest, he found work as a laborer in a big steel factory not far from their neighborhood in Sta. Ana. It was the same factory where his father worked and later lost his job for being leader of a union that went on strike.

In July 1973, the military raided the family house looking for his brother Nolito. Not finding Nolito, the soldiers went to the steel factory and arrested him instead and placed their mother Andrea under house arrest.

When his mother finally found him in Camp Crame, she saw how he had been heavily tortured. Through her efforts, he was released from Ipil Rehabilitation Center at Fort Bonifacio in May 1974. Several months after taking a low-level job in a Makati firm, Roy decided to leave for Mindanao with his brother Nolito to work fulltime as peasant organizers against the dictatorship. "*Para may maiambag ako sa pagpapalaya ng sambayanan,*" he said in a short note to his family: it would be his modest contribution toward winning the people's freedom.

Then nothing more was heard from him. Years later, the Acebedo family learned that he and his brother, Nolito, had been killed in Mahagay, Zamboanga del Sur in 1975. Andrea Acebedo travelled to Mindanao and was told by the local people what they knew about the heroic death of "Ka Demy"³ sometime in 1975. The military had come after his group and Ka Demy could have escaped safely, except that he stopped to assist one comrade who had been wounded. The two were captured, executed and beheaded. After parading the corpses around the community, the killers buried the bodies. But Roy's remains have still not been found, and he is considered a *desaparecido*, someone who was made to disappear.⁴ ■

¹ The First Quarter Storm refers to the series of protest actions led by young activists against the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos in 1970 during the first three months. FQS was marked by unprecedented numbers of demonstrators, in an atmosphere of intense political discussions and violent police dispersals.

² The Diliman commune was a week long protest action (February 1-9, 1971) that mobilized the entire community of the University of the Philippines Diliman campus in Quezon City. It began when militant students erected barricades to express their opposition to rising oil prices. Faculty members and local residents soon joining the protests. University buildings were occupied, political discussions were held everywhere, and support poured in from outside. It was ended when police forces forcibly dismantled the barricades and occupied the campus.

³ Derived from the word democracy.

⁴ Based on interviews with Andrea Acebedo, Rozenda Bervano and Linda Lacaba; and on documents courtesy of Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND).

DANILO M. AGUIRRE

BORN

September 17, 1955 in Meycauayan, Bulacan

DIED

June 21, 1982 in San Rafael, Bulacan

PARENTS

Primitivo Aguirre and Lucia Magat

EDUCATION

Elementary: Bangkal Elementary School,
 Meycauayan, Bulacan
Secondary: Meycauayan Institute, Bulacan

Danilo Aguirre was the third of 11 children whose parents earned a living by selling vegetables in the public market. He was active in a parish-based group, and when martial law was imposed in 1972 he and his friends secretly supported the resistance.

Floods were a perennial problem in their coastal community, which needed the attention of the municipal authorities. Aguirre's group organized local residents to confront the problem, forming and expanding a resistance network in the process.¹ When eventually protest actions began to escalate outside Metro Manila, his group got the information out to their networks and encouraged people to join. The Batasang Pambansa elections was held and Aguirre served as a parish volunteer to guard the event. It was rigged by the regime to ensure an overwhelming majority in its bogus legislature, which confirmed his belief that the so-called lifting of martial law was just another trick by Marcos.

Around this time, a call was made for volunteers from among the resistance activists to get a legal peasant movement underway in Bulacan. Basically, organizing farmers had always been centered on the hinterland areas and related to the armed struggle against Marcos. Aguirre was part of a group – including Edwin Borlongan, Teresita Llorente, Renato Manimbo and

Constantino Medina, all experienced organizers – that would undertake preliminary work in central Bulacan, where the main economic activity was farming. They organized the Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon and when it was still in its early stage of formation, it campaigned in opposition to the withdrawal of subsidies for rice production inputs.

One evening in June 1982, Aguirre and his group were having a meeting inside a farmer's house in Pulilan when they were surrounded by troops from the 175th PC Company. They were unarmed, and did not resist arrest. One of their members was able to elude the raiders and alerted their families.

The following morning, five bullet-riddled bodies were found displayed at the municipal hall of San Rafael, about 20 kilometers away from Pulilan. According to the PC troops' report, they were guerrillas of the New People's Army killed in an encounter. Taking pity on the victims, municipal hall employees spent their own money to buy caskets and bury them in the nearby cemetery that same afternoon.

Aguirre's family was able to recover his remains only after ten days.

The PC officers responsible for the massacre not only went unpunished, they were even promoted and became generals. ■

¹ Interview with Rodelio Faustino, August 29, 2012, Valenzuela City.

LEANDRO L. ALEJANDRO



BORN

July 10, 1960 in Navotas, Metro Manila

DIED

September 19, 1987 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Rosendo Alejandro and Salvacion Legere

SPOUSE / CHILD

Lydynida Ruth Nacpil / 1

EDUCATION

Elementary: St. James Academy, Malabon
Secondary: St. James Academy, Malabon
College: University of the Philippines,
Diliman

“Martial law babies” refer to the young students during the 1970s and the 1980s. They went to schools where lessons, textbooks and lectures were all about the Marcos’ New Society,¹ and the mass media were all controlled by the state. Only those who could be reached by underground information networks had a glimpse of what was really happening in the country.

Leandro Alejandro – popularly known as Lean – was one such martial law baby. He was the eldest of four children raised in Navotas; his mother was a public school teacher, while his father, an accountant, worked in Saudi Arabia for many years. The family lived in a neighborhood that regularly experienced flooding; clean water had to be bought from delivery trucks, or fetched from a communal pump.

He was a cheerful, inquisitive boy whose parents indulged his love for reading. He had many friends. Over and over, he liked to watch favorite movies such as “Sound of Music,” and “Star Wars.” Even as a young man going deep into Marxist works, he quoted passages from “The Lord of the Rings.”

At the University of the Philippines in Diliman, he was not radical at first. Criticizing the *Philippine Collegian*, the militant school organ, as being “too political,” he volunteered to join the staff.

But after researching and reporting articles on the US military bases, the urban poor and the student movement, he quickly realized that the New Society was a lie.

From then on, Alejandro moved to the center of student activism, propelled by his innate leadership qualities and boundless intellectual energy. He was elected chairman of the UP Student Council and became the first student representative to the UP Board of Regents. He led the ever-growing protest actions that marked the early years of the 1980s and reached a high peak after the assassination of Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. in 1983. As a "street parliamentarian," Alejandro was an advocate of restraint, flexibility and reason; he was particularly proud of the UP students' march in May 1984 to Mendiola which ended peacefully, first time that had happened since the First Quarter Storm of 1970.

The nationwide open resistance to the dictatorship welcomed Alejandro to the forefront side by side with veteran politicians and other prominent personalities. He helped establish groups such as Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN) of which he was secretary-general, Coalition of Organizations for the Realization of Democracy (CORD), Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy, Kaakbay and Partidong Bayan.

A well-loved leader of the nationalist, democratic movement that toppled the dictatorship in 1986, Lean Alejandro was killed in an ambush in front of the BAYAN office in Quezon City. He was 27. It was a time when the Cory Aquino government, which had replaced the dictatorship, was being gravely threatened by rightist elements in the military and government. These rightist elements were widely believed to have committed the crime. His funeral turned into a massive protest march through the streets of Metro Manila. ■

¹ "New Society" or "Bagong Lipunan" was the slogan used by the government to mobilize popular support and quell opposition to Marcos' one-man rule. Martial law was the regime's main instrument to implement the new society.

AMADA E. ALVAREZ



BORN

August 10, 1950 in Cotabato

DIED

February 20, 1989 in Infanta, Pangasinan

PARENTS

Miguel Alvarez and Adelaida Enriquez

EDUCATION

Elementary: Cotabato Elementary School
Secondary: Notre Dame of Cotabato Girls'
High School
College: Notre Dame of Cotabato

When the bullet-riddled body of Amada Alvarez was brought to the town of Mangatarem, Pangasinan, local residents came to light candles in the traditional gesture of love and respect for the dead, ignoring the stares of government troopers watchfully standing by.

Then they buried her in the town cemetery, she and the five villagers who had also been killed by state security forces in an attack on a rebel encampment in the hills of western Pangasinan.¹

The people had known her as Ka Monica, a delicately pretty woman who told amusing stories and saw the bright side in most situations. They could see that she was not born poor, nor was she in robust physical health, but she cheerfully adjusted to the hardships of guerrilla life. "*Para akong isdang pwede sa dagat, pwede sa ilog,*" she said, comparing herself to a fish able to swim both in the ocean and in the river.

Alvarez' adaptability may have been due to the fact that she was the ninth child of a very large brood of 17 brothers and sisters. She was a bright student, earning high grades and most of the time coming out on top of her class. After graduating with a philosophy degree (cum laude), she left her hometown in Cotabato to pursue further studies at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila.

She taught for a while at the Far Eastern University.

In college, Alvarez was active in the National Union of Students of the Philippines and the Young Christian Socialists. After college, she joined Khi/Chi Rho, youth arm of the Federation of Free Farmers, where she began helping organize cooperatives in the rural areas of Luzon. This was the beginning of a life-long involvement in peasant concerns and issues.

Alvarez worked as an organizer in Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila of the Basic Christian Communities program (1973 to 1976). She led bible study classes, conducted discussions about the structural roots of poverty and drew lessons from Philippine history. Deepening radicalization led her to join the Christians for National Liberation.

Alvarez was one of the early pioneers of a Catholic church program (BCC-CO) that sent fulltime community organizers to far-flung rural communities. She assisted in developing the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines with a group of religious (among them Bantayog hero Sr. Asuncion Martinez, ICM).² She herself took up work in the parish of Fr. Zacarias Agatep³ in Ilocos Sur, relishing the opportunity to develop closer ties with the hardworking peasants.

The efforts of Amada Alvarez and others to raise the consciousness of the country's neglected peasantry played an important role in mobilizing the latter to resist the martial law dictatorship and to fight for freedom and democracy. ■

¹ Alvarez died in 1989, three years after the ouster of Marcos. Refusing to surface from the underground because of the many attacks against leftist leaders, she instead dedicated herself to working toward a peace agreement between rebel forces and the new government.

² Sister Asuncion is featured in this volume, see p. 159

³ Fr. Agatep is featured in volume 1 of the book, *Ang Mamatay Nang Dahil Sa'yo* see p. 1

MARSMAN T. ALVAREZ



BORN

June 11, 1947 in Santiago, Isabela

DIED

June 26, 1974 in Dinalungan, Aurora

PARENTS

Marcelo Alvarez and Juanita Turingan

EDUCATION

Elementary: North Central School, Santiago, Isabela
Secondary: La Salette High School, Santiago
College: University of the East, Manila

As the younger brother of a well-known political figure, Marsman T. Alvarez was happy to go his own way. Friendly and sociable, he was a loyal campaigner for his *manong* Sonny, (Heherson Alvarez), who before martial law had been Isabela's young delegate to the 1971 Constitutional Convention.

As a college student in Manila (enrolled in business administration and member of the student council and of the Alpha Phi Omega fraternity), he would join the protest demonstrations that were then beginning to stir up the nation's capital.

Alvarez was in his final year in college when President Marcos declared martial law in 1972. His brother, who was a close associate of Marcos' archrival Benigno Aquino Jr., fled to the United States and lived there for many years. Heherson was prominent among the exiled political opposition particularly when Aquino was allowed to leave the Philippines in 1980 to seek medical attention abroad.

Not very far from the Alvarez home, rebel guerrillas had been mounting attacks on the regime's security forces, operating from the mountain ranges in the Isabela-Quezon area of northern Luzon. The region was dominated by Marcos allies, warlord politicians who controlled large paramilitary formations. It was a dangerous place

especially for those who did not totally agree with the dictatorship.

Only a few people were aware that Alvarez was secretly helping the antidictatorship underground. He was part of a small group that helped activists and cadres move in and out of the guerrilla bases. They quietly collected and sent in medicines and other necessities. These were essential tasks of the resistance movement that were being carried out elsewhere in the country by countless numbers of patriotic citizens.

Little is known about the murder of Marsman Alvarez. He left the house one morning and the next day his badly mutilated body was found in the courtyard of the town church in Dinalungan, Aurora. He had probably been picked up and killed by military agents or paramilitaries, according to his friends. But since it was martial law, no one could know for sure.

With the family still in shock, the funeral was a painful one because in expressing their grief the family had to be careful about their statements. His mother fell into a catatonic state for almost a year. Marcelo Alvarez, the patriarch, later suffered a heart attack and died.

News of the brutal slaying became more widely known when, in an interview with foreign media, the archbishop of Manila,

Cardinal Jaime Sin, revealed and denounced it. In response, the regime tried to cover it up, saying that the victim had been killed by the New People's Army. ■

CORAZON C. AQUINO



BORN

January 25, 1933 in Paniqui, Tarlac

DIED

August 1, 2009 in Makati City

PARENTS

Jose Cojuangco and Demetria Sumulong

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Benigno Aquino Jr. / 5

EDUCATION

Elementary: St. Scholastica's College, Manila
Secondary: Notre Dame College,
New York, USA
College: Mount St. Vincent College,
New York City, USA

Corazon C. Aquino assumed leadership of the nation after the EDSA Revolution on February 22-25, 1986 finally forced the dictator Ferdinand Marcos to flee the country.

The “plain housewife” became the 11th president of the Philippines and symbol of a nation reborn after long years of oppression under one-man rule.

She had been thrust to the forefront of the anti-Marcos struggle after her husband, former senator Benigno Aquino Jr., was killed by government soldiers right upon his return to the Philippines in 1983. The opposition leader’s murder triggered waves of protest that grew ever more powerful and finally swept the Marcos regime out of Malacañang Palace.

Corazon “Cory” Aquino was a reluctant candidate in the “snap” election that Marcos had thought would easily be won by him. He belittled her lack of expertise and experience, saying she was “just a woman.” But with opposition leaders united in supporting her candidacy, and the regime fast losing its legitimacy – 35 computer technicians of the Commission on Elections walked out of their jobs during the counting of the votes, saying that cheating was going on. Aquino was able to claim victory even though the Batasang Pambansa proclaimed Marcos the winner on February 15, 1986.

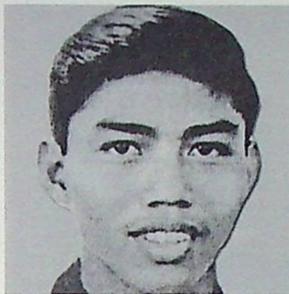
The government she headed included many of the best minds of the antidictatorship movement. A new Constitution was drafted and ratified in a plebiscite in February 1987. Some of the notable laws were those on agrarian reform, the Administrative Code, the Local Government Code, the six-year non extendable term for the presidency.

Despite her popularity among the people, however, Aquino came under attack by military rebels who launched several *coups d'etat* attempting to unseat her but they were unsuccessful. Other sectors held her administration responsible for continuing human rights violations by the state security forces.

Aquino resumed her quiet life after her term ended in 1992 (she was succeeded by Fidel V. Ramos). Her death in 2009, from complications of cancer, was mourned by her countrymen who remembered the simple, courageous and honest woman who did what she could to heal the nation's wounds.

The following year, her son Benigno Aquino III, won the 2010 elections to become the Philippines' 15th president. ■

MERARDO T. ARCE



BORN

May 30, 1953 in Tarlac City

DIED

February 5, 1985 in Mabolo, Cebu City

PARENTS

Jose Agana Arce and Estrella C. Tuason

SPOUSE/CHILD

Lecifina Dumayag / 1

EDUCATION

Elementary: College of the Holy Spirit, Tarlac
Secondary: Don Bosco Technical Institute,
Makati City
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

It was easy to predict that a bright future lay ahead for Merardo Arce: he got very good grades in school and was much admired, a studious yet friendly and popular “golden boy.” Although his family was not rich, they were not poor either. He didn’t have to worry about money.

At the University of the Philippines in Diliman, the teenager from Tarlac enrolled in architecture. There too he shone academically, maintaining a consistent scholarship throughout his stay even though he had become a student activist and member of a university fraternity.

Artistically inclined, Mer Arce became deeply involved in Panday Sining, the cultural arm of Kabataang Makabayan and served as its chairman. Through songs, poetry, plays and artworks, the members of the group portrayed expression to the grievances of the Filipino *masa* as well as their aspirations. They took their productions to various campuses and the streets, where rallies and demonstrations were intensifying.

When martial law was declared in 1972 by President Marcos (his fraternity brother), Arce knew he had to make a choice. It would not be difficult for him to pursue a “successful” career by capitalizing on his talent and his connections. By that time, however, he had already committed his heart

and mind to play his role in the liberation of the Filipino people.

Thus, in 1976, Arce and his wife went to Mindanao where they worked mostly among poor farmers, settlers, *lumad* or indigenous communities. He showed superior leadership skills in the way he quickly grasped situations and decided what course of action to take. He was judicious in weighing issues and voicing out his opinions. He genuinely cared for the people's welfare.

He was in Mabolo, Cebu City when he was killed together with Jose Diaz, who had been a philosophy teacher in Manila. Metrodiscom troopers set up a checkpoint to intercept them on the road, but the two knew that they were sure to be captured alive. So they decided not to stop, instead choosing to buy time for their other comrades by driving on and fighting it out.

The Arce family heard about his death only through local tabloid media reports three days afterward. It was tragic news for his daughter who had come home that afternoon eager to show off an award she had received from school.

Although at first they did not approve of Mer Arce's political involvement, the family, especially his parents came to accept and appreciate his life's work. Support and encouragement came from his many

friends, fraternity brothers and sympathizers. On his gravesite is this epitaph written by his daughter:
"Katawan mo man ay nabuwal, giting mo pa ri'y itatanghal, ng mga iniwan, na mga Anak ng Bayan!" ■

ANTONIO G. ARIADO



BORN

January 15, 1949 in Bulan, Sorsogon

DIED

July 24, 1973 in Bulan, Sorsogon

PARENTS

Juan Ariado and Corazon Grayda

EDUCATION

Elementary: Bulan Elementary School,
Sorsogon
Secondary: Far Eastern University, Manila
College: Far Eastern University,
Araneta University Foundation,
Manila

Antonio Ariado's family owned many hectares of tenanted farmland in San Isidro, Bulan, Sorsogon. He was the seventh of 14 brothers and sisters who grew up in the midst of plenty: toys, clothes, as much food as they wanted, a family car.

Not only did the young Ariado get good grades in school, he had lots of other activities: sports, declamation, dramatic guild, reading and writing. He loved to memorize and recite long poems, a skill which came in handy later when he began speaking at political rallies.

Sent to Manila where he finished high school and enrolled in college, Ariado dropped out after a few years. He had become an activist, committed to spreading the message of social change and organizing among his fellow youth. For him, the experience of being beaten up by the police at rallies only confirmed that "state brutality" were not mere words but painful truth.

By 1969, Ariado had been getting deeply involved with Kabataang Makabayan,¹ more radical than the National Union of Students of the Philippines which he had joined earlier. He was now convinced that moderate politics was not the answer to the nation's problems, and that direct organizing among the masses needed to be done, especially among the peasantry. Therefore, he decided

to return to Sorsogon and put these ideas into practice.

Although his parents were happy to see him again, they soon found that he would not be spending much time with them. He preferred to live among their tenants, and when he came home for meals, he would admonish his parents that he wished they would “share more” with the people.

Soon, student rallies and demonstrations were being held in Sorsogon; under Tony Ariado’s leadership, “long marches” from Bulan to Albay were held to politicize the people. Several months before the declaration of martial law, he was elected chair of the KM provincial chapter.

To escape arrest, Ariado and his friends joined the guerrilla underground. The physical hardships and dangers tested their commitment, but he kept his firm resolve even when his family was made to suffer. His father was imprisoned for one week by the authorities who wanted the son to surrender. An older brother, a policeman, refused to join a military operation and was mauled by soldiers because of it; he was forced to leave his job.

He had been with the armed resistance for less than a year when Tony Ariado and 12 companions were killed in a military operation. When his body was brought to the

municipal hall, the family was amazed to find that it had been wiped clean of blood and dirt. It was a loving gesture by the village folk in saying farewell to the young man who gave up his life for their cause.² ■

¹ Kabataang Makabayan (KM) was founded on November 30, 1964 with members between the ages of 15 and 35. It advocated agrarian reform, nationalist industrialization, democratic governance, and an independent foreign policy, among others. KM was banned when martial law was declared in 1972.

² See Ryan V. Filgueras, “Tony G. Ariado: Talambuhay ng Isang Kasama,” in *Pulang Hamtik*, Banhi, Sorsogon, 1997.

JULIET C. ARMEA

BORN

April 4, 1954 in Pasig City

DIED

October 24, 1984 in Gingoog City,

PARENTS

Isaias Cupino and Elena Ranollo

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Carlos Armea / 2

EDUCATION

Elementary: Bagong Ilog Elementary School,
Pasig City
Secondary: Jose Rizal College,
Mandaluyong City
College: Far Eastern University, Manila

Her deep compassion and solidarity with the weak and oppressed – *mapagmalasakit*, *mapagkaisa*—made it natural for Juliet Cupino Armea to choose nursing as a career. This was before a nurse’s diploma became a popular course of study because of the many well-paying job opportunities in rich countries abroad.

Growing up in a working-class community in Pasig City, she was familiar with the suffering and deprivation of the factory workers and their families. It helped that there were activists among her relatives, and as a teenager she already knew that political consciousness and organization were essential tools in collectively advancing the people’s welfare and rights.

At the age of 17, she organized many older women workers, mothers and wives into the Samahan ng Kababaihan sa Rizal (Pasig was then part of Rizal province). She also enrolled in nursing, and married fellow activist Carlos Armea, a labor organizer. She dropped out of school when martial law was declared in 1972.

After that, Juliet Armea quietly helped out two labor unions in southern Metro Manila, one in a big textile factory and the other, a manufacturer of export-quality ladies’ underwear. The women workers were especially discriminated against lower pay rates, forced overtime, labor-camp discipline

(toilet breaks and water breaks were strictly restricted to a few minutes), loss of their jobs due to marriage and pregnancy. Since the country was under martial law, management could do as it pleased. Armea became knowledgeable about labor law, workers' rights, effective union tactics. Her discussions with the women were not limited to these topics. Instead, she shared with them what she knew about the situation in other parts of the country and what other sectors were doing to resist the dictatorship. When election for the Interim Batasang Pambansa (IBP) was held in 1978, the LABAN party was organized to challenge the dictatorship. Juliet Armea enthusiastically mobilized the women workers, campaigning for the LABAN candidates, among them were Senator Benigno Aquino, community organizer Trinidad Herrera and feminist Nelia Sancho.

When her husband was jailed in 1979 because of his trade union work, Juliet Armea turned her attention to helping political detainees and their families. When her husband was released and decided to leave for Mindanao, she made the painful choice to join him and leave her young son and daughter behind. It was not easy for them but they worried about the children's safety.

Juliet Armea was captured alive after her group was attacked by paramilitary forces in the early dawn of October 24, 1984, in the forested area of Gingoog City in Misamis Oriental. She was tortured before being killed by members of the religious cult "Tadtad"¹ utilized by the military in pursuing rebel guerrillas in Mindanao. Despite the reluctance of local officials, she was given a Catholic burial by local residents led by their bishop. ■

¹ Fanatical religious groups like the Tadtad were active especially in Mindanao during martial law. These were armed groups that considered themselves Christians but their beliefs and organizations were not sanctioned by church authorities. They were often integrated into the regime's security forces as paramilitary groups, terrorizing local communities and operating with impunity.

MONICO M. ATIENZA



BORN

May 4, 1947 in Cuenca, Batangas

DIED

December 5, 2008 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Ambrosio Atienza and Eulogia Montenegro

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Edith Sangalang / 2

EDUCATION

Elementary: Cuenca Elementary School,
Cuenca, Batangas
Secondary: Far Eastern University Boys'
High School, Manila
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

As the 1960s drew to a close, youth and student activism became a major political force in the Philippines. While in the past, the country's most promising young people prepared themselves for leadership in the established political, economic and social system, the Sixties generation asked disturbing questions: why are we poor? why is there so much injustice? what is wrong with the system?

There was much discontent among the youth, not only in the Philippines but in America, Europe, and the many newly decolonized countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. They were expressing it in protest actions such as demonstrations, marches and strikes. They read books and organized study sessions about revolution.

Monico Atienza was still in high school when he joined the radical Kabataang Makabayan (KM). He was part of a group of students who managed to go to China – where Filipinos were forbidden to go at the time – and stayed there for two months. They observed and admired, the changes in a society that previously was in even worse condition than the Philippines.

Back home, Atienza dedicated himself to organizing student groups and linking up with progressive individuals and organizations. As KM secretary-general, he was instrumental in its rapid expansion

in Metro Manila and all over the country. Other youth organizations appeared one after another, each one sporting a unique acronym.

These militant youth formed the backbone of the anti-martial law movement that spread nationwide when President Marcos imposed one-man rule in 1972. Most of them went to the countryside where the peasants were supportive of the guerrilla resistance, and many died in armed clashes with government troops and paramilitaries.

In October 1974, Monico Atienza was arrested together with several others including his wife and child. He was severely tortured, so much so that he had to be hospitalized. After six years of detention, he was released.

He resumed his studies at UP Diliman, and eventually taught at the Department of Filipino and Philippine Literature. He pursued a quiet and productive life as a scholar and well-loved mentor to many students.

After the dictatorship's downfall, Atienza helped organize Partido ng Bayan which fielded its own candidates in the 1987 elections. During the campaign, however, he was seriously wounded in an ambush in Quezon City; two companions were killed

and rightist military officers were blamed for the incident.

Monico Atienza died from cancer at the age of 60. ■

ALOYSIUS U. BAES



BORN

July 28, 1948 in Los Baños, Laguna

DIED

December 21, 2006 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Gerardo Baes and Aurora Ureta

EDUCATION

Elementary: Makiling Elementary School,
Los Baños, Laguna
Secondary: UP Rural High School, Laguna
College: University of the Philippines,
Los Baños
Postgraduate: University of Minnesota, USA

Memorable songs – expressing the people’s longing for freedom and justice – are among the enduring legacies of the struggle against the Marcos martial-law dictatorship. Today, the lyrics and the music of “Mutya” and “Huwad na Kalayaan,” among many others, continue to stir audiences, especially those who lived through those terrible years.

Composing these songs seemed to come naturally to Aloysius Baes (Ochie to all) during his detention in a succession of military jails in the early period of martial law. He came from a family for whom music was a way of life – his father was a tenor and band leader, his mother sang and played the organ in church. Baes himself learned to play several instruments.

But he was a man of many exceptional talents and skills. Elected chair of the student council at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños in 1968-1969, he initiated programs that introduced students to the realities of the rural areas like learning from the People summer work camps and stimulated debates through a regular Friday book club. UPLB students boycotted classes for two weeks in 1970 to protest increased oil prices and barricaded the national highway leading to their campus. When the writ of habeas corpus was suspended in 1971, Baes led a long protest march from Los Baños to Manila.

By then, he had joined the university faculty as an instructor in chemistry, having graduated with honors in 1969. To evade arrest after the imposition of martial law, Baes briefly worked underground among the farmers of Laguna. He was detained in 1973 and released the following year.

While teaching in UP Diliman after that, he continued participating in the struggle through his underground connections. In 1982, he was able to leave for the United States to pursue masteral and doctoral studies. Already delving into environmental management, Baes went to Japan to handle graduate classes in this field where he was recognized as an authority.

After the fall of the dictatorship, Baes returned to the Philippines. In 1989 he and other scientists formed the Center for Environmental Concerns-Philippines, of which he was the managing director from 1989 to 2003. He also cofounded the Advocate of Science and Technology for the People (AGHAM), a nationalist and pro-people organization in the science and technology sector, in 1999.

Baes was a scientist who tirelessly offered his expertise to serve the people's interests. He worked hard to expose the toxic effects of the Calaca coal-fired power plant in Batangas, for example, or of the contaminants left behind by the US military

at their former bases in Subic and Clark. In 2006, despite his failing health, he took on an assignment to investigate a big mining project in the Bicol region.

He died of renal failure at the National Kidney Institute in 2006. ■

FLORO E. BALCE

BORN

July 30, 1955 in Daet, Camarines Norte

DIED

July 30, 1978 in Camarines Sur

PARENTS

Monico Balce and Vicenta Elep

EDUCATION

Elementary: Abaño Pilot Elementary School,
Daet
Secondary: Camarines Norte High School
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

During the martial-law period, not all students became activists. Many, or maybe most, of them chose to concentrate on their studies instead because they were expected to graduate and get a good job that would help their families move up to a better life.

Still, it was nearly impossible to deny the truth of the activists' message, especially if one had been brought up to value honesty, integrity, hard work and idealism.

Thus, Floro Balce refused for two years to join any student organization at the University of the Philippines in Diliman except for the Student Catholic Action and two Bicolano groups (the dorm-based Molave Kurahaw and the UP-wide Ibalon of which he was a charter member in 1974).¹

Enrolled in electrical engineering, he studied hard to keep his scholarship from the National Science Development Board. He helped his activist friends prepare placards and streamers for their rallies, but told them he could be more effective outside their organization. In 1975, however, he became a member of Kabataang Makabayan.

In 1978, Balce left school, deciding to return to the Bicol region. "I have come to terms with my life," he wrote to a friend. "My questions about the resistance movement have been sufficiently answered. I know what I want – to be with the masses."

That February, Balce joined a unit that went around conducting political education classes among the farmers in the heavily militarized Tigaon-Goa area in Camarines Sur. In July, army troopers pinned them down and he was wounded. He died several days later at an army encampment in Tigaon. ■

¹ This narrative is adapted from "Floro E. Balce: Iskolar ng Bayan," by Antonio A. Ayo Jr. and Ma. Leny E. Felix, in *Pulang Hamtik*, Banhi, Sorsogon, 1997.

MANUEL C. BAUTISTA



BORN

July 25, 1946 in Manila

DIED

September 1976 in Tagkawayan, Quezon

PARENTS

Uldarico Bautista and Susana Candelaria

EDUCATION

Elementary: Pura V. Kalaw Elementary School, Quezon City
Secondary: University of the Philippines High School, Quezon City
College: University of the Philippines, Los Baños, Laguna

In the 1970s and well into the following decades, underground newspapers were part of the resistance movement against the Marcos dictatorship.

These newspapers published news about developments in the struggle of the people in the localities, analyzed the impact on their lives of the dictatorship's policies like the Masagana 99 rice growing program,¹ or the coconut levy.² Written in the local languages, they were printed by hand and circulated in secret, as possession of these materials meant arrest and torture by the military.

The guerrilla press during martial law worked under difficult and dangerous conditions. Staff members were constantly on the move, sheltered and fed by supportive communities.

Manuel Bautista was a fourth year student in economics and a student leader at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños when President Marcos suspended the writ of habeas corpus in 1971, one year before going one repressive step further by declaring martial law. He had been a member of the student council and represented his college to the university-wide UP student council based in Diliman, Quezon City. He was a senior staffmember of the college paper, *Aggie Green and Gold*.

It was a time when student activists were questioning and criticizing many aspects of Philippine society. Early on, Bautista was at the forefront of an expose denouncing a project undertaken by the UP College of Forestry, involving the testing of a controversial defoliant that was being used by the US military in Vietnam.

Bautista went underground in the Southern Tagalog area, where his writing and research skills came in handy when he was assigned to handle *Kalatas*. He was arrested in 1973, taking part two months later in a mass escape of political prisoners from Camp Vicente Lim in Canlubang, Laguna. Immediately, he rejoined the underground and was reassigned to the Quezon-Bicol border area, this time taking charge of another underground paper, *Pulang Lupa*.

In September 1976, Manny Bautista died in an encounter with government troopers in Tagkawayan, Quezon. Surviving comrades took his body and buried him in an unmarked grave. He had just turned 30. ■

¹ The Masagana 99 program was introduced in 1973 with the goal of increasing the yield of rice farmers to 99 cavans per hectare from the average of 44 cavans per hectare of unhusked grain. It promoted the planting of high-yielding varieties and heavy use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides.

² The coconut levy was a form of tax paid by farmers. The collected fund, however, was used by Marcos crony Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. to acquire personal assets such as the United Coconut Planters Bank and San Miguel Corporation. In 2014 the Supreme Court ruled that the fund and the assets arising from it belonged to the government and must be used for the benefit of the farmers and the coconut industry.

ALEXANDER A. BELONE LL

BORN

June 23, 1952 in Naga City, Camarines Sur

DIED

October 11, 1980 in Balatan, Camarines Sur

PARENTS

Alexander Belone Sr. and Victoria Abonita

EDUCATION

Elementary: Naga Parochial School
Secondary: Philippine Science High School,
Quezon City
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman
University of Nueva Caceres
(Naga City)

“Hindi kami nagalit nang mamatay siya,” said Alex Belone’s father. The family felt no anger after their son had been shot dead by policemen during martial law, telling themselves: “A tree dies, the forest lives forever. At least, we have done our share as parents in raising a son who loved his country more than himself.”¹

If he had lived to tell his own story, the son himself would have recalled how his parents borrowed P700 to help him escape to the hills when martial law was declared. He would also mention that the older man, a schoolteacher, was jailed by the authorities to force the son to surrender.

“Nasa dugo namin ang patriotism,” the father said, explaining that it runs in their blood. “My father, a soldier and an officer, went to the hills to join the struggle against the Japanese. My son joined the revolutionary struggle for eight years, aside from his years of school activism. *Hindi man lang ako nagalit... talo nga niya ako sa IQ kaya alam ko na alam niya ang kanyang ginagawa. Bakit ko pipigilan ang daloy ng patriyotismo sa buhay niya?*” (That didn’t make me angry...his IQ is higher than mine so I know that he knew what he was doing. Why should I stop the flow of patriotism through his life?)

Alex Belone, later to be widely known as Ka Tandis the guerrilla fighter, was a book-

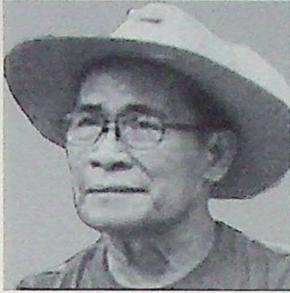
loving, gentle child. He was a sacristan and a boy scout, and he loved chess and archery. At the Philippine Science High School where he was among the first batches of students, Alex began to become aware of the larger social realities in the country. He entered UP Diliman (enrolling in electrical engineering) just as student activism was gathering momentum in the early 1970s. Kabataang Makabayan was his choice of organization. After the declaration of martial law, he dropped out of UP and continued studying in Naga, shortly afterwards deciding to join the guerrilla movement against the dictatorship.

Credited for his role in carrying out political education work among the guerrilla fighters in the Bicol area, Alex Belone was shot dead by a police team in Bato, not far from where he grew up. At his funeral, hundreds of people came to tell his parents how their son had helped them.

They were proud of Alex because he had died for the sake of the people, his father said: "*Namatay siya sa bala para sa bayan, kaya paanong hindi ka magmamalaki?*" ■

¹ As interviewed by Soliman Santos, "Alex Belone: Mahal na Anak, Mahal na Kaeskuwela, Mahal na Kasama," in *Pulang Hamtik*, Banhi, Sorsogon, 1997, pp. 52-64.

CRISPIN BELTRAN



BORN

January 7, 1933 in Bacacay, Albay

DIED

May 20, 2008 in Fairview, Quezon City

PARENTS

Paciano Beltran and Valentina Bertiz

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Rosario Soto / 10

EDUCATION

Elementary: Bacacay East Cental School,
Albay
Secondary: Tabaco National High School,
Albay
College: Far Eastern University, Manila

The son of farmers in a small town in Bicol, Crispin Beltran was a bright grade-schooler when Japanese imperial troops invaded the Philippines during World War II. The 9-year-old boy scout volunteered his services to the resistance movement in their area, later earning an award from the United States Armed Forces in the Far East as their youngest courier.

Returning to his books after that, Beltran graduated salutatorian of his class, and then on to high school where he also finished with honors. He then moved to Manila to enrol in college, supporting himself by working as janitor, messenger, and gasoline boy. Eventually he found regular employment at a big taxi company and became active in the labor union there. At age 22, he helped establish a federation of taxi drivers' unions, becoming its elected president for eight years.

The 1950s were years of intensified formation. He took courses at the Asian Labor Education Center (based in the University of the Philippines), gaining a larger perspective and a better grasp of the issues confronted by the trade union movement. He served as vice-president of the Philippine Workers Congress in 1956, and of the Confederation of Labor of the Philippines.

In 1972, President Marcos declared martial law, and banned workers' assemblies, pickets and strikes, and even unionism itself. Soon, however, protest actions were openly breaking out, and working-class communities in the urban areas provided a strong network of support and source of activist cadres. Despite the repression, strikes were successfully carried out, supported by students and church groups.

Beltran was among the founders of the Kilusang Mayo Uno in 1980. It fought not only for workers' rights and welfare, but confronted the Marcos dictatorship politically on various issues. In 1982 he and the others were arrested and jailed, but he later escaped, to surface only after Marcos' ouster in 1986.

When Rolando Olalia¹ was assassinated in 1986, he took over from the latter as KMU president. Hoping that the new regime would usher in significant changes, Beltran agreed to run for senator in the 1987 elections as a candidate of the short-lived Partidong Bayan. He lost, but that did not stop him from still trying to achieve progress in the prevailing system. From 1993 to 1999, he served as chair of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan).²

From 2001, Beltran served in Congress as representative of the party-list Bayan Muna³ and later of Anakpawis party-list.⁴ He was

ordered arrested for rebellion in 2006 and released from detention 18 months later.

He died suddenly at age 75 at the Far Eastern University Hospital in Fairview, Quezon City after an accidental fall while repairing his modest house in San Jose del Monte City (Bulacan). Many expressed admiration over how a public figure like him, a well-known politician, could live such a simple life of unquestioned integrity. ■

¹ See Rolando Olalia in pp. 185-186 of this volume.

² BAYAN (Bagong Alyansang Makabayan) was formed in May 1985 from the broad array of personalities and organizations that forcefully opposed the dictatorship in the "parliament of the streets." Its founding chairman was Lorenzo M. Tañada, with Lean Alejandro as secretary-general.

³ Bayan Muna partylist was founded in 1999 to represent the marginalized and underrepresented sectors of society in the Lower House of Congress.

⁴ The partylist Anakpawis (Toiling Masses), founded in 2002, is the electoral wing of the trade union center Kilusang Mayo Uno and the peasant center Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas.

CATALINO D. BLAS



BORN

April 30, 1951 in Samal, Bataan

DIED

October 25, 1972 in Samal, Bataan

PARENTS

Dionisio Blas and Felicisima Deldoc

EDUCATION

Elementary: Samal North Elementary School

Secondary: Bataan National School of Arts
and Trades

College: University of the East, Manila

Solemn funeral processions were among the very first signs of resistance and protest, after the imposition of martial law, in the small towns whose beloved sons and daughters were killed fighting the dictatorship.

Red flags were unfurled as hundreds of people accompanied their dead to the cemetery, often with a red flag also draped over the coffin. Cassette tapes were played, airing the songs of struggle. Strangely enough, the regime's uniformed men and military agents often let these funerals pass without incident, contenting themselves perhaps with making mental notes for the reporting to be done later.

Youth leader Catalino Blas was killed just over a month after martial law had been declared. Wanted by the authorities, he was tracked down at a meeting. The owner of the house tried to hide him by rolling him up in a sleeping mat, but the soldiers riddled the mat with bullets anyway.

Catalino grew up in a small village in Samal, Bataan where a big paper mill was located. His first political involvement had to do with the pollution of the coastal waters caused by the toxic discharges spewing from the mill. He organized the youth of his town to object to such a situation, which was destroying fishing grounds and farmlands on which their families depended.

After graduating as valedictorian from the Bataan National School of Arts and Trades, Catalino found a job as apprentice at the nearby American naval base in Subic, Zambales. He worked for some time in the naval repair facilities. But though the pay was good, and his family needed the money (he was the fourth of eight children), Catalino decided to work fulltime as an organizer for Kabataang Makabayan in Central Luzon. In 1971, at the height of turmoil against the Marcos administration, he was a key figure in the Lakbayan, a protest march that started from key points in Central Luzon and ended in Manila.

In the schoolyear of 1972, he went to school again, as an entrance scholar at the University of the East in Manila. But that September, martial law was declared and Catalino needed to avoid being arrested.

He was only 21 years old when he died. Hundreds of local people came to bury him, most of them wearing red as a symbol of their support for the young man who showed courage and commitment in fighting for their interests. ■

EDWIN G. BORLONGAN



BORN

May 14, 1959 in Malolos, Bulacan

DIED

June 21, 1982 in San Rafael, Bulacan

PARENTS

Egmidio Borlongan and Consorcia De Guzman

EDUCATION

Elementary: Atlag Elementary School,
Malolos, Bulacan
Secondary: Marcelo H. del Pilar
High School, Bulacan
College: Samson Technical School,
Manila

It was only after Edwin Borlongan died that his family learned what he had been doing with his life. And it turned out to have been a very productive one.

He was the fourth of ten children. They could hardly depend on their father's irregular income as a small fisherman – sometimes he would return from the waters of Manila Bay with no catch – but their mother, working long hours at home, earned for them by sewing dresses. Even as a young boy, Edwin helped her out; at school he sold slippers to the other children and after class he peddled frozen ice candy (ice drops). He turned over the money he made to their mother. He was practically the head of the family, his siblings said.¹

After graduating from high school Edwin went to the big city. In Manila he took a course in automobile repairs while staying with a relative and serving as her driver. By 1977, he was on his own. From time to time he would visit his family in Malolos, and sometimes brought friends.

But by 1980, there seemed to be a purpose behind Edwin's visits. He was reviving old friendships, spending time with relatives, neighbors and classmates. More people had opinions on political and economic issues. Various groups began to be organized. Even the drug users in the neighborhood were

somehow influenced for the better, and Edwin was being credited for it.

One day in June 1982, a stranger came and informed the shocked family that Edwin died and where they would be able to recover his body. It took almost a week to do it, as the authorities did not make it easy. When they found him, he was wearing the same green shirt that he had on the last time he was at home. Four others were killed by government troops and buried together in a shallow grave in San Rafael, Bulacan.

It was learned that the “Bulacan martyrs” – Edwin, Danilo Aguirre, Teresita Llorente, Renato Manimbo and Constantino Medina² – had been volunteer organizers of a militant farmers’ organization, the Alyansang Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon.

The massacre only caused the people of Bulacan to be more active in resisting the Marcos dictatorship, among them Edwin’s own brothers and sisters. All over the country, the mass protest grew more intense. The following year, Senator Benigno Aquino, Jr. was assassinated by government soldiers, and from then on the popular movement grew stronger and broader until it was finally able to topple Marcos rule. ■

¹ Interview with Maria Fe B. Fegaredo, Juan Borlongan, Donato Borlongan and Elizabeth B. Salac in Atlag, Malolos, Bulacan, June 24, 2012.

² Aguirre, Llorente, Manimbo and Medina are also featured in this volume. See Aguirre (pp. 5-6), Llorente (pp. 139-140), Manimbo (pp. 155-156) and Medina (pp. 161-162).

LINO O. BROCKA



BORN

April 7, 1939 in Pilar, Sorsogon

DIED

May 21, 1991 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Regino Brocka and Pilar Ortiz

EDUCATION

Elementary: San Jose Elementary School,
Nueva Ecija
Secondary: Nueva Ecija North High School
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

At the height of the Marcos dictatorship, the filmmaker Lino Brocka brought world recognition to the Philippines in a way that was undesirable to the regime.

His masterpieces, shown to critical acclaim in leading film festivals abroad, portrayed poverty and redemption in both city and the countryside contrary to what the dictatorship wanted Filipinos to believe – “the good, the true and the beautiful” about Philippine society.¹

Among his unforgettable heroes were the young man from the province searching for a lost love and meeting a tragic end in “Maynila sa Kuko ng Liwanag” (1975), a factory worker turned scab in “Bayan Ko: Kapit sa Patalim” (1985), and women struggling against exploitative relationships in “Insiang” (1976); “Bona” (1980), “Angela Markado” (1980). His contempt for hypocritical moralizing runs in “Tinimbang Ka Ngunit Kulang” (1975).

Through the stories of such individuals, he was effectively portraying deep seated social problems and the efforts of people to overcome the dehumanizing circumstances of class and politics.

Brocka was able to keep his artistic independence by directing commercially successful movies that set high technical standards and gave employment and training

to many co-workers in the film industry. Further, international fame ensured that the regime could not punish him. It tried, but failed, to stop “Bayan Ko” from being shown in the country. When the director attended its premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in France, he wore a barong Tagalog with the Philippine map printed in blood red with the word “Justice” printed boldly in front.

“Direk Lino” – formally known as Catalino O. Brocka – was also a militant activist in the parliament of the streets. In 1983, he founded Free the Artist, which became the Concerned Artists of the Philippines. For participating in a nationwide strike by jeepney drivers in 1984, he was arrested and jailed (together with fellow director Behn Cervantes) for 16 days. After his release, Brocka was elected to the national council of the Coalition for the Restoration of Democracy, a major formation of the broad antidictatorship movement. He received the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1985, again a slap on the regime from the international community.

After the dictator's downfall, Brocka was appointed to the Constitutional Commission that would draft the country's new basic law. But he led other members in walking out in protest against its provisions on agrarian reform. He also opposed other provisions

that he thought were repressive and anti-Filipino. He continued to make films, among them the widely admired “Orapronobis” (1989) -- depicting human-rights violations, this time under the new government of Corazon Aquino.

Lino Brocka died in a car accident in 1991 at the age of 52. From small town lad to world-famous movie director, he lived his life as part of the Filipino people's struggle against tyranny and oppression. ■

¹ See Rolando B. Tolentino, *Contestable Space: Cinema, Cultural Politics and Transnationalism in the Marcos-Brocka Philippines*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2014.

DAVID T. BUENO



BORN

April 14, 1956 in Piddig, Ilocos Norte

DIED

October 22, 1987 in Laoag City

PARENTS

Bernardo Bueno, Jr. and Amalia Triunfante

EDUCATION

Elementary: Piddig Central Elementary School
Laoag Central Elementary School

Secondary: Ilocos Norte National High School, Laoag City

College: University of the East
University of Santo Tomas
Ateneo de Manila University
San Beda College

To become a lawyer was really what David Bueno wanted. Thus, while he was already well on the way toward earning a degree in medicine, his heart was not in it. He persuaded his parents to let him shift to law instead.

But the country was under a dictatorship, and the Bueno family lived right in the heart of “Marcos country.” In the Ilocos region there was outward peace and order, but only because local warlords, all followers of the dictator, ruled through their private armies and terrorized the people.

After passing the bar, David Bueno became a human rights lawyer. He joined the Protestant Lawyers League of the Philippines. Many of his cases were *pro bono*, which meant that he did not charge for his legal services. He spent his own money in defending and protecting the rights of his clients, mostly were poor people, indigenous Yapayao¹ farmers, political detainees, or activists and community organizers. Sometimes he would take out his wallet so that his clients’ families could visit them in jail. At the height of military operations in far-off villages in the towns of Dumalneg, Piddig and Vintar, he sheltered refugees in his home and sent their children to school.

Following the assassination of Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. in 1983, open protests spread nationwide. Actively campaigning for

justice, democracy and the rule of law, Bueno joined numerous demonstrations and mass actions.

When Cory Aquino came to power after the ouster of Marcos, an offer was made for Bueno to serve under her administration but he declined. He preferred to continue defending the victims of government abuses. Ilocos Norte had remained a stronghold of Marcos loyalists and rebel soldiers, and human rights violations went on as before.

Bueno organized the Ilocos Norte-Laoag City Human Rights Organization, later becoming its chairman. He denounced the abuses, particularly the military operations in Dumalneg, on his radio program at Radyo Bombo Laoag. He successfully negotiated for the release of two Korean engineers and a local politician who were being held by the New People's Army.

In October 1987, as he was standing in front of his office, David Bueno was shot and killed by two men riding on a motorcycle. The murder was part of a pattern, in which the assassins were believed to be from the police or military aiming to destabilize the new government. ■

¹ Also known as Isnegs.

AMADO G. BUGAY



BORN

February 6, 1954 in Samal, Bataan

DIED

April 9, 1977 in Morong, Bataan

PARENTS

Manuel Bugay and Perfecta Guinto

SPOUSE/CHILD

Eufrosina Lacanare / 1

EDUCATION

Elementary: Samal North Elementary School,
Bataan
Secondary: St. Catherine of Sienna Academy,
Bataan

The young farmer Amado Bugay was up early to begin tilling the ricefields when a truckload of constabulary troopers came rumbling down the road. "*Hapon!*" he exclaimed to himself, and guessed that they might be looking for his friend Ed. Last night they had been having a long discussion in a hut some distance away.

But Bugay arrived too late to warn Ed. The raiding troops had surrounded the hut and rained bullets upon it. Ed and another young man died in that attack. Bugay saved himself by jumping into the river nearby and hiding among the nipa palms.

That incident on July 16, 1973 would be repeated many times during the entire period of martial law, especially so in the barrio of San Juan in Samal, Bataan with its long history of resisting oppressive rule.² Countless young people had "gone to the hills" and many did survive to pass on the tradition to the next generation, although there were others who died fighting and were honored for it.

Amado Bugay, whose father had been a tenant farmer before finding a job at a nearby factory, decided that he would join the guerrillas and fight the military enforcers of the Marcos dictatorship. He became well-known as an effective leader. His group operated in Morong, in the mountains of the Bataan peninsula. They lived among

the indigenous Aetas, the settlers and other landless peasants who burned *kaingin* in order to plant and have food to eat. Even in the lowland areas, the local residents thought highly of Bugay and sought his advice in helping them solve their problems.

One sunny afternoon of 1977, Amado Bugay was killed in an encounter with government troops. It was April 9³ when Bugay's unit was outnumbered and outgunned and he was wounded in the initial exchange of gunshots. Continuing to fire, he ordered his two companions to escape. That was how he died at the age of 23.

A funeral procession that was several blocks long accompanied Bugay to the town cemetery. Thousands of people came to pay tribute, despite the threatening presence of the military. The march turned into a rally, to which the soldiers reacted by arresting 50 mourners, among them the dead hero's father. Many volunteers accompanied them to the military encampment. And the townspeople moved quickly to hide those in danger of being taken into custody. It was a truly memorable event. ■

- ¹ Locals called Marcos' troops "*Hapon*" because of the abusiveness and cruelty of the Japanese soldiers during World War II.
- ² See the three-part series by Benjamin Pimentel, Jr., "The Secret of Barrio San Juan," *Midweek*, January 6, 13 and 20, 1988.
- ³ Ironically, it is a day that is celebrated today as "Araw ng Kagitingan" to remember the heroism of the defenders of Bataan against the invading Japanese army in World War II.

JOSE G. BURGOS, JR.



BORN

January 4, 1941 in Manila

DIED

November 16, 2003 in San Juan, Metro Manila

PARENTS

Jose Burgos Sr. and Tomasa Gacusano

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Editra Tronqued / 5

EDUCATION

Elementary: Ateneo de Cagayan,
Cagayan de Oro City
Secondary: University of Sto. Tomas High
School, Manila
College: University of Sto. Tomas, Manila

Among the first acts taken by President Marcos in imposing martial law was to control the mass media: newspaper offices, radio stations and television channels were all taken over by his regime.

Prominent media personalities were jailed right at the start. Many working journalists suffered long detentions, some went underground, others flew abroad, and still others joined the regime's media apparatus or other government agencies. Eventually, some media outlets owned by Marcos cronies were allowed to operate, but only favorable news and opinions were allowed to appear.

Word of mouth filled in the very big blanks in the information system. Guerrilla groups put out their own underground newspapers. "Xerox journalism" consisted of photocopied articles from foreign media. Mimeographed sheets were circulated by church workers.

Before martial law, Jose "Joe" Burgos Jr. had already received praise for his investigative reports on political violence in Ilocos Norte, his home province and that of President Marcos. For this he was named one of the country's Ten Outstanding Young Men in 1970.

In 1973, with martial law in full swing, Burgos accepted a Jefferson Fellowship to

study at the University of Hawaii's East-West Center. He then worked for a while in two government agencies.

In 1977 he began his foray into independent media with the fortnightly *We Forum*; he staffed it with members of the mothballed College Editors Guild of the Philippines, which they were trying to revive. It was a success, as the public soon discovered that its news and commentaries could not be found in the Marcos-controlled press. Burgos also launched three other publications (*Midday*, *Malaya* and *Masa*).

Marcos tolerated these publications for a time, because their existence allowed him to claim that there was press freedom in the country. But after *We Forum* published a series of investigative reports about the dictator's fake war medals, the police raided its offices, arresting Burgos and the newspaper's columnists and staff and shuttering its editorial and printing offices in December 1982.

Released from jail but undeterred, Burgos put out *Ang Pahayagang Malaya* instead. By then, opposition to the dictatorship had become more openly defiant. Like *We Forum* before it, the newspaper mirrored the mood of the times and its circulation soon surpassed those of the crony publications. It was well positioned to reflect and amplify

the huge protest movement that reached new heights after 1983.

Joe Burgos was named International Journalist of the Year by InterPress Service in 1986, and by the International Press Institute as one of the 50 "World Press Freedom Heroes" of the 20th century.

He survived his great battles in journalism but not his battle against cancer; he died in 2003, at the age of 62. ■

LEOPOLDO Y. CALIXTO, JR.



BORN

July 30, 1946 in Manila

DIED

February 20, 1974 in Calinog, Iloilo

PARENTS

Leopoldo Calixto and Elsa Yulo

EDUCATION

Elementary: Rafael Palma Elementary School,
Manila
Secondary: Philippine School of Arts and
Trades, Manila
College: Mapua Institute of Technology,
Manila

Student journalism turned out to be a powerful and effective weapon against the Marcos dictatorship, even before martial law was actually declared. It was able to reach out to thousands of young people, shaping their thinking about the scandalous inequalities prevailing in society, the government policies that perpetuated such inequalities, Philippine sovereignty, world affairs, etc..

The College Editors Guild of the Philippines (CEGP) was a decades-old organization that had become a training ground for campus writers aspiring to enter traditional elite politics. But by the end of the 1970s it was experiencing a revival, amid the upsurge of student activism that was setting the pace of national debate in the political arena. At its national congress held in 1970, the CEGP determined to pursue unification, and Leopoldo “Babes” Calixto was one of those assigned to carry out this important task.

In the next few years, Calixto devoted himself to CEGP organizing particularly among the editors and writers of big tertiary institutions in Manila such as the University of the East, Philippine College of Commerce (now the Polytechnic University of the Philippines) and the University of Santo Tomas. He himself was a staffmember of *Avant-Garde*, the student paper at Mapua where he was student of mechanical engineering.

Thus it was no wonder that many campus journalists were among the hundreds of those who volunteered to become fulltime activists in the underground resistance to martial law. Babes Calixto was among them. Before the end of 1972, he had gone off to Panay in western Visayas -- hoping that despite belonging to a poorer branch of his mother's clan, he would fare better there.

Calixto was a street-smart, tough young man who could get along well with just about anybody. His friends in the Pasay-Malate area called him "Binong Bakal" for his physical strength and courage combined with natural leadership and willpower.

For the next year and a half, Calixto lived among the poor peasants in the uplands of Panay. Cattle rustling was their main problem, they told him, and no one protected them from the bandits who were stealing their livestock. And so, aside from propagating the message of struggle against the Marcos dictatorship, Calixto went after the cattle rustlers, for which the people were very thankful.

One morning Calixto's group encountered members of the paramilitary Barrio Self-Defense Unit (BSDU). He was hit at once, and he ordered the others to leave him and escape. Then he dismantled his rifle and threw the pieces away. He took the cash in his pocket and tore the bills to little bits,

making sure the money would not fall into enemy hands. Then, rather than surrender, "Binong Bakal" let himself bleed to death. ■

JENNIFER K. CARIÑO



BORN

March 4, 1950 in Baguio City

DIED

July 13, 1976 in Hungduan, Ifugao

PARENTS

Jose Cortez Cariño and Josefina Kintanar

SPOUSE/CHILD

Gilbert Pimentel / 1

EDUCATION

Elementary: Baguio Central School
Secondary: St. Theresa's College,
Baguio City
College: University of the Philippines
College Baguio

Jennifer Cariño was a bright young woman who, during her short life, did more than her share in strengthening the unity of the Cordillera ethnic communities notably through cultural work. In the process, she helped build the people's resistance to the Marcos dictatorship and its oppressive policies.

Cariño belonged to a large, well-known Ibaloi clan; her grandfather was the first Igorot mayor of Baguio City. (On the other hand, her mother was also part of a large, well-known clan originating in Cebu.) She was the first of eight children, all of whom later became activists.

It was in high school that the young Cariño first publicly stood up for Igorot pride, reacting strongly to a statement by then foreign secretary Carlos P. Romulo that "Igorots are not Filipinos." In an article published in the student organ, she criticized the discrimination against the Cordillera highland tribes and recalling their proud history of resistance to foreign domination.

But she was not simply one angry, politicized teenager. She enjoyed singing, parties, playing the guitar, reading widely, going out with her friends. Singing songs of protest, she became involved in Baguio student activism. Mass actions always meant popular cultural expressions, and soon

Cariño had dropped out of school to work on this aspect full-time for the movement.

Shortly before martial law was declared, she married fellow activist Gilbert Pimentel from the Mountain Province. Together, at a conference in Bontoc, they had helped organize what would later be known as Kilusang Kabataan ng Kordilyera (Cordillera Youth Movement).¹

Giving birth in November 1972 and caring for her baby girl, Cariño experienced the hardships endured by many other parents unable to provide a safe and stable environment for their families. Moreover, her husband was in prison and she could not visit him for fear of being arrested herself. In 1974 she finally decided to leave the child with her family and work with the resistance organization in the Cordillera mountains.

The area between Ifugao and Benguet provinces was one of the most depressed areas in the region. There was a lot to do for members of the Kalanguya tribe who lived there with very few material resources and visiting their settlements would mean very long arduous treks along mountain trails.

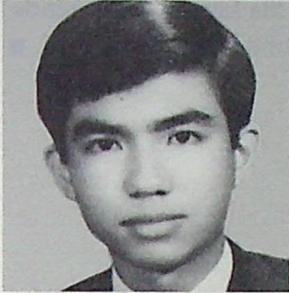
Cariño wrote songs, conducted literacy lessons, applied acupuncture therapy to the sick members of the tribe. She learned their language, and enjoyed eating such upland

delicacies as wild ferns and the beetle grub found among fallen pine logs.

Sadly, Jennifer Cariño died on July 13, 1976, when she was hit by a bullet misfired from a comrade's gun. ■

¹ Kilusang Kabataan ng Kordilyera was founded in 1971 to advance the aspiration for self-determination of communities in the highlands of northern Luzon.

ARTEMIO S. CELESTIAL, JR.



BORN

September 16, 1950 in Maragondon, Cavite

DIED

February 19, 1975 in Montalban, Rizal

PARENTS

Artemio Celestial, Sr. and Marina Somoza

EDUCATION

Elementary: Ateneo de Manila, Quezon City
Secondary: Ateneo de Manila, Quezon City
College: Ateneo de Manila University,
Quezon City

A sad experience happened to Artemio Celestial, Jr. when martial law was declared. During the first semester of academic year 1972-73, he was unceremoniously “kicked out” of the only school that he had known. He was a proud Atenean from the elementary grades to college.

The fourth year economics major, who had always gotten good grades, suddenly found himself expelled, along with several others. They were banned from entering the campus. Their pictures were posted at the guardhouses, as if they were wanted criminals. Jun’s younger brother, after graduating from high school, was not allowed to enrol either.

Many schools all over the country expelled their students who were at the forefront of campus activism when President Marcos imposed martial law. Even before September 1972, some Ateneo student leaders had been barred from the school and Celestial was one of them.

He was committed to student activism. As secretary-general of the Ateneo student council, he organized and coordinated protest actions sponsored by the council on such issues as the Filipinization movement, campus repression, civil liberties, militarization, and impending martial law. When massive flooding hit Central Luzon, he led efforts to raise funds and provide help.

During the martial law, many students took their struggle underground because they could no longer hold open mass actions. They published *Rebel Pandayan*, with defiant articles and encouragement to their peers to resist the dictatorship. The military raided the Celestial family residence in 1973, searching for a mimeographing machine that he had brought home from the student council office and which they suspected was being used to print the underground publication. They found neither the machine nor its "borrower," who had managed to hide behind the heavy curtains in the living room.

Celestial got himself a job and never returned to school again. Once he was picked up by the military and briefly detained without being charged. After that he put up a small tailoring business. He often visited his friends and his only brother, who became political detainees in government jails. In his last visit, his brother noticed him that he looked sad and troubled -- "maybe he felt that he should have gone ahead and joined the movement full-time."

One day in February 1975, Jun Celestial arrived in a taxi at Wawa Dam in Montalban, Rizal. At the toll gate, he scribbled a letter on a piece of paper and handed it to the guard. Addressed to President Marcos, it asked for the release of all political

detainees. The next day, his body was found floating in the river. An investigation revealed that he had been questioned by a Philippine Army unit in the area, but there were no conclusive results.

Despite the puzzling tragedy, his family and friends choose to remember and celebrate his life instead. ■

JORGE M. CHECA

BORN

February 25, 1951 in Manila

DIED

July 22, 1984 in Tampilisan, Zamboanga del Norte

PARENTS

Alfredo Checa and Irene Montenegro

SPOUSE

Corazon A. Cramen

EDUCATION

Elementary: Rafael Palma Elementary School,
Manila

Secondary: Manila High School

College: Philippine College of Commerce,
Manila

Gleeful laughter from the audience always rewarded the actor Jorge Checa in his signature scene -- the one where he portrayed a schoolteacher scolding an unfortunate pupil for pronouncing English sentences in the Filipino way. "A is for apple, get it?" he would scream in an exaggerated American accent. "Now say Man...hat...tan! Manhattan!"

The audience of jeepney drivers, factory workers and passersby found that very funny. Checa's performance reminded them of their own frustration at having to master a foreign language, right in their own country, in order to have a good job and social standing.

Kamanyang (Incense)¹, the theater group to which Checa belonged, had very little funds apart from the resources put at their disposal by the progressive administration of their school, the Philippine College of Commerce. The cultural activists running Kamanyang wrote and produced most of their plays, songs and poems, taking inspiration from the everyday lives and suffering of the people.

The protest theater that youth activists brought to the streets, poor communities and strike areas was a far cry from the glittering, polished cultural events that were close to the heart of Imelda Marcos.

Born in Manila, Jorge Checa was one of nine children whose parents were migrants

from the Visayas. His father took whatever temporary jobs were available. Thus, Jorge readily empathized with the analysis of social problems offered by the radical movement that he encountered in college.

Checa was one of the many student activists marked for arrest when martial law was declared. With his wife and others, he found refuge in the poor communities of the metropolis, where Kamanyang already had contacts. Arrested, detained and released, he resolved to continue the struggle by joining the armed resistance.

For the next ten years, Checa persevered. He worked among the peasant settlers and tribal people of western Mindanao, touching their lives with the same dedication as he had poured into Kamanyang's theater productions. He was reported missing in July 1984, and when the military authorities finally acknowledged having captured him they claimed that he had committed suicide.

After two months, human rights workers were able to exhume Checa's body from an unmarked grave in Tampilisan.² He had been tortured, the autopsy showed, before being killed. ■

1 An account of Kamanyang's work and Jorge Checa's involvement is narrated by Jaime Flor Cruz in an email dated September 14, 2014 addressed to Carrie Panaligan (Bantayog archives).

2 Just before the scheduled exhumation of Jorge Checa's remains, the two leaders of the human rights workers, lawyers Jacobo Amotong and Zoro Aguilar were killed by military assassins in Dipolog City. Amotong and Aguilar are featured in Volume 1 of *Ang Mamatay Nang Dahil Sa'yo*. See pp. 3-4; 11-12.

WILLIAM T. CHUA



BORN

October 6, 1955 in Manila

DIED

December 13, 2004 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Chua Bon and Tiu Bin Guat

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Betty Ong / 3

EDUCATION

Elementary: Xavier School, San Juan City
Secondary: Xavier School, San Juan City
College: De La Salle University
University of the Philippines

He was always joking. “Question: What do you call a candidate who garners the most number of votes in a Marcos-sponsored election? Answer: The Loser.”

A good dose of humor was what William T. Chua provided his fellow activists as they mobilized in the hundreds of thousands during the final years of the dictatorship. The young lawyer and an assortment of volunteer writers (including his former professor Haydee Yorac) were behind an eagerly read publication, *Sick of the Times*, which was full of satirical pieces, gossip and biting comments about the Marcos regime.

Chua, the son of Chinese immigrants who came to the country in the early 1950s, was born in the Philippines. He was a college sophomore at La Salle when martial law was declared. He began joining rallies and other protest actions, but evaded the threat of arrest with the help of sympathizing friends. In his senior year, he became editor of the student organ *The La Sallian*, where his writing abilities came to the fore.

While pursuing his law degree at the University of the Philippines, Chua contributed critical articles to *Nassa News*, a church-based newsletter that had become a major source of news that were not found in the official media. A report about the plight of sugarcane workers in Negros province touched him deeply, and he began to see

how poor people could be helped by good lawyers like Jose W. Diokno, whom he admired the most.

After passing the bar, Chua joined the Movement of Attorneys for Brotherhood, Integrity, Nationalism, Inc. (MABINI)¹ and immediately started representing labor unions and human-rights victims in court. “William took his lawyering seriously,” a client and friend noted. “To him, it was more than just a job. It was a calling and he never lost sight of the ideals that made him pursue law in the first place. He had a fundamental belief that lawyering was about justice and compassion.”²

After the fall of the dictatorship, Chua turned his attention to exposing and prosecuting people involved in corruption and crime, many high-profile and dangerous kidnap for ransom cases and won convictions. He generously offered his legal services to advocacy and citizens’ groups that he supported. He helped the Presidential Commission on Good Government in exposing questionable issues concerning the coconut levy under martial law. He quietly assisted in government efforts to conduct peace talks with armed groups.

William T. Chua, the jovial lawyer for whom the struggle for justice was no joke, died of pancreatic cancer in 2004 at the age of 49. ■

¹ MABINI was founded by a group of lawyers at the height of the martial law to represent victims of human-rights violations. They also counseled for labor unions and other people's organizations.

² Sheila S. Coronel, “Lawyering, a calling for William,” *Tulay Fortnightly*, January 4, 2005, p. 12.

RENATO CONSTANTINO



BORN

March 10, 1919 in Manila

DIED

September 15, 1999 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Amador Constantino and Francisca Reyes

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Letizia Roxas / 2

EDUCATION

Elementary: Bonifacio Elementary School,
Manila
Secondary: Arellano High School, Manila
College: University of the Philippines

The writings of Renato Constantino were a major influence in the intellectual formation of countless young Filipinos who staked their lives and future in opposing the Marcos dictatorship.

At a time when the dominant, elitist view of Philippine-American relations was one of benevolence and mutual benefit, Constantino pointed out that on the contrary, our subservience to the interests of the United States had resulted in stunted growth.

Colonial miseducation was responsible for the lack of critical thinking, he said, and he urged a re-examination and redefinition of the Filipino identity that would affirm our independence, uniqueness and democratic values.

Furthermore, he said, the country's underdevelopment can be traced to our colonial history: "This condition was not abolished with independence; it was merely transformed. We see the economic structure as the basis for the iniquitous political system in which economic privilege becomes the pillar of political power – a power that enhances colonial control and further entrenches the hold of the local elite over the people."

During the 1950s, Constantino had already been branded a "security risk" by state intelligence agencies. His continuing prolific

output of scholarly books and articles, however, found fertile ground in the youth and student movement here in the 1960s, amid worldwide questioning of American domination. These ideas were taken up in activist study courses and discussion groups – where the rebellious students said they were learning more than when they were dutifully taking notes inside the classroom.

In 1972, Constantino published *The Marcos Watch*, a collection of critical newspaper columns. When martial law was declared, he was placed under house arrest for seven months, and not allowed to travel abroad for several years. Still, he continued to research and write, in collaboration with his wife Letizia. In 1976 the couple established the Foundation for Nationalist Studies, Inc. (now the Constantino Foundation) to initiate, sponsor or finance programs and projects for the advancement of Philippine nationalism.

Among Renato Constantino's well-known books are *A Past Revisited and The Continuing Past* (a two-volume history of the Philippines), *The Making of a Filipino* (a biography of Claro M. Recto), *Neocolonial Identity and Counter-Consciousness*, and *The Nationalist Alternative*. His most widely read essay, *The Miseducation of the Filipino*, had to wait five years before it saw print.

He died in 1999 at the age of 80. ■

ELLEGER E. CORTES



BORN

April 15, 1949 in Manila

DIED

October 1, 1971 in Cabangan, Zambales

PARENTS

Rosendo Cortes and Rosalina Eugenio

SPOUSE/CHILD

Mariquit Rivera / 1

EDUCATION

Elementary: Ponciano Bernardo Elementary School, Quezon City
Secondary: Ramon Magsaysay High School, Quezon City
College: University of the Philippines Diliman

Quite early, Elleger Cortez, or Boyong as he was more widely known, learned the virtues of responsibility and concern for others. As the eldest among seven children, he was a model brother. In school – he was a Quezon City boy through and through, from elementary school to college – he was a model student.

Perhaps it was his restless spirit and inquisitive mind that led him to seek answers to big questions like, Why is there so much poverty? Oppression? Whom should I trust to bring about change?

At the University of the Philippines in Diliman, where he was a history major in the mid-1960s, Boyong Cortes became an early student activist. He joined the Kabataang Makabayan but he left the group with others and formed the Samahang Demokratikong Kabataan.¹ The imposition of martial law paved the way for the two organizations to disregard their differences and work together in resisting the dictatorship.

Cortes was also involved in the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, the Student Cultural Association of UP and the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism – where many young people got intensive doses of political education and honed their organizing skills. One of his friends reminisced: “Elleger and I used to go to every bus stop in UP Diliman to tape

posters up with a quote from Apolinario Mabini: 'Get organized.' Usually, late afternoon, after classes. These signs had been hand silk-screened by Ellecer himself."²

But it was not enough to politicize the studentry of UP Diliman. Cortes and his friends fanned out to the provinces to be among the farmers, listening to their problems and imparting their own lessons in turn. They found communities, in Central Luzon for instance, that had nurtured a strong insurgent tradition. Cultural presentations were an important feature of these interactions.³

Cortes' group experienced their own share, a foretaste, of the hardships that the next wave of activists would encounter in even harsher times. Paramilitary groups were suspicious of their activities. They had to carefully avoid being entangled in military operations against armed rebels. Cortes was struck by malaria and had to be brought back to Manila.

On October 1, 1971, Boyong Cortes and two companions were killed by constabulary troopers in Cabangan, Zambales. Several weeks later, President Marcos suspended the writ of habeas corpus, the prelude to martial law, which he was to declare one year later.

The death of Boyong Cortes came as a shock to the youth who had admired his guts and passion. But it also inspired many to follow in his footsteps. ■

¹ The Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan (SDK) was formally established in 1977 as an offshoot of Kabataang Makabayan (KM). It was able to recruit large number of youth as militant activists in campuses and communities. After martial law was declared, many members went into full-time organizing and armed resistance.

² Ninotchka Rosca, "Ellecer Cortes, Early Memories," *Permalink*, April 26, 2012.

³ Agadel F. Guerrero, "Boyong's Legacy," undated manuscript, Bantayog archives.

DELIA R. CORTEZ



BORN

May 20, 1957 in Samal, Bataan

DIED

January 23, 1977 in Abucay, Bataan

PARENTS

Jose Cortez and Lucila dela Rosa

EDUCATION

Elementary: Samal North Elementary School,
Bataan
Secondary: Jose Rizal Institute, Orani,
Bataan

Delia Cortez was a bright-eyed teenager, still in high school, when she started joining protest rallies against, the rising prices of gasoline and fuel, increasing tuition fees, forcible dispersals by the police of student demonstrations.

There were local issues as well. Samal, Bataan was the site of the Bataan Pulp and Paper Mill, a large factory that manufactured paper products. Many people in the town and environs, including the relatives, neighbors and friends of the young activists were employed in the plant. But the toxic chemicals discharged in the manufacturing process were polluting the environment. Rice and vegetable crops were ruined, the work animals got sick, the water was unsafe to drink. Thus, the Bataan Pulp and Paper Mill became the target of protests by Delia and her friends.

Despite the seriousness of the causes she had embraced, Delia remained as lively and cheerful as ever. She joined the Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan like her two older brothers, but earned consistently high grades. She was also an officer of the student council and cadet first lieutenant in the Citizens Army Training.

Because she had passed a highly competitive entrance test for admission to the University of the Philippines, her parents had been planning to send her to UP Baguio for

college. Her father, Jose Cortez was a farmer but a little better-off than others and could afford to send her to school. But Delia thought it was more important for her not to go, as there was a lot of political work to do in their home village of San Juan.

Though she was young enough, Delia began organizing the women of Samal into small groups that met to discuss problems and devise self-help solutions. With the imposition of martial law and the multiplication of armed guerrilla groups in the area, Delia's groups took on other tasks to support the latter: procuring supplies, sending food, gathering useful information.

By December 1974, Bataan was heavily militarized. Delia was among those identified by the authorities responsible for building up the people's resistance to martial law. That was when she began moving about with an armed group, evading encounters with government forces. Assigned for a time in San Luis, Pampanga, Delia earned the admiration of the people for being "so young, yet so wise."

In January 1977, Delia was killed in an encounter with government troops in Sungkit, Abucay town in Bataan. It was a sad time for the villagers of San Juan, Samal. That March, two months later, the locals also suffered the loss of another

activists Amado Bugay,¹ Delia's cousin. The patriotic sacrifice of San Juan's beloved young martyrs is still well remembered today.

¹ Trifonio Andres, "Biblical Preaching." Feb. 16, 1981, typescript. Bantayog archives. Amado Bugay is also featured in this volume, see pp. 41-42.

ROMEO G. CRISMO

BORN

December 8, 1955 in Saguday, Quirino

DISAPPEARED

August 12, 1980 in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan

PARENTS

Pepito Crismo and Nellie Guilao

SPOUSE

Phebe Gamata

EDUCATION

Elementary: Saguday Central School, Quirino
Secondary: Nueva Vizcaya Comprehensive High School
College: St. Mary's College, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya

Romeo Crismo was the eldest son of a government employee (his father was the postmaster in the small town of Cabarroguis, Quirino). The family being devout Methodists, he and his six brothers and sisters regularly attended Sunday school and Bible studies.

Active in the 4-H Club,¹ Crismo often represented his town in provincial and national meetings. In 1972 he was elected president of the high school student body, and was even conferred the school's Politician of the Year Award. He really wanted to take up law after high school, but enrolled in accounting instead, upon his father's advice.

Crismo was very active in the United Methodist Youth Fellowship, rising to leadership positions from the local chapter presidency to the district presidency and the Northern Philippines Annual Conference presidency. He was involved in redrafting the UMYF constitution, and in 1976 was elected as the organization's first national executive secretary.

Crismo's church participation was wide-ranging, from the youth leadership training program of the National Council of Churches of the Philippines (NCCP) to rural youth projects undertaken for the Christian Conference of Asia and to education work

for the Student Christian Movement of the Philippines.

After becoming a certified public accountant in 1977, he worked as a cooperatives examiner in Cagayan for the Department of Local Government and Community Development. Later he joined to join the Commission on Audit, becoming one of the youngest government auditors in Region II at the time.

Although he appeared to be leading a “normal” life and working at a “normal” job, the martial law dictatorship stirred a yearning in the young man for something else, a radical alternative. “In our hearts, we believed in the alternative that aimed to restore justice and freedom in the country,” said a close friend.² In 1973, Crismo had already aroused the suspicion of church elders when he campaigned against the sham plebiscite being organized by Marcos to legitimize martial law. He did go on to help establish an underground network in his church that engaged in active resistance to the dictatorship.

In 1980, Crismo and his new bride moved to Tuguegarao, where he began teaching at the Cagayan Teacher’s College and St. Louis College. On August 11, unknown men tried to take him away in a van as he was leaving school for the day. He was saved only by

the presence of his students. The following day, he failed to make it to his afternoon class.

Since then, despite years of patient effort, his wife Phebe has not been able to find any trace of her husband. ■

¹ The 4-H Club was founded in the Philippines in 1952, patterned after the 4-H Club in the United States. It was an organization that promotes the development of young people, including out-of-school youth, in the rural areas.

² Jefferson P. Tugawin, “The Northern Passion of Romeo Crismo,” a tribute delivered at the Good Samaritan United Methodist Church, August 12, 2000.

THE DAET MASSACRE¹

June 14, 1981
Camambugan, Daet, Camarines Norte

In the morning of June 14, 1981, thousands of people were marching on the road leading to the Freedom Park on the grounds of the provincial capitol in Daet. They were doing so in order to make the government listen to what they wanted to say: Abolish the coconut levy!² Increase the buying price of copra! Boycott the fake elections!

Nationwide election had been set for June 16, in which Filipino voters would have to “choose” Marcos again as president. Calls for boycott were everywhere as the people believed that the election was one-sided. Marcos was running against Alejo Santos, a politician from Bulacan who he handpicked to be his opponent. The regime thought that it could claim legitimacy in the eyes of the world with this election, especially since it had declared the “lifting” of martial law earlier that year.

In many places all over the country, rallies and demonstrations were taking place. The people had begun to overcome their fear of martial law, and this was an opportunity to make themselves heard. Many of them were calling for a boycott of the election.

In the Bicol region, it was the Kilusan ng Mamamayan para sa Tunay na Demokrasya (KMTD) that was spearheading the boycott movement. It was headed by Jesus Antonio Carpio, a leading human-rights lawyer,³ and other opposition personalities in the region.

Thousands of marchers were on the road that morning. Most of them came from the towns of Lupi, Basud, and San Lorenzo Ruiz, and others were from Ragay and New Mercedes. Since three days before, they had been moving into the capital town. They had walked on dark, little-used trails, in small groups, trying to avoid being stopped by the military. There were strict instructions also not to carry anything that could be mistaken for a weapon, not even spoons and forks for eating their meals along the way.

On June 13, the various groups assembled in the plaza of Barangay Matnog, Basud municipality. That night, someone gave the alert and there was a scramble to avoid a confrontation with the military, but it was a false alarm. Early in the morning of June 14, the rallyists proceeded toward the next village, Camambugan. Because those who

lived in Matnog knew the way, they were asked to march in front. The tallest ones would give the signals that everyone could see and follow. *“Nagbigkis ang aming mga siko...nagkapit-bisig kami, parang bakod.”* (We formed a protective fence around the marchers, linking our elbows, with one person facing inward and the next one outward, and so on.)

It was after 8 a.m. that they came upon a firetruck blocking the road. The demonstrators refused to be stopped, and the firemen left. Then the constabulary troops arrived in several vehicles. At once, they began firing their automatic rifles. People were dropping to the ground. Two officers, Lt. Col. Nicasio Custodio and Capt. Joseph Malilay, ordered everybody to squat and put their hands up behind their heads. Rushing to the scene, civic leader Grace Vinzons-Magana tried her best to prevent more bloodshed and bring the dead and wounded to the hospital.

Those who died on the spot were four men: Jose Alcantara, Rogelio Guevarra, Elmer Lagarteja, and Benjamin Suyat. Two months later, Rosita Arcega, 30, and Ernesto Encinas, 25, also died of their wounds.

Many others were severely injured for life and lost their livelihood.

The families of these victims suffered

grievously as a result. Children had to stop schooling. Some were sent to live with relatives who could take them in. Mothers and older siblings needed to earn to take the place of the incapacitated fathers and other family members, aside from caring for them.

Two weeks after the massacre, KMTD leaders Carpio and Magana were ordered arrested by Marcos. They were detained by the military for almost a month. Custodio and Malilay, however, were reported to have been promoted and transferred in 1982.⁴ In 1997, – 15 years after the massacre – the two were charged with the crime of murder before the regional trial court of Camarines Norte, but no further information is available on the progress of the case.⁵ ■

¹ Based on interviews with Reynaldo Rivera, Crispin Abad, Ernesto Encinas, Ramona Guevarra-Yanto, Zaldy Suyat and Shirly Suyat-Laviña conducted in Brgy. Matnog, Basud, Camarines Norte on Aug. 11, 2014.

² The coconut levy was a tax imposed on copra and other coconut products, supposedly to create a fund for the farmers in developing the industry. Today the small farmers have still not benefited from the coco levy funds; instead, these continue to serve the interests of some Marcos cronies who remain powerful today.

³ He was appointed director of the National Bureau of Investigation by President Corazon Aquino in 1986, serving until 1989.

⁴ See Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, *Pumipiglas: Political Detention and Military Atrocities in the Philippines 1981-1982*, Quezon City, 1986, p. 97.

⁵ By 2009, Nicasio Custodio had retired from the Philippine National Police with the rank of director general.

JOSE E. ALCANTARA

BORN

June 27, 1940 in Payo, Catanduanes

DIED

June 14, 1981 in Daet, Camarines Norte

PARENTS

Severino Alcantara and Valeriana Esteban

SPOUSE / CHILD

Carmen Coderes / 5

EDUCATION

Catanduanes Primary School

Jose Alcantara was the youngest son of landless tenant farmers from Catanduanes. As a young man, he had migrated to the Bicol mainland hoping to find opportunities to make his own living. In Daet, he worked in a bakery and fell in love to a fellow worker. The couple soon started a family and settled down on a piece of land whose owner allowed them to plant rice and coconuts and vegetables in exchange for part of the produce.

Because he was strong and hardworking, it hardly mattered that Alcantara had only one year of primary schooling. Still, the couple wanted their children to get more education than they had. It was a struggle to send them to school, but they managed.

The village where they lived in Matnog was heavily militarized. Everyone had to be indoors by 5:00 in the afternoon. The name of every resident

had to be posted at the doorway of each house. Questions would be asked if pairs of slippers at the doors were more than the number of persons living in the house.¹ Not surprisingly, when Alcantara told his wife that he was planning to join a march-rally, she did not want him to go.

The family suffered very much after Alcantara was killed. They depended so much on him. For a time his wife tried to support their children by selling whatever could be produced from the farm. But she could not do it all by herself, for her eldest daughter and son were still in high school and too young to really be of help. Thus she was forced to surrender the farm, and the children were taken in by relatives. Her children did manage to continue schooling but had to stop after several years.

“Nagkawatak-watak kami,” said his daughter sadly. “If he had stayed away he would have lived to see his grandchildren.”² ■

¹ Interview with Crispin Abad in Matnog, Basud, Camarines Norte on Aug. 9, 2014.

² Interview with Marilyn Alcantara Amora in Matnog, Basud, Camarines Norte on Aug. 11, 2014.

ROGELIO GUEVARRA

BORN

December 1, 1936 in Daet, Camarines Norte

DIED

June 14, 1981 in Daet, Camarines Norte

PARENTS

Antero Guevarra and Irene Badagwas

SPOUSE / CHILD

Juana Panol / 5

EDUCATION

Elementary: Burabod Elementary
School, Daet

Secondary: Probably in Daet

As a young man, Rogelio Guevarra was already working in Manila where both his parents held jobs as sewers. During his trips back to Bicol he met his wife Juana and they started a family. He continued to be employed in the big city – his cousin had an idea that he once worked as a welder, his daughter remembers that he was a clerk in an office, at another time an appliance salesman – but he regularly visited his family.

Eventually Guevarra moved back to work on his father-in-law's small coconut farm in Matnog. But he kept some of his old city ways. In his leisure time, he liked to read the newspaper, for example, while sipping coffee.

Under the Marcos dictatorship, coconut farmers like him felt very much aggrieved. A levy on their copra was collected by the government, the Cocol Levy as it was known. But it was a heavy burden, and the farmers just wanted it to be removed.

The coconut levy issue was something that Guevarra and his neighbors wanted to raise in joining the rally that was scheduled for June 14 at Daet's Freedom Park. They also wanted the buying price of copra to be set higher. They also wanted Marcos out of power, but since the June 14 election didn't seem to give the electorate a real choice, they were calling for a boycott.

Guevarra was one of those who were killed on the spot by government soldiers who fired upon their march to the provincial capitol. He was 47. ■

ELMER L. LAGARTEJA

BORN

August 10, 1959 in Basud, Camarines Norte

DIED

June 14, 1981 in Daet, Camarines Norte

PARENTS

Armenio Lagarteja and Dominga Lis

EDUCATION

Elementary: Matnog Elementary School,
Basud, Camarines Norte
Secondary: Basud National High School

Elmer Lagarteja had come home that week, taking a break from his job at a garment factory in Angono, Rizal. He was a good and thoughtful boy, his mother said. After her separation from Elmer's father years earlier, it was Elmer who helped her support his five younger siblings. He took the responsibility of seeing them through school, as her income from dressmaking and being a hairdresser was not enough.¹

Elmer had many friends in the neighborhood, and he was in good terms with his father too. His father asked Elmer and his brother to join the demonstration on June 14.

His mother had no inkling that anything wrong was going to happen: "All they wanted to do was tell the government what was on their mind." When the troops started firing, Elmer's younger brother, who was some distance away, saw him fall to the ground.

He had been hit in the head, in the chest and arm. He was 21 years old. ■

¹ Interview with Dominga Lis Lagarteja in Matnog, Basud, Camarines Norte on Aug. 11, 2014.

BENJAMEN SUYAT

BORN

June 29, 1932 in Tabaco, Albay

DIED

June 14, 1981 in Daet, Camarines Norte

PARENTS

Maximo and Josefina Suyat

SPOUSE / CHILD

Margarita Obay / 10

EDUCATION

Elementary: Tabaco Elementary School, Albay

Eggplants, string beans, squash, radishes, mustard leaves – these were the classic vegetables of the folk song “Bahay Kubo” that Benjamen Suyat knew how to grow. He planted them, weeded, watered and protected from insects. Then every morning his wife would bring the fresh produce to market. That was how they raised their ten children.

But Suyat had no land of his own. His own parents were landless peasants themselves, who had moved from Tabaco, Albay to Camarines Norte during the 1940s in search of a better living. They had relatives there, and soon found a piece of land whose owner allowed them to plant vegetables.

When Suyat came of age, he also found a place to plant vegetables and where he could in turn, like his parents before him, support his wife and children. He worked hard, said his son Zaldy, and insisted that his boys follow his rules on personal discipline – no smoking, no hanging out with friends at night, etc.

Father and son joined the rally on June 14. Before going, Zaldy, then 22, had asked the older man to stay behind: “I said, let me go and you stay. At least, if anything should happen, it would be just me. I’m a single person.” But then Benjamen showed up at the meeting point on the eve of the actual march. “Isn’t this much better, he said, we’re all together here?” Zaldy recalled his father saying.

When the firing started Zaldy saw his father got hit. He himself was among the rest who were rounded up by the military and made to kneel on the ground, their hands behind their heads. When they were allowed to go home Zaldy, sad and frightened, informed the family that their papa had been killed.¹ ■

¹ Interview with Zaldy Suyat in Matnog, Basud, Camarines Norte on Aug. 11, 2014.

LUCIO P. DE GUZMAN



BORN

September 25, 1949 in Manila

DIED

November 8, 1987 in San Jose, Mindoro

PARENTS

Tomas T. de Guzman and Agustina Parungao

SPOUSE / CHILD

Lucille E. Parreño / 1

EDUCATION

Elementary: Lourdes School, Quezon City
Secondary: Christ the King Mission
Seminary, Quezon City
College: University of Santo Tomas,
Manila

Lucio “Boy” de Guzman came from a close-knit family living in Quezon City, his father a teacher and his mother a pediatrician. Because there were seven children, they were brought up to share what they had, and to be considerate of others; thus, when plates of food were passed around the dinner table, the last child usually got the biggest share.

Their mother’s devout religious practice was an early influence, and the teenaged De Guzman went through high school as a seminary student. At the Christ the King Mission Seminary, he absorbed the progressive, pro-poor ideas of his mentor-priests, and he was soon being immersed in some urban communities.

By the time he went to college, de Guzman had become a student activist – participating in teach-ins, marches, demonstrations, helping typhoon victims, bolstering workers’ pickets in strike areas, acting in street plays as Uncle Sam because he was tall and fair-complexioned. When martial law was declared by President Marcos, the Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan (SDK)¹ of which de Guzman was a member launched a “back-to-school” campaign; he was assigned to organize core groups in some girls’ schools in Quezon City and Marikina.

In 1976, having attracted the attention of the authorities, de Guzman hied off to seek sanctuary among the peasants of the Bicol

region. There he adapted well to the difficult life of a guerrilla -- organizing the people's resistance, helping them in whatever way, mediating conflicts. Through the years, his commitment to the quest for freedom and democracy only deepened -- knowing that it might require the unhesitating sacrifice of his own life.²

De Guzman moved to Mindoro in 1982, at a time when the antidictatorship resistance was rapidly rising all over the country. Massive protest demonstrations were being held in Metro Manila and other urban centers, more so after the assassination of Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. in 1983. Peasant delegations from Mindoro, politicized by de Guzman and his comrades, took part in these mobilizations.

In the island province itself, the people's militancy was met by state repression. Many local leaders were summarily killed supposedly because they were sympathizers of the guerrillas. In turn, the rebels became stronger and bolder in attacking the regime's military units.

In 1986, even after the fall of the dictatorship, fighting continued in Mindoro; everything remained the same.

Early on November 4, 1987, Lucio de Guzman and a companion were arrested by a foot patrol from the 268th PC Company in

Barangay Paclolo, Magsaysay, as they were trying to restart their installed motorcycle. Days later, their dead bodies, showing signs of brutal torture, were displayed in the town plaza of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. ■

¹ "...[M]as ibayong isulong ang simulain[g] napasukan ko hanggang kung buhay ma'y kailangang ialay [nang] walang pag-aatubili para sa kalayaan at demokrasya." Letter to his sister, January 10, 1981.

NIMFA B. DEL ROSARIO



BORN

May 6, 1954 in Naga City

DIED

December 7, 1976 in Banawe, Ifugao

PARENTS

Mariano del Rosario and Rosita Borrás

SPOUSE

Alex Torres

EDUCATION

Elementary: Colegio de Santa Isabel,
Naga City
Secondary: Philippine Science High School,
Quezon City
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

The magnificent Banawe rice terraces in northern Luzon are seemingly endless mountains that have been made sustainably productive, over countless years of history, through the engineering skills and patient labor of the local people. Declared a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the site is visited by thousands of people annually.

But this vista of awesome beauty became the setting, in 1976, of the violent death of a young woman whom the villagers recognized as Ka Mia when her body was brought by soldiers to the Banawe town center.

Ka Mia was Nimfa (Nona) del Rosario, someone who had studied at the best schools in the country. But when martial law was declared, she chose to fight it among those who were suffering the most from systemic injustice.

Del Rosario's parents were government employees. The large family of eight children grew up in an atmosphere of fun and noise, squabbling and doing things together. Her siblings looked up to Nona, the third child, because she was a good leader, mature and excellent in school.

The young girl left the family home in Naga to study at the Philippine Science High

School in Quezon City. There, she joined the Serve the People Brigade, and later she led the school chapter of Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan. Activism did not interfere with her studies and she graduated amid the turmoil of political unrest in the period just before martial law.

Entering the University of the Philippines in Diliman as a scholar, del Rosario enrolled as a chemistry major. She joined the Kabataang Makabayan and plunged into writing, organizing, recruiting and persuading other students to fight for change in society. On the national scene, the situation was very tense. Inevitably, perhaps, del Rosario quit school after her second year to dedicate herself fulltime to the movement. By this time, she and fellow activist Alex Torres¹ had become a couple.

In 1973 Nona and Alex, together with his brother, were arrested in Quezon City. Ten months later they were released; the couple then decided to join the antidictatorship resistance groups operating in the Cordillera region. But in 1975, Torres was captured in Kabayan, Benguet and was never seen again. del Rosario, after months of searching for her husband, returned to her work in Ifugao.

As part of the Marcos regime's plans to develop tourism, a village road was then being widened near the Banawe rice

terraces. The farmers, however, had not been consulted and they opposed the project. Ka Mia went to interview them and ask what help was needed. One morning at dawn, soldiers attacked Nimfa and her companion, who was able to escape. Nimfa del Rosario died at age 22. ■

¹ Alex Torres disappeared in 1975. See pp. 233-234 of this volume.

DENNIS ROLANDO R. DEVERATURDA



BORN

March 12, 1952 in Subic, Zambales

DIED

February 3, 1972 in Botolan, Zambales

PARENTS

Juan Deveraturda and Rosita Ramirez

EDUCATION

Elementary: Calapandayan (Subic) Elementary School, Iba Central School, Zambales

Secondary: Zambales High School, Iba, Zambales

College: University of the Philippines Diliman

Thought-provoking, conscience-stirring -- it was a story that would be repeated many times over from the 1970s and even beyond: A bright young person full of dreams, eagerly soaking up knowledge. Then, a short while later, his sacrificial body returning home.

Dennis Rolando Deveraturda was one of the earliest student activists to die at the hands of a regime that talked about reforms and change, but only continued to worsen poverty, military abuses, graft and corruption.

He had been a typical, carefree teenager in high school, enjoying parties and picnics with his friends, playing games, and experiencing puppy love.¹ Then he was admitted to the University of the Philippines in Diliman, enrolling in economics preparatory to studying law.

Membership in the UP Nationalist Corps introduced Deveraturda to the ideas of radical economists like Karl Marx and Victor Perlo, and he thought that they made sense. He joined the Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan (SDK) with its program of action stressing integration with the poor and helping them organize. He got busy with rallies and demonstrations, teach-ins, and picket lines. Back home in Zambales, he started an SDK chapter and spent school breaks with his newly politicized friends.

His mother noticed a change. Dennis was no longer choosy about what he ate and wore. She learned that he had been visiting the farmers in distant barrios, learning about farming and hearing out their problems.

Then his report of grades came, which confirmed that he had been neglecting his studies. His parents were upset. But he answered that he was not learning about reality in the classroom, and to continue as if nothing was happening would be like covering his eyes with textbooks.

“He wanted the present system to change,” his mother explained. “To him, it was unfair to see the rich getting richer and the poor poorer.” She explained that his son did not say much to them about his activities, but she believed that “there was nothing wrong with mingling with the farmers.”²

The military, however, had placed Deveraturda under surveillance so he decided to leave home because it was not safe anymore. That was in November. The following February, his parents were told to retrieve his body at the Philippine Constabulary camp in Iba. Two others had been killed with him.

Some months later, President Marcos would declare martial law. ■

¹ Edgardo Logan, “Dennis,” *Philippine Collegian*, February 18, 1972, p. 3

² The Nationalist Corps was a program of the UP Student Council through which student volunteers spent period of time living in poor communities for them to learn about social conditions, and to interact with the people on a daily basis.

³ *Philippine Collegian*, February 18, 1972, p. 3

MARIANI C. DIMARANAN



BORN

February 1, 1925 in Lubang, Occidental Mindoro

DIED

December 17, 2005 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Mariano Dimaranan and Maria Cuevas

EDUCATION

Elementary: Stella Maris School, Lubang
Secondary: Holy Infant Academy,
Calapan, Mindoro
College: Divine Word College, Calapan
University of Santo Tomas,
Manila
Postgraduate: De La Salle University, Manila
Maryknoll School of
Theology, New York (USA)

One of the most well-known personalities of the antidictatorship struggle was a small, dark-skinned Catholic nun who worked tirelessly to seek out and defend victims of human rights violations, presenting factual data that the regime could not deny.

For 21 years, Sister Mariani Dimaranan headed Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, (TFDP),¹ which had been created in the early years of martial law by the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines precisely to investigate and document human rights abuses and, whenever possible, intervene with the military for the release of detainees.

Under her fearless leadership, TFD played a critical role as an independent agency documenting and publicizing those abuses. She set up local TFD offices to provide direct service to prisoners and their families, worked out prisoner releases, and built up an international network to campaign against political detention in the Philippines. By 1986, the final year of the Marcos dictatorship, TFDP had 65 local offices across the country, and Sister Mariani's name had become synonymous with the defense of political prisoners and human rights in the Philippines.

Dimaranan was a member of the Franciscan sisters (SFIC), and taught high school and college courses in the congregation's schools

in Luzon. Before devoting herself full time to the work in TFD, she was the registrar and head of the social sciences department at St. Joseph's College in Quezon City and assistant dean at Our Lady of the Angels Seminary, also in Quezon City.

She had been participating in protest actions as early as the 1960s because of her concern for the plight of the poor. In 1973, Dimaranan was detained for six weeks in Camp Crame and Fort Bonifacio for alleged involvement in subversive activities. It was a disturbing experience. Being a nun gave a measure of protection from her military captors, but in detention she learned the truth about the huge number of those who had been arrested and tortured by the authorities. Thus, upon her release she volunteered to join the newly set-up TFD.

Dimaranan was an exemplary teacher who taught by example. She trained countless volunteers in gathering reliable data, and trained staff and paralegals in development work. Today many Filipino aid workers who learned from her serve humanitarian organizations all over the world.

The fall of the dictatorship in 1986 did not convince Dimaranan that the defense of human rights had become irrelevant. Until her failing health obliged her to slow down, she continued to lead Task Force Detainees

actively until 1996. Still, she did what she could, until her death in 2005 at the age of 81. ■

¹ TFDP is more popularly known as TFD.

SILME G. DOMINGO



BORN

January 25, 1952 in Texas, USA

DIED

June 2, 1981 in Seattle, Washington, USA

PARENTS

Nemesio Domingo Sr. and Adelina Garciano

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Terri Mast / 2

EDUCATION

Elementary: West Woodland Elementary School, Seattle, WA, USA
Secondary: Ballard High School, Seattle, WA, USA
College: University of Washington, Seattle
Postgraduate: University of Washington, Seattle

Silme Domingo was a labor leader, born in America of Filipino parents, whose murder in 1981 was held by a US court to have been the product of a conspiracy to silence opposition to the Marcos dictatorship.

The “conjugal dictators” Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos were charged as masterminds of the conspiracy, which also involved a Filipino-American businessman (a longtime friend of Marcos), and a known pro-Marcos leader in the US West Coast who actually arranged the double murder of Domingo and Gene Viernes,¹ a fellow activist.

Through a separate civil suit, these four persons were ordered to pay \$16 million to the families of Domingo and Viernes. The trial was the first time a foreign head of state was brought to trial and found liable in the United States for the murders of American citizens.

Marcos himself was already dead at the time of the federal court trial in Seattle. Imelda Marcos, in a deposition, claimed innocence. However, the evidence showed that the Domingo-Viernes killings were indeed part of the dictatorship’s moves to harass, intimidate and eliminate foreign-based opposition groups and individuals especially in the United States.

Silme’s father, Nemesio Domingo, was originally from Ilocos Sur, and his mother was from Cebu. Nemesio served in the US Army.

Silme, their third child, was born in Texas. Eventually the Domingo couple settled down with their family in Seattle, with its sizeable community of Filipino immigrants.

At the age of 16, Silme began working in the salmon canning factories in Alaska just as his father had done when he first came to the US. Many young men from the Filipino-American communities along the West Coast came on their summer school breaks to earn some money.

It was there that Silme – an outstanding student at the University of Washington – learned first-hand about the discrimination and poor working conditions endured by generations of cannery workers, most of whom were non-white. Organizing for labor reforms, Silme also fought for the cultural and social rights of Filipino communities. He joined the Coalition Against the Marcos Dictatorship and the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP), and established the KDP chapter in Seattle.

In 1981, Domingo and Viernes attended an international workers conference in Hawaii that resulted in a resolution criticizing Marcos' antilabor decrees and authorizing a high-level investigation into Philippine labor and human rights issues.

Less than a month later, the two young leaders were shot dead at their union's office in Seattle. ■

¹ See Viernes pp. 237-238 of this volume.

PEDRO DUNGOC



BORN

1949, in Tinglayan, Kalinga

DIED

June 22, 1985 in Kalinga

PARENTS

Puyoc and Chuchoy Dungoc

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Alice Chuki / 5

EDUCATION

Elementary: St. Teresita's School in
Lubuagan, Kalinga
Secondary: St. Louis School, Tabuk, Kalinga
College: St. Louis College, Tabuk City,
Kalinga

Pedro Dungoc was an unusual man. One of the few persons in his community to have gone to college, someone who was familiar with four languages, he did not choose to migrate to the big city and work there for his personal advancement. Instead, he returned to his native village to till the soil and got involved in asserting the people's rights against a dictatorial regime, sacrificing himself in the end.

Born in the village of Bugnay, where people belonged to the Butbut tribe of the Cordillera region, Dungoc supported himself through high school and two years of college. Then he worked as a telephone operator for the government's Ministry of Public Highways.

In 1974, the Marcos government decided to build dams along the Chico River. The project would generate 1,000 megawatts of electricity, benefiting industries and businesses downstream. With huge funding from the World Bank, it would also bring prestige and lucrative opportunities for the regime.

"But what about us?", asked the Kalinga and the Bontok people, about 100,000 of whom were going to be uprooted because of the Chico River dam projects. Their ricefields, burial sites, orchards and homes would go underwater. Their way of life as communities would no longer exist.

The foremost leader of the tribes' opposition to the dam was Macliing Dulag, a village elder of Bugnay. Dungoc (who spoke Ilokano, Tagalog and English besides Kalinga) became his spokesperson. Dungoc was good at explaining the issues and getting the support of various sectors.

But Dungoc was also a spokesperson for the dam resistance, not only for Macliing. He helped forge a pact among tribal leaders across the Cordillera consolidating their objections to the Marcos project. He coordinated the work of support groups in the urban areas. He even worked to address the problem of illiteracy among the elders, enabling them to sign their names in legal documents.

Increased militarization was the regime's response to the people's campaign: checkpoints, arbitrary searches, and all kinds of harassment. Dungoc was arrested, beaten up and detained by soldiers in 1980 together with another villager who was wrongfully accused of stealing a rifle from the local outpost.

One night in April 1980, troops went up to Bugnay and killed Macliing Dulag right in his house. They went after Dungoc also, but he survived the attack. Then he decided that no other option was left for him but to fight back, and so the New People's Army gained a new member. As a guerrilla, he continued

to spread the same message that the people need to be united in order to resist oppression.

Five years later, Pedro Dungoc died somewhere in the forests of Kalinga province when a tree fell and crushed him during a storm. Not long afterward, the Marcos regime would be ousted and the mighty Chico River has remained untouched. ■

ESCALANTE MASSACRE



It was September 20, 1985, and President Marcos had declared it to be a “Thanksgiving Day” to celebrate the “New Society” under his iron-fisted rule.

Of course, the people had nothing to be thankful for as years of corruption, self-enrichment by the Marcos family and their cronies, subservience to foreign interests, the unrelenting violation of human rights had become like a deadweight that was pulling the Philippines down. There was massive public debt. Investors were pulling out, affecting the economy. The effects of the crisis were being felt all over the country, and most especially by the poor.

The murder of Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. in August 1983 had accelerated the demand for the ouster

of the dictator. More and bigger rallies and demonstrations were held. People’s organizations, creatively named, emerged at all levels. New forms of mass protest, such as the “lakbayan,” mobilized hundreds of thousands of Filipinos who were all determined to express their resistance to oppression. The traditional elites were sharply divided: some began to side openly with the opposition, while others beefed up their private armies.

Still pretending (for the benefit of his patrons in the government of the United States) that his dictatorship was a democracy, Marcos announced the holding of a presidential election. He even picked his own opponent, an old friend from Bulacan, to run against him.

By this time, there were only a few places in the Philippines that could be considered “Marcos country.” Almost everywhere, Filipinos were overcoming their fear of martial law. Thus, the call to boycott the bogus election received tremendous, open support.

People’s strike in Negros

A three-day “*welgang bayan*”¹ had been declared in the entire island of Negros against “hunger, extreme poverty and increasing militarization.” Although the sugar industry had brought fabulous wealth to the ruling

landlord families there, such riches were made possible by the inhuman labor and social conditions to which the plantation workers and their families were subjected.

The Negros Occidental provincial governor then was Armando "Armin" Gustilo, who was known to be extremely loyal to Marcos. His armed bodyguards enjoyed paramilitary status as a Civilian Home Defense Force (CHDF), operating together with the regular military and police units.

The strike in Negros saw the paralysis of public transportation as the members of 28 bus and jeepney drivers associations refused to ply their routes. Public and private schools suspended classes. Offices and some business establishments were closed. Rallies and marches were held, peacefully, in the major city of Bacolod and the towns of Binalbagan and Kabankalan.

The people of northern Negros decided to hold their own *welgang bayan* from Sept. 19 to 21, with their activities centered in Escalante City (98 kilometers away from Bacolod). In the morning of September 20, about 7,000 had already gathered in two places – some in front of the municipal hall, and others blocking the road going to Bacolod.²

Many soldiers were deployed in the area, in full battle gear with high-powered firearms.

Firetrucks arrived with CHDF personnel aboard. To relieve their tension, the people started clapping and shouting : "*Makibaka! Huwag matakot!*", "*Militarisasyon labanan!*" (Let's fight, don't be afraid! Resist militarization!)

The firetrucks began to pump water at the protesters, but ran out of water. Then the CHDF men started firing tear gas canisters into the crowd. One canister fell near Juvelyn Jaravelo, a young woman who was in the front ranks, and she picked it up and threw it back. At that point the CHDF began shooting, and Jaravelo was the first to be hit. Suddenly, the machine gun mounted on the rooftop of the municipal hall also began spitting out automatic fire. People were running in all directions, while others linked arms and stayed put. Many bodies were lying on the ground.

After the shooting stopped, more troops arrived and encircled the survivors, who thought they were sure to die. But a door suddenly opened in the market, and everyone rushed inside, making their way to safety in the town convent. From there they saw how the CHDF were firing more bullets at the wounded lying everywhere, still alive. Market 2nd site, shooting occurred in front of municipal hall.

Fifteen people died instantly in the Escalante massacre. Six more died in hospitals and very many were injured. The terror continued as soldiers were present in the hospitals, intimidating the doctors and other medical personnel.

The Escalante massacre shocked the entire country. It was the first time that so many people – 21 in all –

were killed in just one attack by government forces. The anger that it provoked added fuel to the citizens' determination to oust the dictator. And indeed the people's resistance to the brutal and corrupt Marcos dictatorship bore fruit less than six months after, on February 22-25, 1986.

The first anniversary of the massacre -- with the dictator Marcos and his family finally out of Malacañang Palace -- was a collective commemoration by the people of Escalante. Since then, September 20 has been an annual day of mourning and prayer, declared as such by the local city council. On this day, the tragic event is reenacted the inspiring stories of heroism and solidarity that they witnessed are retold. Some years later, an impressive monument to the martyrs of Escalante was erected through the efforts of the townspeople.

Of the 45 found to be involved in the massacre, only 28 low-ranking policemen, were charged and arrested. In 1994 three of these were convicted by the Sandiganbayan. Gustilo died in the United States in 1986 and was never charged. ■

1 Welgang Bayan was a new form of protest that involved a coordinated stoppage of public activities. In other occasions, it included stoppage of transportation, closure of business establishments, walk-out by students and teachers to join marches.

2 The following account is taken from the narration of events given by participants Eddie and Alma Villalon, in an interview with Bantayog researchers Carrie Panaligan-Manglinong and Cathy Abrazado, August 2, 2013, in Escalante City.

WILLIAM D. ALEGRE

BORN

July 22, 1967 in Cadiz City, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Carlos Alegre and Consuelo Delosendo

The second of five children of hacienda workers, Alegre started working at the age of 13. His father had suffered a work-related disability and the family depended on the small income he brought in. This teenager was a dutiful son who turned over all his earnings as a field hand to his mother. He was only 18 at the time of his death. ■

MICHAEL DAYANAN

BORN

1968 in Sagay City, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City,
Negros Occidental

Human-rights workers were unable to find any of his relatives to find out more about him. What is known is that he was born in Fabrica, Sagay City, and that he was 17 years old when he was killed in the massacre. ■

Jaena, Sagay City, had already lost three children due to malnutrition. A member of the National Federation of Sugarcane Workers (NFSW), he had been active in mass protest actions for about a year before the 1985 welgang bayan that took his life. ■

RODNEY A. DEMEGILIO

BORN

March 5, 1955 in Sagay City, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City,
Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Rogelio Demegilio and Natividad Araña

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Regina Demegilio / 2

With two growing children (a daughter, 9, and a son, 5), Rodney was a devoted father, anxious for their future. He and his wife, who lived in sitio Nabiga-a, Barangay Lopez

ROVENA FRANCO

BORN

April 1, 1971 in Sagay City, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Bernaldo Franco and Tessie Traje

At age 14, she was the youngest of the Escalante martyrs. She died late in the evening of that day, suffering for hours after she was brought to the hospital. The military, her mother said, prevented the doctors from attending to her. At the site of the massacre, the wounded Rovena had urged her friend to run for safety instead of trying to help her. Rovena had been a hacienda worker since age 12. ■

ALEX D. LABATOS

BORN

July 10, 1967 in Cadiz City, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Mauricio Labatos and Jovita Delos Santos

Four days later, his family was shocked to learn that he had been killed in the Escalante massacre. They did not even know that he had joined the Welgang

Bayan. All the time they thought he had been in Bacolod City. Next to the youngest among 12 siblings, Alex had been living with his elder sister and her family after the death of their parents. Like everyone in the family, he had been working at Hacienda Escolastica in Cadiz City. ■

ANGELINA LAPE

BORN

1968 in Sagay City, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City,
Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Batilo Lape and Flora Malinao

Since the age of 13, she had been working at Hacienda Gina in Sagay City. Both her parents and her 10 other brothers and sisters were plantation workers. Going to school only two days a week and toiling in the fields the rest of the time, she managed to finish the fifth grade. An active member of the NFSW's youth arm, she had attended protest actions in the past. ■

NORBERTO LOCANILAO

BORN

July 5, 1969 in Toboso, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante, Negros
Occidental

PARENTS

Crescenciano Locanilao and Leonarda Siacor

All of his six brothers and sisters worked at the hacienda. He himself began working in the fields at age 8. After having finished

only four years of formal schooling, he became the sole support of his aging parents and three brothers. He was 16 years old, when he died in the Escalante massacre. ■

RODOLFO C. MAHINAY

BORN

1963 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Bonifacio Mahinay and Felicidad Caraballo

His parents, who worked in a farm, had eight children of whom Rodolfo was the third. He was a prayer leader of the Kristohanong Katilingban and a member of the youth organization. Dropping out after third year high school, he was one of the few among the Escalante martyrs who had received a longer education. ■

ROGELIO MEGALLEN JR.

BORN

1964 in Toboso, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Rogelio Megallen Sr. and Erlinda Sinanggote

He had been working on the sugarcane plantations since age 10. His parents and their 10 children all toiled together in the fields, but their earnings were never enough. Although Rogelio dreamed of going

to college one day, no one in the family was able to go beyond sixth grade. ■

CLARO F. MONARES

BORN

1967 in Sagay City, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Crispolo and Maria Flores

He had been married, just the previous December, to a girl from Silay City, also a poor farmworker. In September, at age 18, he died from bullet wounds suffered in the Escalante massacre, leaving her a young widow. He had nine brothers and sisters, all forced to depend on their earnings from the hacienda like their parents and grandparents before them. ■

MA. LUZ MONDEJAR

BORN

August 14, 1969 in Sagay City, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Apolinario Mondejar and Rosita Umbao

A photo in the Bantayog archives shows Ma. Luz at her elementary school graduation

ceremony, holding her grade 6 diploma and wearing a white dress. Of her 10 brothers and sisters, only she and one other were able to finish the elementary grades. But the family could not afford to send her, or any one else, to high school. Everyone had to work in the hacienda, which Ma. Luz began to do at age 12. The family only learned later that she had been at the Welgang Bayan, and killed there; she had only asked for permission to see a movie. She was 14. ■

RODOLFO T. MONTEALTO

BORN

February 13, 1964 in Toboso, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Marcelino Montealto and Enisita Tapang

The sixth among 11 children, he had been the sole support of his mother and three younger brothers. Like his grandparents, parents, uncles and aunts, he and his cousins as well as nieces and nephews were employed as field hands of the Danao Development Corporation in Toboso. He had been working since age 13, and died at age 21. ■

ANIANO C. ORNOPIA

BORN

May 9, 1955 in Rizal, Sagay City

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Feliciano Ornopia and Trinidad Custodio

SPOUSE/CHILD

Rodolfa Ornopia / 1

His parents, both farmworkers, died when he was 5; all his life he worked on the hacienda. He and his

wife, who was also employed there, had a three-month-old baby girl when he died in Escalante, at the age of 27. ■

NENITA T. OROT

BORN

September 18, 1965 in Sagay City, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Eugenio Orot and Susana Traje

She was the only one of her parents' eight children who ever went to high school, although she had to stop after two years. She worked at the hacienda as a housemaid at the time she joined the September 20 demonstration in Escalante City. She died at the age of 20. ■

He was a young fisherman who was active in the Association of Small Fishermen in Negros. When the weather was bad and he could not go out to sea, he looked for work in the hacienda. When he was orphaned at the age of 15, he started to fish for a living; he even stayed in Bantayan, Cebu for a year before returning to Negros and getting married. He and his wife had a nine-month-old baby. ■

EDGARDO SALILI

BORN

1962 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Apolinario Salili and Leonora Gomez

SPOUSE/CHILD

Juvy Salili / 1

RONILO J. SANTA ANA

BORN

January 1, 1968 in Sagay City, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Climaco Santa Ana and Leonarda Japana

The entire family, parents and nine children, worked for a hacienda in Sagay City; he was a boy of 10 when he began. Two days after the shooting rampage in Escalante, he died in the Vicente Gustilo Memorial Hospital. ■

JUANITO S. SUAREZ JR.

BORN

1955 in Sagay City, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

The youngest of six, Johnny was brought up by his father, Juanito Suarez Sr., after the death of the mother when he was just three years old. At age 12 he began to be employed at Hacienda Ricky, while his two brothers worked on the farm and his sisters were housemaids. Johnny also worked as a fishpond watcher. The protest action in Escalante was the first one he had attended. ■

MANUEL L. TAN

BORN

January 1, 1967 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Jesus Tan and Lourdes Llavore

His father was a fisherman, and Manuel was 12 when he started joining him at sea. Manuel had stopped schooling after four years. Only one of his six brothers and sisters had gone on to high school. That September, Manuel had been all set to formally ask permission from the parents of his sweetheart to marry their daughter. Tragically, he was killed in the Escalante massacre. He was 18 years old. ■

CESAR T. TEJONES

BORN

1961 in Toboso, Negros Occidental

DIED

September 20, 1985 in Escalante City, Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Domingo Tejones and Josefa Tayo

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Lucrecia Tejones / 2

He started working at age 14 and died at age 24. His wife was then pregnant with their second child. Cesar would try to find work in the neighboring haciendas in order to put food on the table when there was no work available in their area. On the day he left for Escalante, he had to borrow money to get there. He had been active in such protest actions since 1983. ■

ROLANDO M. FEDERIS

BORN

February 6, 1963 in Jose Panganiban, Camarines Norte

DISAPPEARED

October 1976 in Lucena City

PARENTS

Dionisio Federis and Veneranda Morallo

SPOUSE / CHILD

Carole Ojeda / 1

EDUCATION

Elementary: Pura Elementary School,
Quezon City
Secondary: Jose P. Laurel High School,
Quezon City
College: Philippine School of Business
Administration, Quezon City

Rolando Federis was the sixth of eight children. His father once had his own tailoring shop in Camarines Norte, and migrated to Manila where he found employment as a master cutter in a tailoring shop in Cubao, Quezon City.

Thus the young Lando grew up as a city kid, in the populous neighbourhood of Project 4, Quezon City. Graduating from high school, he enrolled at the nearby Philippine School of Business Administration (PSBA). He was the first in his family to go to college.

In high school, he had already been drawn into student activism. When martial law was declared in September 1972, he dropped out of PSBA and became a full-time community organizer. He joined what was known as a “collective,” composed of several other activists who carried out their tasks in consultation with each other. These tasks usually consisted of raising awareness about anything related to the new regime, and more importantly, about the people’s rights as individuals and as communities. Basically, the work meant “making friends and influencing people” to protect their rights and to resist the dictatorship in various ways.

Because it was martial law, Federis and his friends had to be extra careful. But he himself was an “insider” in this kind of neighborhood: he had grown up talking and

acting like the other street-smart young men. Thus it was no problem for them to discuss radical politics over a cold pitcher of beer. His friends respected, trusted and sheltered him.

Then Federis took on more dangerous work. He acted as liaison between the city underground and the armed resistance in his native Bicol.

His wife was a fellow activist whom he had patiently tutored in the intricacies of living among the urban poor (for she had led a sheltered life). Because her family was being harassed by the military, she decided to leave for the United States with their infant son, hoping to return "when the situation improves."

On October 1, 1976, Federis and two women with him were forcibly taken off a train going to Bicol. They were taken to a secret prison "safehouse" (secret prison) somewhere in Lucena City in Quezon province. There they were subjected to severe torture and raped, for weeks. On October 17, Federis and one of the women, were taken away. That was the last bit of information about them. The two were never seen again.

Although detailed testimony was available, including the names of the military officers involved, no one has been made to answer

for the disappearance in custody of Rolando Federis and his companion. ■

JESUS F. FERNANDEZ



BORN

April 4, 1955 in San Carlos City, Pangasinan

DIED

May 27, 2007 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Dominador Fernandez and Generosa Flor

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Minerva Gonzales / 2

EDUCATION

Elementary: Immaculate Heart of Mary
College, Manila
Secondary: San Sebastian College, Manila
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

It was the country's young people – shedding their blood in battle, creatively engaging in many forms of organized resistance, carrying the struggle forth in successive waves of protest – who were at the forefront.

Jesus Fernandez was one key figure who devoted his leadership and organizing skills to the youth and student movement that was a crucial component in the fight against the Marcos dictatorship.

The son of a public school teacher and an engineer, Fernandez became an activist in high school; street protests and teach-ins were already underway by that time. He was a freshman at UP Diliman in 1972, when martial law abruptly shut down student political organizations.

Campus activism was then made more difficult by the curtailment of the freedoms of expression and assembly as well as by the proliferation of military agents spying on students and faculty alike. Fernandez and his friends turned to organizing around student rights and welfare issues. Notably, they rallied support for the restoration of student councils and campus newspapers which quickly became leading centers of dissent and linked up with each other across schools and across the nation.

To Fernandez' credit, he finished his political science course despite his political involvement. However, instead of going on to law school as his father wanted, he chose to enrol in graduate school at the University of the East to be able to engage in organizing there with its large student population.

Martial law was still at its height, but Fernandez and other student leaders tirelessly organizing in the "university belt" of Manila. Soon enough big protest rallies were being openly held against tuition fee increases. The experiences gained in these mobilizations would prove to be valuable in sustaining the momentum of the antidictatorship resistance in the years to come. In 1978, Fernandez would also play a big role in the campaign against the Interim Batasang Pambansa election, which anti-Marcos candidates contested.¹

His activities would continue well into the 1980s as the antidictatorship movement covered more and more ground; among the highlights were the protest rallies during the visit of Pope John Paul II to Manila, which attracted worldwide attention to the Philippine struggle. The three years that followed the killing of Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. in 1983 were marked with massive and unrelenting actions that led to the dictator's ouster. Again, Fernandez was

there working tirelessly behind the scenes. In later years, he became a consultant to several mainstream political figures.

Fernandez died of lung cancer in 2007 at the age of 52. ■

¹ Among the candidates were Benigno Aquino Jr., Aquilino Pimentel, Teofisto Guingona Jr., Trinidad Herrera, Fernando Barican, and Alex Boncayao. As expected, the regime made sure that they would all lose the elections.

CEFERINO A. FLORES



BORN

February 4, 1939 in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental

DISAPPEARED

January 28, 1983 in Metro Manila

PARENTS

Ceferino Flores and Juliana Arbon

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Blancaflor Tuazon / 6

EDUCATION

Secondary: Tondo High School, Manila

Luxury hotels was where Jun Flores spent more than two decades, cleaning the elegantly furnished rooms, picking up the used towels left lying on the bathroom floor, politely responding to any and all demands of the guests.

Then when his shift was done, he would go home late, always arriving before midnight with a bag of leftover food from the hotel – a quiet, reliable family man. One night he didn't come, and the following two nights after that. His wife, a part-time college teacher in social science, started to look for him everywhere. But she never saw him again.

Son of a poor family in Negros Oriental, Ceferino Flores Jr. had gone to Manila in the 1950s to find a job, becoming a roomboy at the famous Manila Hotel at the age of 16. He worked there for the next 13 years, and it must have been the time when he became painfully aware of how different he was from the usual people he served day after day: their wasteful habits, self-centeredness, careless extravagance.

In 1971 he helped set up the short-lived Samahan ng mga Manggagawa sa Otel at Restawran sa Pilipinas, but this first attempt to organize hotel and restaurant workers did not survive the declaration of martial law. By that time he had begun working at the Intercontinental Hotel in Makati, he was

also reading books about history, politics and the economy.

The Floreses did not have an easy time under martial law. In early 1973, probably because of his trade union work, the military raided their home. They failed to get him but they confiscated his books including a pamphlet entitled "*Paano Pinagsasamantalahan ang Manggagawa*" (On the Exploitation of Workers). In 1975, Flores was arrested and detained for seven months, but released after his subversion case was dismissed.

Returning to his old job at the hotel, Flores became more actively involved in the leadership of the employees union. He was also a founding member of the National Union of Workers in the Hotel, Restaurant and Allied Industries.

Trade union organizing became Flores' be-all and end-all. One son recalled how his father brought him to a picket line as a way of teaching him and his siblings how workers struggled and sacrificed for a better life.

Despite being continually harassed by management and pressured to resign, Flores had the union's support and he was able to hold fast for ten years. But that Friday night in January 1983, as he stepped out of the hotel's back door, the terror of martial law

finally caught up with him. He remains missing to this day. ■

ANTONIO Y. FORTICH

BORN

August 11, 1913 in Sibulan, Negros Oriental

DIED

July 2, 2003 in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental

PARENTS

Ignacio Fortich and Rosalia Yapsutco

EDUCATION

College: Ateneo de Manila

Although he was born to a landed family in the Visayas, and presided over a diocese of the Roman Catholic church that thrived on the patronage of the ultra-rich sugar barons of Negros, Bishop Antonio Fortich reserved a large, special place in his heart for the poor.

He was bishop of Bacolod from 1967 until his retirement in 1989 – a period that spanned the duration of the Marcos dictatorship. At a time when it was dangerous to proclaim a “Church of the poor,” Fortich insisted that “there can be no peace if there is no justice.”

One of his first acts as bishop was to call his official residence, the Bishop’s Palace, as “the house of the people.” He introduced radical new policies, including the immediate implementation of land reform on church properties in the diocese. He established a social action center and a legal aid program to help the poor. He encouraged the priests to get involved in organized labor like the National Federation of Sugarcane Workers (NFSW). He initiated the Dacongogon Sugar, Rice and Corn Cooperative, where small farmers and sugarcane workers joined together and successfully operated their own sugar mill; for this he received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service in 1973.

Ironically, Fortich was not opposed to martial law in the beginning. He thought it unwise to go against the Marcos regime because he needed government cooperation for his social projects. "But as time went on, it became very clear that the purpose of martial law was really to stop the ferment for social change that was taking place" in Negros and all over the country.¹ He became convinced that "martial law was devastatingly destructive of social and human life in the Philippines."²

Militarization was intense, and human-rights violations were rampant. Fortich and other bishops signed a letter of protest against martial law. He supported his priests when they got into trouble with the authorities. When some of them went full time in social action work, or even actually joined the armed resistance, he only reminded them not to forget their other priestly duties.

His constant concern for the poor may have led the military and some landowners to call him a sympathizer of the New People's Army, "Kumander Tony." But everyone knew that Fortich was someone who reached out to all sectors in order to help attain social justice: "I have no problem with a world in which there are rich and poor," he said. "But I cannot accept that some people have to live by scavenging for food in the garbage cans of others."

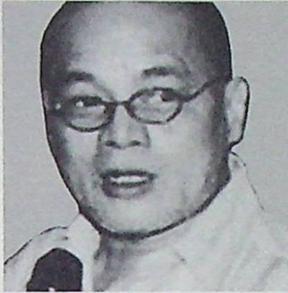
In 1983, as the people's resistance to martial law reached new heights, Fortich helped organize the National Movement for Free Elections and served as its national co-chairman until 1989. He advocated for the establishment of "peace zones" in some areas marked by frequent clashes between government troops and rebel guerrilla forces.

Bishop Fortich died in 2003 at age 89. ■

¹ Niall O'Brien, "The story of Bishop Antonio Y. Fortich," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, July 5, 2003, p. A-13.

² *Ibid.*

OSCAR D. FRANCISCO



BORN

February 10, 1946 in Tacloban City

DIED

August 15, 2010 in Makati City

PARENTS

Rafael Francisco and Ramona Diamaro

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Edna Nolasco / 3

EDUCATION

Elementary: Kapangian Community School,
Tacloban City
Secondary: St. Paul College, Tacloban City
College: Mapua Institute of Technology,
Manila

Oscar Francisco began a life-long involvement in community work in the late 1960s, even before martial law was declared. He had been active in the Student Catholic Action in college, and later at the Archdiocese of Manila. He was also involved with the National Union of Students of the Philippines and then later the Christians for National Liberation.

Working under church programs for community organizing, Francisco trained and supervised numerous community organizers, working primarily in Tondo, one of Manila's oldest and poorest districts.

When Marcos imposed martial law, he wanted to build an international port in Tondo's foreshore, where, in every space available, some 30,000 migrant workers from the provinces had already built their own dwellings. Marcos ordered these homes to be demolished, triggering a fierce defense by the people of their right to shelter.

Francisco was then doing organizing work in the area called Magsaysay Village, right in the center of the people's resistance. Together with organizers from the local parish, he helped set up a broad alliance Zone One Tondo Organization (ZOTO). Members of the community trooped to government offices to submit position papers, they talked to foreign reporters and invited nuns and priests to their homes.

They joined marches and rallies against the dictatorship.

After his stint with ZOTO, Francisco joined the National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA) of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, where he played a key role in the justice and peace program as well as the program for poor settlers. He helped develop another church program called Basic Christian Community-Community Organizing (BCC-CO), which became a strong influence in mobilizing rural and urban communities nationwide to resist the Marcos dictatorship.

Francisco had a gift for getting all kinds of people to work together. Thus, by the early 1980s, he was deep into organizing broad antidictatorship alliances in which diverse sectors of society found common ground and took united forms of action. These formations included the People's Assembly for the Pope's Arrival (PAPA), National Coalition for the Protection of Workers' Rights, People's Movement for Nationalism, Independence and Democracy (People's MIND), Coalition for the Restoration of Democracy (CORD), Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), and the Lakbayan-Sakbayan march and caravan that campaigned to boycott the 1984 elections.

After Marcos was overthrown, Francisco went on to support various initiatives for

urban and rural development, agrarian reform, people empowerment and good governance. He joined government in several capacities, notably as NGO sectoral representative, and later as vice-chair, in the National Anti-Poverty Commission. He died from complications of diabetes in 2010. ■

ARTHUR GALACE



BORN

May 10, 1942 in Baguio City

DIED

December 26, 1993 in Baguio City

PARENTS

Agustin Galace and Dolores Erfe

SPOUSE/CHILD

Nida Luis / 1

EDUCATION

Elementary: Mabini Elementary School,
Baguio City
Secondary: Baguio City National High
School
College: Baguio Colleges Foundation

Art Galace was not a student activist. The son of a Baguio City police officer, he took odd jobs to earn some money for school by shining shoes, part-time bookkeeper, and checking moviehouse tickets. He entered law school when he was already in his late 20s.

But he was a voracious reader of newspapers, magazines, fiction, poetry, and the Bible, aside from his law books. He became a lawyer in 1977 after passing the bar as the third topnotcher.

By that time President Marcos' martial law dictatorship had already been in place for several years. Galace slowly built up a clientele of affluent Baguio residents. But he also defended many poor people for free. He was happy to help them, and in fact he ignored suggestions for him to work abroad; he was rich enough with friends, he said, and he felt needed here in the Philippines.

Besides, the press had begun publishing reports about human-rights violations committed by the military and police. Galace, who read at least three newspapers daily, volunteered to join the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG) and soon became one of its most active members in the city. He also became active with the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) and was elected to head the local chapter in February 1985. The Northern Luzon Human Rights

Organization was formed in 1984, and Galace was one of its leaders.

As the people intensified their open resistance to the dictatorship, Galace was always there to provide legal assistance. He defended imprisoned students and activists facing rebellion charges. Rural communities sought his help against the military's abuses.

With the ouster of the dictator, political prisoners were released from detention, and many of those who could not immediately return to their families were welcomed by Galace into his home for as long as they needed to stay. At this point, he was named a member of the Presidential Commission on Human Rights under Jose W. Diokno.

Disappointingly, the military abuses continued even under the new government of President Corazon Aquino. "So what else is new," he remarked. "Nothing has changed. The struggle continues."¹

On a personal level, Art Galace was engaged in a long battle with disease. Diagnosed to be a diabetic as a young man, he was able to keep it from incapacitating him all through his most productive years. After his family house was totally destroyed in the big earthquake that hit Baguio in 1991, his health rapidly deteriorated until his death two years later, at the age of 51. ■

¹ "Atty. Arthur Erfe Galace: Primus Inter Pares." Undated, unsigned statement.

ROSALINDA GALANG-REYES



BORN

January 5, 1949 in Manila

DIED

October 12, 1998 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Ruben Galang and Remedios Del Mar

SPOUSE/CHILD

Ricardo Reyes / 1

EDUCATION

Elementary: University of Santo Tomas

Secondary: University of Santo Tomas

College: University of Santo Tomas

Having graduated with a journalism degree (magna cum laude) from the University of Santo Tomas, where she was literary editor of the *Varsitarian*, Rosalinda Galang joined the country's most influential newspaper at a time when student activism was just getting started.

Writing professionally as Roz Galang, she covered the rallies held by students and workers in Metro Manila. She was quickly convinced that the demonstrators were correct in fighting for change. Thus it was not hard for her to seek out the underground resistance as soon as President Marcos declared martial law.

"Despite the objections and fears of her family – her father after all was a military officer, fully aware of the brutality that the military and police forces were capable of – Roz chose to place her gifts, skills and conscience in the service of the common people specially taken advantage of and abused by the Marcos dictatorship."¹

The underground press for which she wrote "went deep among the workers, the urban poor, landless farmers, hinterland tribes... [reporting on] their struggle for just wages, agrarian reform... guerrilla ambushes, people's organizing committees, the heroic deeds of those who died young."²

Though it was a dangerous job, Roz Galang was "happy doing this kind of work,"

said one friend. ““Even if the opportunity presented itself, I think she would not have exchanged the fulfilment she was enjoying then [as a revolutionary journalist] for the perks and privileges of an establishment journalist. No airconditioned offices, no expense accounts, no rubbing elbows with the rich and famous. No salary, and often, not even a pseudonym for a byline. It was enough that for the first time in their lives, ordinary people found themselves being written about admiringly, in language they could understand.””³

In contrast, the mainstream media had to be very careful not to displease the authorities, and journalists had to resort to indirect ways of reporting and commenting on what was really happening. As the popular resistance intensified, however, the mass media was able to exercise more freedom.

With the fall of the Marcos dictatorship, Roz Galang chose to write and edit for human rights organizations such as Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates and the Freedom from Debt Coalition. She worked for many years with PhilRights, during which she was given a citation by a London-based human rights institution.

She died from lung cancer in 1998. ■

1 Testimony of Carolina S. Malay, Quezon City, July 27, 2011.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

LOURDES GARDUCE- LAGMAN



BORN

October 12, 1954 in Manila

DIED

June 23, 1979 in Bongabong, Nueva Ecija

PARENTS

Venancio Garduce and Felina Petate

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Filemon Lagman / 2

EDUCATION

Elementary: Our Lady of Loreto College,
Quezon City
Secondary: Our Lady of Loreto College,
Quezon City
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

“*Laging may iniisip*” was how her family used to describe Dodie Garduce. Even as a young girl she would make serious comments about the things that were going on and often argue with her father, a lawyer, who somehow would end up admitting the correctness of her views. But she was never hardheaded and got along well with all kinds of people.

It was not surprising that in high school, Garduce became an activist. She joined KASAPI, which had an outreach program organized by the Franciscan sisters in Loreto (now Siena) College. Through this program she saw for herself how poor people lived in Tondo, Manila and in the provinces of Negros, Quezon, Cebu and Samar. One notable experience was before martial law. She was interacting with *sacadas* (migrant workers) at the Central Azucarera de Bais in Negros Oriental when military harassed them that they had to seek refuge at the local parish church.

Back home in Project 4, Quezon City, Garduce and her sister organized a community youth group which later became a chapter of the Samahang Demokratikong Kabataan. Student activism, especially at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, was then reaching new heights.

With the declaration of martial law, Garduce – who by then had married fellow activist

Felimon Lagman – continued her activities underground. For years their families gave the couple their full support, helping them secure safe shelters and taking care of their two children.

When the dictatorship held elections for the interim legislature in 1978, Garduce plunged into the campaign for participation. Despite the certainty that President Marcos would not allow any of the opposition candidates to win, she worked round the clock to firm up alliances, raise funds, manage the multiple tasks of electoral campaigning.

While fulfilling all these political tasks in relation to the antidictatorship movement, Garduce made sure to keep in touch with her family and especially the children. In 1979 she asked relatives to bring them to Nueva Ecija, where she and her husband had been assigned to organize among the peasantry.

It was there that Garduce last met with them, for not long afterward their group found themselves – the couple and two others -- surrounded by government troopers. As they broke out from the hut where they had been staying, Garduce was fatally hit by gunfire.

(Her father, Venancio Garduce, was elected to represent the second district of Samar in 1987 to 1992, during the 8th Congress which immediately followed the ouster of Marcos.

He was a candidate of the short-lived Partido ng Bayan.) ■

CESAR GAVANZO



BORN

June 5, 1947 in Matnog, Sorsogon

DIED

November 5, 1972 in Bulusan, Sorsogon

PARENTS

Cesar Gavano Sr. and Abundia Grayda

EDUCATION

Elementary: Matnog Central School,
Sorsogon
Secondary: Osias Academy,
Matnog, Sorsogon
College: Manuel L. Quezon University,
Manila

When Cesar Gavano was studying in Manila, he used to attend discussion groups held by activist leaders from the big student organizations. Although he listened intently and absorbed what he was hearing, and attended their protest rallies, what he chose to join was a relatively little-known fraternity, Tau Omicron Delta, and another group, Sandigan ng Bagong Kabataan (SBK).

In his written application to join SBK in 1970, Gavano stated that he wished to participate in bringing about changes in society. He had also been much affected by the death of a friend from school, Fernando Catabay of Manuel L. Quezon University, during the violent dispersal by police forces of a big rally in Mendiola.

In the 1971 local elections, Gavano returned to Sorsogon to support the gubernatorial campaign of Juan Frivaldo, a popular Bicol politician who was running against someone close to an ally of President Marcos. During the campaign, he openly criticized the president and urged the people to elect honest and responsible leaders. Frivaldo won the election.

As the tense political situation built up – and Marcos was widely expected to impose martial law – Gavano’s family asked him to come home from Manila. In Sorsogon, he found a job in the governor’s office. Still, he

continued to attend protest rallies. In one of these, he was picked up, detained and beaten by a policeman; he escaped a few days later with the governor's help.

When martial law was declared, soldiers came to the family residence to arrest him. He was not there. They were to return repeatedly, harassing Gavanzo's widowed mother.

Then one day in November 1972, the family learned that Cesar had been killed and that his body was at the Bulusan municipal hall. He had obviously been subjected to brutal torture before he was shot in the head.

Cesar Gavanzo is considered the first victim of martial law in Sorsogon. In the succeeding years, more young people in his province were killed for their beliefs. Among them were his cousin Antonio Ariado¹ and friend Nanette Vytiaco² (also in Bantayog's Wall of Remembrance). His sister and two brothers were imprisoned in Camp Crame, Quezon City. ■

¹ Antonio Ariado is featured in this volume, see pp. 17-18.

² Nanette Vytiaco is featured in this volume, see pp. 243-244.

BONIFACIO H. GILLEGO



BORN

June 5, 1921 in Bulan, Sorsogon

DIED

August 1, 2002 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Cresenciano Gillego and Calixta Hubilla

EDUCATION

Elementary: Magallanes Elementary School, Sorsogon
Secondary: Albay Normal School, Albay
College: Far Eastern University, Manila
Postgraduate: School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University (USA)

President Ferdinand Marcos tried to create myths about himself in order to make people believe that he was extraordinarily brave and intelligent. He claimed, for example, to be the most decorated war hero in the Philippine resistance to the Japanese occupation during World War II.

Although his fellow soldiers laughed, knowing that this was a lie, nobody openly questioned his boast, especially after Marcos had declared martial law. It took Bonifacio Gillego, a retired military intelligence officer, to expose the whole truth about the dictator's fake medals after conducting diligent research in the United States. Through interviews with former guerrillas and a review of Marcos' records in US army archives, Gillego convincingly demolished the carefully-constructed story that had bolstered the latter's inflated reputation.

The story was published in Jose Burgos Jr.'s *We Forum* and angered Marcos so much that he had the newspaper closed and the staff arrested. But the exposé dealt him a powerful blow, at a time when the regime was already beginning to tear apart.

Gillego had served as a delegate to the 1971 Constitutional Convention which, to his dismay, gave rise to the 1973 constitution that formalized Marcos' dictatorial powers. Rather than keep quiet, he denounced and opposed this constitution. In 1978, he

escaped to the United States where he joined the Movement for a Free Philippines and earned a modest income through a series of odd jobs.

Besides the series on the fake war medals for which he is most well-known, Gillego also authored articles exposing the Marcos spy network in the USA and analyzing the effect of US government assistance on the dictatorship, among others. It was he who challenged the inclusion of Marcos among the awardees of the US Medal of Honor, and caused the removal of the latter's portrait from an exhibit in New York.

After nine years in exile, Gillego returned to the Philippines and was elected to Congress. He represented his home province of Sorsogon for three terms. As a legislator, he pushed for the zero-retention type of land reform, spoke against human-rights abuses, and worked for the abolition of paramilitary units and a reduction in the military budget. He was much respected for his progressive views, devotion to the public good and adherence to a simple lifestyle.

He died at the age of 81 after suffering a stroke. ■

MELITO T. GLOR



BORN

April 21, 1949 in Atimonan, Quezon

DIED

December 5, 1974 in Calauag, Quezon

PARENTS

Gerardo Glor and Gloria Tierra

SPOUSE

Flora Valencia

EDUCATION

Elementary: Malusak Elementary School,
Atimonan, Quezon
Secondary: Quezon Memorial High School,
Atimonan, Quezon
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

Melito Glor was what the old folks would call “niño bonito”: a golden boy, a leader. He was handsome and bright, always at the top of his class. His parents had already built a garage for the car they were planning to buy for their only child when he finished college.

For a long time, he dreamed of becoming a soldier, and it was easy to imagine him as a tall, broad-shouldered officer with polished manners. No wonder all the girls in the small town of Atimonan fell under the spell of his natural charisma.

Still, Melito Glor was not the easy-going, happy-go-lucky type who would bask in all the honors and attention he had been getting all his life. He was described in his high school yearbook as “the campus James Dean” – referring to the brooding, mysterious aura of the 1950s Hollywood idol.

“He was a deep thinker,” said his teacher Francisco Laude. “Palaisip.” He arrived at the University of the Philippines campus in Diliman in the late 1960s, when students were beginning to stir with the consciousness of gross injustices and inequalities in Philippine society. Enrolled in pre-medicine, he was recruited into the elite Upsilon Sigma Phi fraternity to which President Marcos and other famous “brods” belonged.

Then slowly he was drawn into radical activism. At first, Glor quietly listened and observed. He joined Panday Sining, the cultural arm of Kabataang Makabayan. Committing himself more and more firmly to this thinking, he eventually decided to work fulltime in bringing about the thorough change that he thought was needed. The declaration of martial law in 1972 found him already involved in rural organizing in his home region. From then on, joining the armed resistance to the Marcos dictatorship became the only available option.

As his mother said, whenever he committed to something it was for keeps (*ang salitang binitawan niya ay hindi niya pwedeng palitan*). In December 1973, he married Flora Valencia, a girl he met while organizing the peasantry in Mauban, Quezon. He said to her, "I don't care to go back to my old life. I'm staying here with you, we'll have lots of children. That's if we don't get killed first."

Flora was due to give birth to their first baby when their group was surrounded by government troops in an isolated hut. Melito and another man was killed, Flora was captured. Military medical personnel delivered her baby, which they said was born dead. Many years later, when the family was finally able to recover Melito's remains, they found a surprise. Beside his

bones was a tiny skeleton – that of the son that he did not live to see.¹ ■

¹ This account is based on interviews with Melito Glor's parents, Francisco Laude, Behn Cervantes, his cousin, and his wife Flor.

EUGENE DAVID C. GREY



BORN

November 22, 1949 in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental

DIED

January 13, 1973 in Tayabas, Quezon

PARENTS

Edgardo Grey and Gloria Conejero

EDUCATION

Elementary: De La Salle College, Manila
Secondary: De La Salle College,
Lipa, Batangas
College: Lyceum of the Philippines,
Manila

When student activism stormed into the Philippine political scene in the 1960s, many people were glad that the country's youth had taken up the formidable task of bringing about change in the social, political and economic system.

Thus, the public generally tolerated the ensuing disorder in the streets as the student activists marched about denouncing government policies, especially the plan of President Marcos to impose martial law in order to remain in power beyond the term limits provided in the Constitution. They protested the increase in fuel prices and noisily supported transportation and other workers' strikes. They boycotted their classes and spent much time discussing political tracts among themselves. Mothers complained that the student activists went home only to have a good meal and take a much-needed bath.

Eugene Grey embodied the passion and energy of the times. He helped organize rallies and demonstrations, wrote press releases for the Kabataang Makabayan (KM), and gave interviews to television reporters. Exceptionally articulate, he was always one of the main speakers at mass actions, noted his brother. He joined laborers at their picket lines, and talked politics with out-of-school youths in the urban poor communities

It was at the Lyceum of the Philippines where he first encountered the radical ideas that would lead to his commitment to revolutionary change. He was a wide reader, and eager to learn. But he was fun to be with, his friends said. He played the guitar and sang the songs of the Beatles and Bob Dylan.

Grey came from a middle-class family, descendants of a British naval officer who stayed behind in the country after the withdrawal of an expeditionary force that had occupied the Philippines in the 18th century.

In 1971, with the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus¹ Eugene Grey was included in the list of student activists to be arrested by the authorities. He chose to go underground. Soon, his family lost contact with him.

In January 1973, Grey and his group were cornered and killed by the military in the mountains of Tayabas, Quezon. It was said that some of them were sick, including Grey, and unable to defend themselves. The family was able to confirm his death only two months later, but they were never able to recover his remains. ■

¹ The suspension of the writ of habeas corpus was prelude to martial law that Marcos imposed the following year.

CESAR E. HICARO



BORN

November 3, 1947 in Atimonan, Quezon

DIED

October 24, 1973 in Malabon, Rizal

PARENTS

Vicente Hicaro and Soledad Ella

SPOUSE/CHILD

Maria Sarmiento / 1

EDUCATION

Elementary: San Jose Elementary School,
Pili, Camarines Sur
Guinobatan Elementary School,
Guinobatan, Albay

Secondary: Roxas Memorial Agricultural
School, Guinobatan, Albay
Don Severino Agricultural
College, Indang, Cavite

College: University of the Philippines
Los Baños

If he had not died young, Cesar Hicaro could be a farmer today, contentedly growing a variety of indigenous crops on his own small piece of land following the methods of sustainable agriculture, applying organic fertilizer and biological control of unwanted plants and insects, propagation of indigenous varieties.

Modern farming was what Hicaro had studied at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, having been a scholar all through college. He graduated in 1968. During his early years, since his father was a schoolteacher and principal assigned to different towns, Hicaro was enrolled in a series of schools himself.

He was a consistently good student and a natural leader, who was active in the Future Farmers of the Philippines and the 4-H Club. Thus even at a young age he was already doing extension work in his own community.

At UPLB, Hicaro became a member and leader of both the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) and the Upsilon Sigma Phi fraternity. He joined KM teams that went around recruiting student activists in the Southern Tagalog region, and initiating dialogues with small communities around the campus such as Tuntungin, Maahas, Mayondon, Malinta, Lalakay, and Bambang.

Through these activities and the frequent political discussions among the various student groups, Hicaro developed a surer grasp of the basic problems afflicting the nation and particularly the small farmers and landless peasants. After graduation, he dropped the original plan of joining the academe and instead went into full-time organizing. Then martial law intervened and security concerns became urgent as well as the need to mobilize the people's resistance to dictatorship.

Clandestine work against the martial law authorities involved taking great risks in the countryside as well as in the urban areas. Especially in the early years, the networks that composed, sheltered and supported the underground organizations suffered the arrest, torture and forced disappearance of many members.

In mid-1973, due to a series of arrests in their network, Hicaro's group was holding an assessment meeting in a rented apartment in Malabon, Rizal. They were tracked down by military intelligence and raided on October 24. Hicaro urged his comrade Alfredo Malicay to make a run for it together with the three women in their group. But in the end both of them chose to stay, fight and die for what they truly believed in. ■

MANUEL L. HIZON JR.



BORN

May 24, 1952 in Quezon City

DIED

June 17, 1976 in Nueva Ecija

PARENTS

Manuel Hizon Sr. and Yolanda Llanes

SPOUSE

Ella Valmonte

EDUCATION

Elementary: Lourdes School, Quezon City
Secondary: Lourdes School, Quezon City
College: Ateneo de Manila University,
Quezon City

He was the eldest son, who had all the advantages of a good education and a stable, loving family life. But Sonny Hizon gave up material comforts and, in the end, his life in order to serve the poor, the deprived and the oppressed.

It was his choice as a Christian, which he arrived at after much reflection and experience gained by actually living and working with the people he wanted to serve.

At the Ateneo de Manila University where he was studying economics, the journey began when he joined the Sodality Movement and the Student Catholic Action. This led to an interest in more secular issues, and he joined the Ateneo Political Society and became a representative to the Sanggunian ng mga Mag-aaral ng Ateneo. Here there were trips to urban poor areas, and the initial exposure to the face of poverty was a crucial one. Just as important, he was attending a class where the professor discussed liberation theology, which made sense of his new perceptions.

In 1969, Hizon became a member of Lakasdiwa, a Christian Democratic activist organization. Searching for more answers, the following year he joined another, more radical group, the Ligang Demokratikong Atenista. He embraced a simpler lifestyle; he started using Filipino instead of English.

All this led him to another organization, the Kilusang Kristiyanong Kabataang Pilipino (KKKP), which¹ interpreted and applied the ideas of liberation theology to the Philippine context. Hizon plunged into KKKP organizing, and in 1972 was elected to the national council and, later, became its general secretary. After graduating from college in 1972, he took a paying job but his heart was not in it. That was understandable, as political turmoil and demands for change, especially from the youth and students, were reaching a climax that the government would respond to by declaring martial law.

KKKP was banned. Hizon and many others went underground to recruit and organize. They wrote statements denouncing the regime, they spread the news and opinions that could not be published in the muzzled media. They staged lightning rallies. They tried to avoid military surveillance and arrest.

Sonny Hizon even found time to fall in love and get married, to a fellow activist.

In 1974, he left Manila in haste after a military raid in which his wife was arrested (she was released after six months). He became part of an armed guerrilla unit in Cagayan Valley, and later in Nueva Ecija. There he was killed, one early morning, in an encounter with government troops. ■

¹ See "Manuel "Sonny" Llanes Hizon, Jr. (1952-1974)" in *Living and Dying: In the Memory of Eleven Ateneo de Manila Martial Law activists*, by Cristina Jayme Montiel, Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2007, pp. 41-45. See also email communications from and among Matt Hizon, Marianne Hizon-Crisol, Cathy Abrazado and May Verzola-Rodriguez July 29, November 17, December 10, 2008 in Bantayog archives.

MANOLO J. HOLLERO SR.



BORN

July 17, 1950 in La Paz, Iloilo City

DIED

November 3, 1977 in Calinog, Iloilo

PARENTS

Carlos Hollero and Angeles Jubelag

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Nelly Angeles / 2

EDUCATION

Elementary: La Paz Elementary School,
Iloilo City
Secondary: Iloilo Provincial High School,
Iloilo City
College: Philippine School of Business
Administration, Manila

Born in Iloilo, where he studied until high school, Manolo Hollero was a college student in Manila during the First Quarter Storm. He was drawn into activism, joining demonstrations and rallies; once, his right hand was injured by an improvised explosive or “pillbox.”

In 1971, he dropped out of school (he was enrolled for a degree in commerce) and went home to Iloilo, where he spread the message of activism and teamed up with local youth leaders. When martial law was imposed, he continued his political activities. But in 1974, he was arrested, tortured and detained by the authorities in Camp Delgado. He was released after seven months. He then left the city to seek out the armed guerrillas in the hinterlands of central Panay.

Hollero was well regarded by the poor peasants in the communities of the organized people’s resistance. He was helpful and a good leader.

In November 1977, Hollero was killed in Calinog, Iloilo. According to a sketchy account by one of his comrades, he had been wounded in one leg in an encounter with government forces, and was unable to run away. Captured, he was tortured and then killed by troops belonging to a Constabulary Security Unit. Indeed, when his body was recovered and brought home to Jaro, Iloilo

City two days later, one could tell right away that his captors had brutally tortured him.

Hundreds came to his funeral although it was the height of martial rule. It was an eloquent tribute, and at the same time, a strong expression of anger and protest. ■

LAURENTE C. ILAGAN



BORN

September 16, 1946 in Manila

DIED

November 15, 2001 in Davao City

PARENTS

Honorio M. Ilagan and Pompeia Calanog

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Luzviminda C. Ilagan / 4

EDUCATION

Elementary: Teodoro Palma Gil Elementary School, Davao City
Secondary: Davao City High School
College: Ateneo de Davao College
Ateneo Law School, Davao City

Though the country was under martial law, the future seemed bright for Laurente Ilagan, a young corporate lawyer in Davao City. He was law school valedictorian and he had good social and political connections.

But was that kind of lawyering what justice was about? What should justice be?

These were the questions that bothered him after he began taking up the cases of peasants, workers and indigenous peoples who were fighting against exploitation and landgrabbing. He had been assigned by the local chapter of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines to head its legal aid committee.

Then the Marcos regime's repression intensified, and Larry Ilagan was approached by "so-called rebels" to defend them. "I had to understand the reasons why they turned rebels," he said. "...Given the facts and figures, I asked myself: Is the government against the people? Is [it] being used by the ruling elite to perpetuate their economic base? That was my turning point."¹

Having fully grasped that his task as a "relevant lawyer" was to serve the ends of justice, in the following years Ilagan committed himself to the antidictatorship struggle. The people's resistance was particularly strong in Mindanao,² to which he contributed his organizing skills and personal charisma as a leader.

His hands were full, serving as legal counsel to human-rights groups and forming alliances with other antidictatorship organizations and personages, particularly in the years following the assassination of former Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. Dabawenyos would proudly claim that their open protest movement could rival the mass actions escalating in Metro Manila.³ As chair of the broad multisectoral Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Mindanao, Ilagan's influence extended beyond Davao City.

Ilagan and his fellow lawyers Antonio Arellano and Marcos Risonar were arrested without warrants in May 1985, flown to Manila and detained for the next ten months in Bicutan Rehabilitation Center. Before the Supreme Court, they contested the violation of their right not to be arrested without a judicially determined order. But ironically, the highest court of the land affirmed the validity of the regime's action in what is known, even today, as the "Ilagan Doctrine."⁴ The three were the first political detainees released when President Corazon Aquino came into power in 1986.

After Edsa, Larry Ilagan was among those who were offered high government positions. But he turned them all down, preferring to continue his lawyering for the poor and the marginalized.

Larry Ilagan died in 2001, not long after being diagnosed with cancer. ■

1 "There's nothing in between," interview with Carolyn Arguillas, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, May 10, 1997, p. 5.

2 Gus Miclat, "Martial law: Rage, disquiet in Mindanao," *Philippine Daily Inquirer Interactive*, Feb. 19, 2000.

3 Interview with Silvestre Bello III by Bantayog Research and Documentation, July 26, 2012, Makati City.

4 *A Radical's Nut* <http://arnoldpadilla.wordpress.com/2010/03/11/ilagan-doctrine-a-background-note/>

INOCENCIO T. IPONG



BORN

December 28, 1945 in Makilala, North Cotabato

DIED

November 21, 1983 in Mindanao

PARENTS

Ricardo Ipong and Amadora Tocmo

SPOUSES / CHILD

Angelina Bisuña / 1

EDUCATION

Elementary: Saguing Elementary School,
Makilala, North Cotabato
Secondary: Notre Dame Diocesan Seminary,
Nuling, Cotabato
College: Regional Major Seminary,
Davao City
San Carlos University, Cebu City

Compassion for the poor, especially the lowly farmers of the Visayas and Mindanao, led Inocencio Ipong (popularly known as Boy Ipong) to a life of activism.

It was while finishing his philosophy studies in Cebu City that Ipong found another way, other than the priesthood for which he had been preparing, to fulfil his desire to serve the poor. He became a member of Khi Rho, attracted by the youth organization's advocacy for the peasants. He joined their trips to Carcar, Cebu where Khi Rho members interacted with the rural community.

Eventually, Ipong joined the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF)¹ which was then expanding and setting up chapters in the Visayas and Mindanao including his hometown of Makilala, North Cotabato. His father, at the time the incumbent mayor of Makilala, once witnessed Boy speaking at a gathering of local farmers; a mixture of pride and apprehension for his son's safety filled the older man.

When martial law was declared, however, Ipong and other organizers broke away from the FFF after the leadership decided to collaborate with the Marcos dictatorship. He found his way to the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines (RMP), founded in 1969 by the Association of Women Religious Superiors in the Philippines. In the

Philippines, inspired by Vatican II's message of social justice and its call to serve the poor, deprived and oppressed, countless Catholics courageously stood up against the dictatorial regime and defended the people's rights.

Ipong worked with the nuns of RMP and helped them shape their vision of a "free, just, peaceful and egalitarian society." He travelled with them all over the country, organizing the peasants and indigenous communities. "Know your rights!" he would often say, believing that the people's awareness of their rights as human beings would empower them against the dictatorship. He did inspire many of them to commit themselves, like himself, to the service of the people.

In 1982, Ipong was abducted, tortured and detained in Davao City. The military authorities denied that he was in their custody; luckily, he happened to be looking out of a window in his cell at the Metrodiscom headquarters just when his own father was passing by and Boy was able to call out to him. Released soon after, he resumed his work with the RMP sisters.

The following year, however, Ipong died when the passenger boat he was riding capsized at sea during a storm. He was among a group of 12 human-rights workers, religious and lay, who were travelling to Cebu aboard the mv Cassandra to attend

a seminar-meeting. Survivors of the tragedy recounted how members of the group, disregarding the danger to themselves, helped save the other passengers. ■

¹ The Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) was established in 1953 to popularize the social teachings of the Catholic church with regard to the peasantry, rural development and land reform.

ROMULO A. JALLORES

BORN

November 8, 1948 in Ocampo, Camarines Sur

DIED

December 30, 1971 in Naga City

PARENTS

Edilberto Jallores and Marcela Acetre

EDUCATION

Elementary: Moriones Elementary School,
Ocampo, Camarines Sur
Secondary: Sta. Clara Academy, Tigaon,
Camarines Sur

There is a photograph taken during the “Battle of Mendiola”¹ on January 30, 1970, showing a truck full of young people, ramming the gates of Malacañang Palace. They were symbolically storming the seat of power, in a show of new-found confidence and strength by the country’s youth restlessly seeking change.

Romulo Jallores’ picture atop that truck, wearing a beret just like Ernesto “Che” Guevara, the legendary revolutionary of Latin America, made him famous after that. Activists called him Che. Like the picture itself, splashed across the pages of a national magazine, Jallores became a symbol of the emerging struggle for national emancipation.

He had been born poor, one of six children that their mother raised by herself. Jallores loved to read (like his mother May Silay) and discuss all sorts of topics with his friends. As a child he enjoyed playing war games with the others, always taking the side of the weaker opponent, she said. After second-year high school, however, he dropped out and set off for Manila to work for a living.

He supported himself by doing garage work, construction work, machine shop work. Towards the end of the 1960s, rising student and youth activism drew him in and provided answers to his questions. He began

attending teach-ins and demonstrations, joining marches and other protest actions.

Shortly after the Battle of Mendiola, with his brother Benjiehe returned to his native Bicol region to organize among the landless peasants and the workers in the fields of abaca. To the activists still in Manila, the Jallores brothers became a symbol of a higher form of struggle in the countryside, one that demanded utmost dedication and sacrifice. Romulo Jallores became famous as “Tangkad,” reputed to be among the top guerrilla leaders there along with his brother.

In 1971, government troops surrounded a house in Naga City where Jallores had been meeting with some comrades. He refused to surrender, and went down in the exchange of fire, in which a constabulary lieutenant also died. News of his death electrified the surging protest movement in Manila, providing a glimpse of the risks and glories of the path that Tangkad had taken.

When martial law was declared by President Marcos the following year, many among “the best and the brightest” of that generation were inspired to follow Romulo Jallores in going to the grassroots and working among the people to bring about radical change, no matter what the cost.² ■

¹ Named after the street near Malacañang Palace. It was the day when students demonstrators stormed the palace and riot police fought against them.

² On July 5, 1972, Benjie Jallores was killed in a raid by constabulary troops in a remote area of Ocampo, Camarines Sur. See Ricardo Lee, “Ang Mahabang Maikling Buhay ni Kumander Tangkad,” *Asia-Philippines Leader*, Pebrero 18, 1972, pp. 34-36.

ALFREDO V. JASUL



BORN

May 23, 1952 in Lucban, Quezon

DIED

January 13, 1973 in Tayabas, Quezon

PARENTS

Gabriel Jasul Sr. and Sofia Villaflor

EDUCATION

Elementary: Lucban Elementary School,
Lucban
Secondary: Lucban Academy, Lucban
College: Far Eastern University, Manila

The town of Lucban, Quezon, where Alfredo Jasul was born, is nestled in the foothills of the Sierra Madre mountain range which runs from northern Luzon all the way south to the Bicol peninsula. With its lush forests and abundant resources, the Sierra Madre has a special place in Philippine history and culture. In its bosom it has nurtured indigenous communities, armed guerrillas and small farming families alike.

Members of Jasul's family had, time and again, risked their lives fighting for justice and freedom, to the extent of taking "to the hills" during critical periods of the nation's history. Thus when Alfredo and his younger brother Ramon chose to go underground when martial law was declared, they could count on the support and understanding of a large network.

Alfredo Jasul had become a member of the Kabataang Makabayan in 1970, while studying political science at the Far Eastern University. In line with the call to the youth to go to the countryside and learn from the people, he dropped out of school and proceeded to Central Luzon. In Tarlac province he lived among the tenant farmers and helped them organize to reduce land rent and the onerous burden of usury.

Then he returned to Lucban, where he applied the lessons learned earlier. Here, though, he discovered that the farmers had

already organized themselves in mutual-aid groups called turnuhan, where each member was helped by the others in planting and harvesting. Alfredo saw that these groups could also benefit from discussing their problems collectively and finding common solutions. This caused the military to monitor his activities, and to tag the groups as rebel sympathizers. Thus, Jasul and the farmer leaders were forced to go underground when martial law was declared in 1972.

Shortly after that, Jasul's group was pinned down while they were meeting inside a farmhouse in Tayabas, Quezon. No one survived the attack by the Philippine Constabulary. Among those killed was the student activist Eugene Grey, who is also honored at the Bantayog Wall of Remembrance.

The Jasul family suffered another casualty four years after the death of Alfredo, with the unexplained disappearance of his younger brother Ramon in 1977. He was in a group of ten other activists, students from the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, who were arrested and who have not been heard from nor accounted for since then. ■

EDWIN C. LAGUERDER



BORN

April 7, 1961 in Surallah, South Cotabato

DIED

November 26, 1987 in Davao City

PARENTS

Jesus Laguerder and Lilia dela Cruz

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Crestita B. Guadez / 3

EDUCATION

Elementary: Libertad Central Elementary School, Surallah
Secondary: Notre Dame of Marbel College, Koronadal, South Cotabato
College: University of the Philippines Diliman
Notre Dame of Marbel College, Koronadal

Resistance to the dictatorship for Edwin Laguerder meant essentially organizing people, especially at the grassroots, to be aware of their rights against the abusive regime and to find ways of promoting their welfare under the noses of the martial-law authorities.

A bright student from Mindanao, he had won a prestigious government scholarship to study engineering at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. Some years after the lull that had marked the beginning of martial law, antidictatorship activities were once more becoming bold and assertive, and Laguerder was soon active in the protest movement. Neglecting his studies for what he considered to be a more important objective, he lost his scholarship and returned to his hometown to continue his schooling.

But even there, political organizers were finding plenty of reasons to promote the resistance, especially with widespread abuses by the Marcos military and the rampant land-grabbing and labor exploitation by corporations linked to the regime.

Again Laguerder dropped out of college to do fulltime work. He was coordinator of the Integrated Youth Development Program for Mindanao covering the areas of Davao and Cagayan de Oro cities, as well as rural

youth in South Cotabato, Agusan and Iligan. In 1985 he started work as Mindanao coordinator of the People's Ecumenical Action for Community Enlightenment (PEACE) Foundation, while also serving at the Consortium for Rural Services and Programs of Mindanao, which handled issues affecting small farmers. These organizations were independent, cause-oriented entities that operated in the open; but they also provided opportunities for establishing clandestine networks of the people's resistance to dictatorship.

Laguerder survived the difficult years of the dictatorship. But when it fell in 1986, with people power forcing the Marcos family to flee from Malacañang, the militarization that the regime had institutionalized remained intact especially in Mindanao. Like many other activists, Laguerder believed that there was no reason not to continue the same work that he had been doing with and for the local communities.

One day, returning to Davao City from a speaking engagement in Butuan City, Laguerder was picked up by the police at a checkpoint. Witnesses saw him being taken away in a military vehicle. After days of searching, his body was found floating in the sea near the city's waterfront. He was 26 years old, a loving son, husband and father. ■

VERGEL E. LANDRITO



BORN

July 27, 1950 in Quezon City

DIED

April 25, 1972 in Botolan, Zambales

PARENTS

Maximo Landrito and Paz Edquilane

EDUCATION

Elementary: Pasig Catholic College, Rizal
Secondary: Pasig Catholic College, Rizal
College: Ateneo de Manila University

Butch Landrito was a Diliman kid. His mother worked in the administration office of the University of the Philippines (his father had a dental practice), and the family lived on campus. From grade one to third year in civil engineering, he studied in no other school.

When Landrito was growing up, Diliman was still partly wilderness. There were few buildings, mostly left-over structures from when the area was still being used as a temporary American military facility. In Area 2, where his family lived, the young people were a close-knit community whose parents were faculty or employees of the university. Teenage Butch had a neighbourhood *barkada*; they called themselves the Black Cats.

But the times, they were a-changin', as a popular song of the period proclaimed. UP Diliman's quiet "groves of academe" were being transformed into a restive campus where the students – like in many countries during the late 1960s – had grown impatient and even furious. They wanted sweeping change in "the system," and they were ready to make it happen. Landrito, a boy with a soft spot in his heart for the poor and oppressed, joined the Samahang Demokratiko ng mga Kabataan; soon the Black Cats had become the SDK core in Area 2.

The campus was also then being racked by frequent brawls among the student fraternities. Landrito was an active member of Beta Sigma. After one incident where someone from the rival fraternity was killed, he was implicated and suspended from the university. Maintaining his innocence but facing charges in court, he worried about the extra financial burden that his family had to shoulder because of the case.

He then started frequenting the communities on the fringes of the Diliman campus and organizing SDK chapters among the young workers and out-of-school youth. From there, he took the big step of moving to a rural area in Central Luzon, living and working with the Aeta people in the hills of Zambales and Tarlac.

In April 1972, while tumult and social awareness were rocking the UP Diliman campus as never before, Butch Landrito was killed somewhere in Botolan, Zambales. An armed encounter with government troops resulted in the deaths of his entire group, including a pregnant woman who may have been his wife. He was 22.

On his gravestone is written: "To die for the people is to live for the people." ■

EDUARDO E. LANZONA



BORN

August 22, 1946 in Davao City

DIED

January 17, 1975 in Nabunturan, Davao

PARENTS

Miguel Lanzona and Iluminada Estrella

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Imelda R. Banaag / 2

EDUCATION

Elementary: Ateneo de Davao, Davao City
Secondary: Ateneo de Davao, Davao City
College: Ateneo de Davao, Davao City
Postgraduate: Ateneo de Manila University,
Quezon City

Common folk were the ones who suffered the most from human rights violations under the Marcos dictatorship. They were ordinary working people, sunburned and often shoeless, courageously fighting for the right to live and work decently. But the military and police personnel behaved as if they were less than human, as if they had no rights at all. There are many reports of sadistic officers who delighted in inflicting pain on their victims.

Maybe Eduardo Lanzona did not reveal who he was when he was arrested, with four companions in Davao City in 1975. They were tortured and killed. His dead body bore the marks of abuse. If he had told the military that he was a college professor, that his parents were prominent residents of the city, would they have spared him?

Lanzona, known to many as Taking, used to drive an expensive sportscar, a red Jaguar, around the city. His family owned much real estate, and even an entire subdivision. He attended Ateneo de Davao from grade one to college. After finishing his master's degree in economics at the Ateneo de Manila, he returned to Davao to teach.

It was while taking postgraduate studies in Manila that new, liberal ideas took hold in his mind. Influenced by Ateneo personalities such as Raul Manglapus and Fr. Francisco Araneta, he became passionate about land

reform. He supported the “land to the tiller” program espoused by the Federation of Free Farmers, and joined thousands of farmers in a march-demonstration by the FFF. At the same time he also became a member of the Samahang Demokratikong Kabataan. He read voraciously and engaged in political discussions with his friends.

Upon returning to Davao, Lanzona plunged into activism. Ateneo became the hub of the student protest movement in southern Mindanao. He helped organize his fellow professors into a union, as well as the employees of the Davao branch of the Bank of the Philippine Islands.

When martial law was declared, Lanzona went underground to help expand and strengthen the resistance to dictatorship. By then he had married and started a family with his college sweetheart. Whenever he could, he met with his old friends. He expressed no regrets about leaving his family and career in order to pursue his “consuming conviction,” said a friend, that “it was the only right thing to do...nothing else mattered.”¹ Another friend asked Lanzona, “Do you think you will see the fruits of what you’re doing?” He replied, “I have no illusions that I will live to see the results of what I’m fighting for. But we have to start somewhere.”² ■

¹ Communication from Rudy Buhay Rodil dated Sept. 11, 2010 and forwarded by Luzviminda Santos to Cathy Abrazado, Bantayog Research and Documentation.

² As told to Macario Tiu, narrated in a communication dated Sept. 23, 2010 and forwarded by Juan Perez III to Bantayog Research and Documentation.

SALVADOR F. LEAÑO



BORN

December 4, 1921 in San Andres, Romblon

DIED

February 7, 1986 in San Andres, Romblon

PARENTS

Castor Leaño and Macaria Fabella

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Liwana Gadon / 9

EDUCATION

Elementary: Despujols(San Andres)
Elementary School, Romblon
Secondary: Romblon High School
College: Romblon College

San Andres (formerly Despujols) is a municipality on the island of Tablas, one of the three main islands comprising the province of Romblon in central Philippines.

It is a small place, and everyone in the community knew Salvador F. Leaño. He had been a town policeman for a long time, and eventually head of the local police force in the 1960s. He was a devoted family man and a respected lay pastor of the church.

Thus, Leaño's murder at the hands of Marcos supporters during the 1986 "snap" presidential election was particularly shocking. He was abducted in front of many people who knew him, and killed a short distance away. Six days later, his body was found in a shallow grave on the property of a prominent resident some 50 kilometers away.

He was still a young man when he joined the guerrilla resistance to the Japanese occupation during World War II under Col. Agustin Marking. After the war, he taught in elementary schools in different towns of Tablas, got married and raised a family. His children remember him as firm but soft-spoken and loving father. Once he caught his two young girls taking peanuts from an aunt's garden; he took them to the local jail himself and locked them up overnight, even as he himself stood guard outside their cell.

In the 1970s, he became active in the Foursquare Church in Romblon, where he served as a lay pastor.

Being a man with strong moral principles, Leaño became an outspoken critic of the Marcos martial-law dictatorship. He admired opposition leader Benigno Aquino Jr. and joined the UNIDO party that had been organized to challenge the dictator in the 1986 election. He gave invocations at campaign rallies, boldly urging the people to demand change: "*Panahon na ng pagbabago, tapusin na ang diktadura!*"

Leaño was appointed a watcher for UNIDO during the February 7 election (in which Corazon Aquino was running against Marcos). As he was standing outside his assigned precinct in a mountainous barangay of San Andres, he was accosted by Marcos loyalist Nemesio Ganan, Jr. who had arrived with two bodyguards. Ganan was provincial assemblyman and head of the Marcos party, KBL, in Romblon. When Leaño refused the invitation of Ganan, he was taken away at gunpoint.

As he was being dragged into Ganan's waiting vehicle, Leaño called out to his fellow watcher: "*Jun, maski ano man ang mangyari sa akon, ayaw guid pagbaya-e angurna, dal-a guid sa munisipyo!*"

(Whatever happens to me, Jun, don't let go of the ballot box, bring it to the municipal hall!)

The sacrifice of this decent man was part of the price paid by the Filipino people in ousting the abusive and repressive Marcos dictatorship. ■

TERESITA E. LLORENTE



BORN

February 8, 1962 in Meycauayan, Bulacan

DIED

June 21, 1982 in San Rafael, Bulacan

PARENTS

Zacarias Llorente and Dionisia Evangelista

EDUCATION

Elementary: Libtong Elementary School,
Meycauayan, Bulacan
Secondary: Meycauayan Institute, Bulacan

“Mababait sila. Ang nasa puso nila ay makatulong sa bayan. Maihahambing ko talaga sa mga anghel na walang hangarin kungdi tumulong.”¹ (They were good and kind people, what they wanted in their hearts was to help the country. Like angels, who had no other desire but to help). These were the words of Maria Victoria Llorente about Teresita and her group.

Martial law explained why so many young Filipinos like Llorente, who sang with her sisters in the church choir, ended up some years later in a shallow grave.

The girls’ parents engaged in small businesses, and the 10 children were business-minded and industrious too. Teresita and her sister were part of a group of young people who were active in church, singing in the choir and teaching catechism. They had a feeding program for the children. They collected and distributed relief goods to flood victims.

Teresita joined in when a support group was formed to help the families of striking workers at a big textile factory in town. The experience radicalized her, according to her sister, and soon she was a full-time organizer. The family willingly extended assistance to her and her comrades:

“matapang talaga, may prinsipyo talaga.”
They admired her courage and principled decision. Although she did not come

home very often, they knew that she had something to do with the strikes and protest rallies that were taking place in the province. They also knew that she was involved in peasant organizing.

That dedication to serving those who need help ideally should merit recognition and encouragement. But it was martial law, and people like Teresita Llorente were considered subversives and were arrested, jailed or killed by the Marcos regime's military apparatus.

One day in June 1982, her family read in the newspaper that her dead body had been found, displayed by the military in a corner of the municipal hall in the town of San Rafael. There were four others – Danilo Aguirre, Edwin Borlongan, Renato Manimbo and Constantino Medina – who were killed in an alleged encounter. In her sorrow, Teresita's mother fell ill and died.

Although the 175th Philippine Constabulary company had been identified as the unit that captured the group while they were meeting in the town of Pulilan, the perpetrators are not known to have been investigated or punished. ■

¹ Interview with Maria Victoria Llorente, July 6, 2012, Marilao, Bulacan.

BAYANI LONTOK



BORN

July 23, 1950 in Quezon City

DIED

November 1972 in Mauban, Quezon

PARENTS

Pedro Lontok and Purita Pulido

EDUCATION

Elementary:	St. Mary's College, Quezon City
Secondary:	University of the Philippines Preparatory School, Manila
College:	University of the Philippines Los Baños, Laguna

The minds of other teenagers were filled with carefree thoughts, if not dreams of getting rich and enjoying a successful career. It was not surprising. Bayani Lontok, however, was bothered by the widespread existence of poverty in the Philippines. He wanted to do something about it.

Transferring from the University of the Philippines in Diliman to the campus in Los Baños, he chose agricultural engineering as his field of study. It was a matter of finding the appropriate technological solutions, he believed, that would help Filipino farmers achieve higher incomes. He took up courses in soils analysis, the study of hybrid varieties, intercropping, irrigation. He learned about tractors, threshing machines, the hand tractors that were then just being introduced.

But spending two successive summers among the farmers of Infanta (Quezon) and Bae (Laguna) led him to realize that the actual situation was quite different from what he had imagined in the classroom. (Besides, he had spent most of his life in the city.) Even though the farmers he now met shared his vision for change, still he needed to learn their ways of speaking and doing. And, he observed, bigger harvests did not necessarily mean a better share for the farmer.

And what about the role of government? It should be spending more for services and infrastructure, he argued, instead of imposing measures that only burdened the peasants or workers at the bottom of society. The problem is that foreign interests are responsible for the system being what it is.¹ Some of these ideas developed in his conversations with old farmers in the area who had once fought as guerrillas in the resistance movement against the Japanese occupation during World War II.

Bani Lontok joined the Samahan ng Demokratikong Kabataan and the UP College of Agriculture Cultural Society. Determined as he was to help solve the complex problems of Philippine society, he never let go of his music. He and his four siblings were close, and fond of making music together: playing the guitar and the cello, singing.

But martial law intervened, schools were closed, and many young people had to go into hiding. Lontok initially sought refuge among the peasants of Mount Banahaw, the mystical mountain of the southern Tagalog region. One cold and wet morning in November 1972, his group was surrounded by a unit of the 46th Infantry Battalion based in Camp Vicente Lim, Laguna. All of them were killed. Denied permission to retrieve

his body from the military, Lontok's family have not been able to reinter him themselves. ■

¹ He wrote an article on this topic, "Austerity: *isang 'maginhawang' lunas*," in *Aggie Green and Gold*, in 1970, according to his sister Leny Lontok Quirit, in an interview with Bantayog researchers in 2008.

AL-RASHID LUCMAN



BORN

June 23, 1924 in Bayang, Lanaodel Sur

DIED

July 21, 1984 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

FATHER

Sharif Makaalang

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Tarhata Alonto / 7

Rashid Lucman – also known by his traditional title Sultan Haroun Al-Rashid Lucman – died in exile in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1984. He had left the Philippines voluntarily in 1976, never to return.

A good friend of Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. who was then also living in exile in America, Lucman did what he could to help the opposition in the Philippines. At one time, he obtained an audience with King Khalid bin Abdulaziz, at which Aquino briefed the latter about the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship.

Insisting on his right to come home to the Philippines, Aquino was assassinated at the Manila international airport where he had arrived on August 21, 1983. The brazen murder proved to be the spark that ignited the fires of open resistance to the Marcos regime. For more than two years, the people's movement grew stronger until, finally, Marcos and his family were forced to leave for exile themselves.

Little known is Lucman's crucial role in Aquino's plan to return and confront Marcos right here in the country. It was he who obtained a passport for his friend to travel as "Marcial Bonifacio."¹ This was the name that appeared on the passenger manifest of the flight that Aquino took from Taipei on that day.

In February 1984, leaders of exiled Filipinos held a meeting in the US city of San Francisco and elected Lucman to the position of vice president of the Ninoy Aquino Movement (NAM). But the latter would pass away only months later, at age 60, without fulfilling his wish to return.

Rashid Lucman belonged to an aristocratic family of Muslim Mindanao, and was recognized as a leader of the people asserting their right to self-rule against an oppressive Philippine government.

As a young man, he had been a guerrilla leader in Lanao during the anti-Japanese resistance in World War II. In 1961-1966, he served as congressman of the lone district of Lanao del Sur. From 1976 to 1984, while in exile, he was chairman of the Bangsa Moro Liberation Organization (BMLO).

In 1968, reports of the alleged Jabidah Massacre marked a change in Lucman's attitude toward the government in Manila. According to the media, complaints by a group of Tausug young men being trained for a secret invasion of Sabah (then part of Malaysia) reportedly resulted in their being wiped out by Marcos military officers. Not long after, that Lucman organized and financed a secret mission abroad to train 90 more youths from Lanao, Cotabato, Sulu, Basilan and Zamboanga. They

received instruction in guerrilla warfare from the Malaysian army, and later became the leaders of the Bangsamoro struggle up to this day. ■

¹ As mentioned in a communication to Quintin Doromal from Robert Anthony Ramos of the Liberal Party, dated June 21, 2004: "Rashid Lucman is also known for procuring for Sen. Ninoy Aquino his 'Marcial Bonifacio' passport.... We currently have no data on how this was done."

RUBEN LUNAS



BORN

November 3, 1950 in Daraga, Albay

DIED

June 12, 1975 in Oas, Albay

PARENTS

Antero Lunas and Eleuteria Marinda

EDUCATION

Elementary: Daraga Elementary School,
Albay
Secondary: Liceo de Albay, Legazpi, Albay
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

“Serve the people!” This was one slogan that youth activists took to heart when martial law was declared by President Marcos in 1972. Many were left on their own when their leaders suddenly went into hiding to avoid arrest. There were “*tibak*” who found themselves stranded at home or on the campus. Classes were suspended, and no one knew when they would resume. No open protests could be held.

But, the activists told each other, it was still possible to serve the people in whatever way they could find. The point was to commit themselves to be on the side of the people against martial law, to do it in an organized way, and to be creative in doing so.

On the Diliman campus of the University of the Philippines, Ruben Lunas (or Mito as his family called him) was part of a group that fanned out to the neighboring communities of Old Balara and Krus na Ligas. There they started a nursery school for the kids, some of them children of people working in the university. They even had a proper syllabus. Lunas would sing and play on his guitar, changing some words in the simple songs to convey a hidden message. Then a second nursery was started in another community. The group even went to La Mesa Dam to gather bamboo and grass to build a hut, and when the hut burned down they constructed another one.

“Why did we go into that? Because we wanted to do something. We believed that we should ‘serve the people.’ Anyway there was not much to do, and we wanted to be of service to the community,” explained a friend of Lunas.¹

Not long after, some members of the group were arrested and detained by the martial law authorities. After Lunas left to join the guerrilla resistance in his home province in the Bicol region, his younger brother Ramon was tortured and detained in Camp Crame for one month even though he was not politically active and knew nothing about Ruben’s whereabouts.

In Albay, however, Ruben Lunas “was able to get the whole support of all his relatives in the [family] compound and the surrounding houses into something like a ‘liberated area’ that was just a kilometer away from the provincial military camp,” according to another friend.² “His family was very proud of him and his involvement” in the antidictatorship struggle.

In 1975, Lunas was killed by constabulary troopers in Albay. He would have escaped with his life if he had not rushed back to retrieve his acupuncture kit, which he had been using to treat the ailments of local residents. The little thin needles were important for him in serving the people. ■

1 Interview with Ellis dela Cruz, August 18, 2011 in Quezon City, Bantayog Research and Documentation.

2 Testimony of Roberto M. Ador, “Ruben Lunas: True Martyr and Hero,” undated.

JULIETO N. MAHINAY

BORN

February 9, 1935 in San Francisco, Surigao del Norte

DISAPPEARED

March 16, 1984 in Bacuag, Surigao del Norte

PARENTS

Faustino Mahinay and Ana Navarette

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Assista Amparado / 4

EDUCATION

Elementary: Anao-aon Elementary School,
Surigao del Norte
Secondary: Northeastern Mindanao Colleges,
Surigao City

Mountainous and undeveloped though rich in natural resources, the northeastern area of Mindanao – Surigao and Agusan – was highly militarized during the Marcos dictatorship. Big corporations interested in exploiting the mineral and forest resources there were aided by the regime in driving away the original inhabitants of the land (*lumad*), as well as the small farmer-settlers who had come from other regions to make a better life for themselves and their families.

Julieto Mahinay was born in a small village near Surigao City, when much of the place was still wilderness. Members of his family were active in the church, and they were much respected for this and for their kindness to neighbors. Even as a young man, Mahinay was already serving as a catechist of the Surigao diocese.

In 1977, the Catholic church started a program called the Episcopal Commission on Tribal Filipinos (ECTF), under the auspices of the Justice and Peace desk of the National Secretariat for Social Action. Mahinay was assigned to join the staff of the program in Surigao; the tasks involved documenting the social issues faced by the indigenous communities, and organizing campaigns in their behalf. He worked with an interfaith group, Silingang Dapit sa Mindanao, that was then just starting out in Surigao.

Working with the Mamanwas, a semi-nomadic community in the region, Mahinay held literacy classes and taught them better ways of planting and caring for their plants. He talked to them about human dignity and their rights as human beings. They appreciated his empathy and gentle demeanor.

But because their life as a community was increasingly threatened, the soft-spoken Mahinay soon became more vocal in denouncing the extrajudicial killings, the illegal logging activities, and landgrabbing attempts by powerful interests.

The day he disappeared in March 1984, Mahinay was expected to arrive at the Claver National High School, where he and a co-worker were supposed to conduct a spiritual retreat for graduating seniors. On the way there, the passenger jeepney he was riding was stopped at a checkpoint of the Philippine Army's 36th Infantry Battalion. A Bible and a map showing the location of tribal communities in Mindanao were found in Mahinay's belongings; the soldiers took him and sent the jeepney on its way.

His family and colleagues searched for him. Groups of Mamanwas came down from the hills to attend the hearing of a petition for habeas corpus that was filed in court. Five thousand marched in the streets of Surigao City, protesting the disappearance of a

humble church worker. Julieta Mahinay was never seen again. ■

ARMANDO J. MALAY



BORN

March 31, 1914 in Tondo, Manila

DIED

May 15, 2003 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Gonzalo C. Malay and Carmen de Jesus

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Paula Carolina Santos / 3

EDUCATION

Elementary: Gagalangin Elementary School,
Manila
Secondary: Torres High School, Manila
College: University of the Philippines

It was not easy for Armando J. Malay to openly take the side of the resistance to martial law. In April 1970 he had agreed to be dean of students at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, at a time when it had already become a hotbed of open defiance against the authorities.

The Diliman Commune some months later, when students took over the campus for more than a week, tested the limits of his ability to balance between his innate sympathy for the activist youth and the expectation that he would enforce rules and regulations in a very unruly situation.

After all, Malay used to be an impulsive young man who once resigned from a prestigious, well-paying job at one of the country's leading newspapers because he felt that staying on would compromise his integrity as a journalist. Besides, he and other top UP officials, as well as President Marcos himself, were loyal members of a college fraternity that fostered close personal ties.

In 1978 Malay chose to retire from UP because he was "tired of being caught in the middle between students who accused him of acting as a censor when he considered himself very lenient, and the military, who thought he was a radical because he allowed anti-government leaflets to proliferate in UP."¹

Freed from the obligations of being a UP official, Dean Malay happily returned to being a fighting journalist. The alternative press -- so-called because it published news and opinions that were suppressed by the pro-dictatorship media -- had gained its footing. Malay began writing for *Who*, Jose Burgos Jr.'s pioneer independent political magazine under martial law. In 1981 he joined Burgos in *We Forum*, and enjoyed a wide readership for the critical columns he wrote three times a week. In 1982 he was among the writers and staff who were arrested and detained by the military for alleged subversion.

Particularly after the assassination of Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. (another fraternity brother), Malay had also stepped up to the frontlines of the human-rights movement. He was founding chair of Kapatid, a support and advocacy group in behalf of political detainees all over the country. He and his wife Paula were among the many oppositionists and cause-oriented leaders, indefatigably marching in rallies and demonstrations.

Having seen the downfall of the dictatorship and its aftermath, Dean Malay died at the age of 89 after a long and eventful life. ■

¹ Marites N. Sison and Yvonne T. Chua, *Armando J. Malay: A Guardian of Memory. The Life and Times of a Filipino Journalist and Activist*. Pasig City, Anvil Publishing, Inc., 2002, p. 195.

PAULA CAROLINA S. MALAY



BORN

April 4, 1916 in Obando, Bulacan

DIED

December 24, 1993 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Ricardo C. Santos and Paula Guevara

EDUCATION

Elementary: Obando Elementary School,
Bulacan
Secondary: Torres High School, Manila
College: Philippine Normal School
University of the Philippines
Diliman

Affectionately known as “Ayi” to a generation of antidictatorship fighters old and young, Paula Carolina S. Malay found the full expression of her life in the struggle to defend and promote human rights in the Philippines.

She was already in her 50s when she threw herself into the rushing stream of activities that propelled the people’s movement forward during the turbulent period of martial law. Before it became easier to express open resistance through the “parliament of the streets” (especially after the assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. in 1983), she dared to work even clandestinely because there was no other way in the earlier years.

She visited jails, raised funds, and distributed news bulletins from the underground and alternative press. She marched in the streets, waved placards and signed petitions. She wrote letters of appeal to friends abroad, prompting them to pressure their own governments to oppose Marcos’ repressive rule.

Hosting innumerable meetings, Ayi participated in the forging of democratic consensus, and helped strengthen – through simple acts of friendship and compassion – the then-emerging community of human-rights activists.

Indeed, Ayi played an important role in encouraging the latter, most of them young enough to be her children, in their commitment to country and people under conditions of great personal risk. Likewise, she tried to do what she could for the families of imprisoned peasants and workers. All of them could come any time and unburden themselves for a while – and Ayi would cry along with them, sharing her own worries and problems.

The Quezon City home of the Malays (he was dean of student affairs at the University of the Philippines during martial law) served as a haven for friends from all walks of life who found themselves united by the need to resist the repressive Marcos regime. When political prisoners were freed in 1986 after the dictatorship was toppled, it was in the Malay residence that a joyful reunion was held where hundreds came to celebrate.

Ayi's involvement was rooted in her own strong political economic and social advocacy, mainly acquired through self-study. But it was also very personal, as the entire family participated in the resistance movement as well.

Even after the fall of the dictatorship, Ayi continued to be active in the human-rights movement, especially in behalf of political detainees and children.

She died in 1993 at the age of 77. ■

ALFREDO L. MALICAY



BORN

July 4, 1946 in Tagum, Davao del Norte

DIED

October 24, 1973 in Malabon, Rizal (Metro Manila)

PARENTS

Benito Malicay and Lucena Lumangtad

EDUCATION

Elementary: Magugpo Elementary School,
Tagum, Davao del Norte
Secondary: Central UM Tagum High School,
Davao del Norte
College: University of the Philippines
Los Baños

Alfredo Malicay was one of two young men who died in a raid conducted by government troops on an apartment in urban Malabon -- just one jeepney ride away from the center of Manila -- barely more than one year after the declaration of martial law.

A *paltik* (homemade pistol) was all he had to defend himself and his comrades -- they were meeting to map out immediate plans for consolidating the antidictatorship resistance after a series of arrests in the Southern Tagalog areas -- and the gun jammed.

Malicay and Cesar Hicaro¹ (were killed, and three women were arrested, in front of a crowd that dared not show its sympathy for the victims.

In a way, his death was a heroic affirmation of the 4-H Club's principles. In the 1960s, in his hometown of Tagum, Davao del Norte, Malicay had been an outstanding 4-H Club leader. Founded in America in the early 1900s, it aimed to foster the all-around development -- through the "head, heart, hands, health" -- of young people in the rural areas.

The son of a farmer and the second child among 14 brothers and sisters, Malicay had the potential to indeed be an agent of social change in the countryside. Aside from being active in the Boy Scouts, he also took the

lead as a PMT cadet officer in high school. He topped the Mindanao-wide competition for a 4-H Club scholarship to college, which enabled him to enter the UP College of Agriculture in 1963.

It was while studying for a degree in agricultural chemistry that Malicay began to look beyond the 4-H model of rural development. He became part of the first crop of political activists in UP Los Baños. They read and discussed the theories of Renato Constantino, Mao Zedong, Karl Marx and others. They cheered the battlefield victories of the Vietnamese people against American forces in their homeland. They denounced what was already being foreseen as the plan by President Marcos, even then, of perpetuating himself in power through martial law.

The boy from Mindanao became a well-known figure on campus. He was recruited into Marcos' own fraternity, the Upsilon Sigma Phi. He also joined the radical Kabataang Makabayan and actively organized chapters in other key cities of the region. In 1968-69, as editor-in-chief of the student publication *Aggie Green and Gold*, he wrote and published numerous political articles.

By the time martial law was imposed in 1972, Malicay was already deep into the kind of peasant and other grassroots

organizing that he believed would bring about genuine social change. He was setting an example that the repressive conditions of martial-law dictatorship would push many others to follow.

Transistion good! ■

¹ Cesar Hicario is also honored as a martyr on Bantayog's Wall of Remembrance. See also pp. 117-118 of this volume.

RENATO T. MANIMBO



BORN

September 12, 1957 in Candaba, Pampanga

DIED

June 21, 1982 in San Rafael, Bulacan

PARENTS

Modesto Manimbo and Mercedes Turla

EDUCATION

Elementary: Anyatam Elementary School,
San Ildefonso, Bulacan
Secondary: San Miguel High School,
Bulacan
College: Feati University, Manila

“Maybe if he hadn’t been blacklisted at school. Maybe if he didn’t go crazy over basketball.” Years after his death, Renato Manimbo’s family was still not sure exactly when it was that their brother Rey took a different path – one that led him to give up his life for a cause he believed in.

Classmates said he would have graduated valedictorian of their class in high school in 1974 if he had not been so busy playing basketball; but everyone recognized also that Rey was a good, daring player who was an asset to the team.

Second eldest of seven children, Rey was the only one who was sent to college. He enrolled in engineering at Feati University. It was there that he became an activist and student leader, becoming president of the student council twice. Still he did not neglect his studies, and fulfilled the requirements for a degree in mechanical engineering. Then he found out that the school was not going to approve his graduation because of his political activities.

Apparently Manimbo decided to become a full-time community organizer because of that. Sometimes he would bring a group of friends home to San Ildefonso, but spent their time studying and having political discussions. Sometimes he would tell his brothers about the rallies he attended; once, when the Pope was in Manila, he led his

group in pulling up a banner that denounced human-rights violations by the dictatorial regime.

“You’re putting yourself in danger,” his father would say. “If you only knew, father, how so many people are going hungry,” Rey would reply. And the older man would say no more.

Friends in the military and police force warned them that Rey’s safety was in danger. To his brother Antonio, Rey only said: “*Anong kwenta nang mabuhay kang isandaangtaon, kung para ka lang lumot na dinadaan-daanan ng agos ng tubig. Kung mamatay ka nang bata at may nagawa ka naman, mas may katuturan ang buhay mo.*” (What’s the use of living a hundred years if it is just to be like a clump of moss sitting passively in the stream? Better to die young but leading a meaningful life).

Ironically, Rey Manimbo’s father was on the government side in the 1960s, fighting against rebel guerrillas in Pampanga. (The family moved to Bulacan after an uncle was killed by the Hukbong Mapagpalayang Bayan in Candaba.)

At the age of 24, Renato Manimbo was killed in a constabulary raid conducted in Balatong, Pulilan, Bulacan. He and four others – Danilo Aguirre, Edwin Borlongan,

Teresita Llorente and Constantino Medina – are collectively known as the Bulacan Martyrs. ■

MA. VIOLETA MARCOS



BORN

July 18, 1937 in Pandi, Bulacan

DIED

April 30, 2001 in Manila

PARENTS

Macario Marcos and Ana Sebastian

EDUCATION

Elementary: Pandi Elementary School,
Pandi, Bulacan
Secondary: Torres High School, Manila
College: University of Santo Tomas
La Consolacion College
Postgraduate: De La Salle University
Sisters' Formation Institute
Asian Institute of Management

Negros island in the 1970s opened the eyes of Sister Viole – born Ma. Remedios Marcos, no relation at all to the dictator – to the realities of a situation for which she was little prepared. She herself said so, “*Doon ako namulat.*”

An Augustinian nun, Marcos had been director of La Consolacion College in Manila. In the early 1970s she was assigned to head La Consolacion College in La Carlota City in Negros Occidental.

There, she was shocked to witness the violent social conflict on which the Philippine sugar industry was thriving. Big landowners, with their goons and political power, extracted scandalous wealth from the toil of countless laborers and peasants on the rich volcanic soil of Negros. Martial law made matters worse, as the entire industry came under the control of Roberto Benedicto, a very close friend of the dictator Marcos. The military and the private armies worked together to suppress labor organizing and physically eliminate “trouble makers.” Communities were terrorized, and church workers, students and union leaders were jailed.

The Bacolod diocese had a social-action program for the sugar workers. After attending one seminar and hearing the people talk about their working and living conditions, Sister Viole began conducting

similar sessions with her fellow religious. In 1975, she gave up school work altogether and directed her energies towards supporting initiatives at the grassroots.

These initiatives included her involvement with the Basic Christian Communities program of the diocese from 1975 to 1985, the Justice for Sugarworkers Committee (where she served as executive secretary, 1978-1980) and the Church-Military Liaison Committee (1976-1978). She helped establish the Negros Occidental Women Religious Association and worked with Task Forces Detainees under the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines.

As a human-rights worker, Sister Violen often had to face danger herself. She opened her convent to victims of military abuses, and convinced others to do the same. She organized documentation work, legal assistance, prison visits, family support and material help. She joined rallies protesting the government's crackdown on the resistance of people in Negros. Later, in the 1980s, she took up new duties in Manila, still related to the defense and promotion of human rights.

After the fall of the dictatorship, Sister Violen found the time to focus on clarifying reforms within her religious community. In 1989 she co-founded the Augustinian Missionaries

of the Philippines, which was granted its own status by the Vatican in 1999. She became its first superior general.

Sister Violeta Marcos succumbed to cancer in 2001. ■

ASUNCION (ESTHER) MARTINEZ



BORN

March 8, 1910 in Nerida, Leyte

DIED

July 21, 1994 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Rafael Martinez and Maria Cabanas

EDUCATION

Elementary: St. Catherine's School,
Carcar, Cebu
Secondary: St. Catherine's School,
Carcar, Cebu
College: University of Santo Tomas,
Manila

Sister Asun was nearly 60 years old when she humbly asked to be assigned to the countryside and visit the remote barrios of Janiway, Iloilo. There she learned first-hand how difficult it was for poor families to give their children a good education, even when they were scholars at the ICM school.

It was an unusual step that she chose to take, considering that she had already served as the head of her religious congregation (the ICM sisters originally based in Belgium) – the first Filipina to be appointed mother superior – and also as the first Filipina to be named as its provincial councilor. Considering also her age, and her family background (her father had once been Leyte governor), such a decision was not commonplace.

It was, however, a response to the call of the times within the Catholic church, as the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council led by Pope John XXIII inspired the opening of windows to the poor, deprived and oppressed. Sr. Asun wholeheartedly embraced the idea of solidarity with the poor, and beyond that, living with them “*babad sa tao*” in a “church of the poor.”

When the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines (an organization of women religious from different congregations) was formed, she was elected co-chairperson. With more and more peasant leaders being

arrested and held by the military, Sr. Asun was one of those who worked tirelessly to support them and their families.

Her involvement in the La Tondeña strike was “my second baptism,” as she called it.¹ She had returned to Manila in 1972, carrying out mission work among factory workers and urban poor communities. Defying the martial law regime’s prohibition against strikes, 800 workers at the La Tondeña distillery boldly declared their right to decent and fair employment terms. Sr. Asun was right there with them, and even as the Metrocom were hauling the strikers to prison the 65-year-old nun refused to abandon them. La Tondeña’s example was soon followed by more and more militant actions by more and more workers and young people in the urban areas.

The Urban Missionaries of the Philippines, patterned along the lines of the Rural Missionaries, emerged from this experience of solidarity between the workers and the church sector. Again Sr. Asun was part of it, together with the countless religious and lay workers whom she guided and inspired by her example.

There was no let-up in her devotion to the interests of the working people. In the 1980s she went to live in Bagong Barrio, an urban poor community in Caloocan City, and helped the residents there in defending their

rights. Even after being ordered to retire in 1983, she continued to make herself useful by managing a seminar facility that the workers could use for meetings and study sessions.

Sister Asun finally went to her rest after a long, fulfilling journey with the poor. She was 84 years old. ■

¹ “I Climb Mountains: Selected Writings of Sr. Asuncion Martinez, ICM,” Mga KAISA, December 1988.

CONSTANTINO R. MEDINA

BORN

May 3, 1954 in Hagonoy, Bulacan

DIED

June 21, 1982 in San Rafael, Bulacan

PARENTS

Emilio Medina and Isabel Reyes

EDUCATION

Elementary: Sagrada Familia Elementary
School, Hagonoy, Bulacan
Secondary: Southern Institute,
Hagonoy, Bulacan

Constantino Medina was born and grew up in the coastal town of Hagonoy, Bulacan; his father supported his wife and six children by looking after the fishponds that produced plentiful supplies of *bangus* for the markets in Manila.

Almost everyone in Hagonoy made a living from the sea. There were not many stable jobs to be had, however, and Tinoy Medina never refused a chance to earn a decent peso. Even as a young boy, he joined the crews that brought in fish from Manila Bay, or gathered seaweed for sale to producers of gelatin and agar-agar, or repaired the earthen dikes crisscrossing the town's extensive fishponds.

Medina was quiet, hardworking and dependable. He liked to recite poetry, especially his own verses. He got good grades in school, but when his father died he had to stop after high school.

It was around this time that he became one of the many political activists in town, although the family could only guess how this came about.¹ As the 1980s began, he began spending more and more time away from home, busy organizing secret groups that resisted the martial law dictatorship.

It was his 28th birthday on May 3, 1982, when his mother and his younger sister last saw him alive. He came with a friend,

Teresita Llorente. “I want you to stay and take care of Inang,” he told his sister Lita, who was being invited by their older sister to move to Canada. “Because I’m going away now.”

Some weeks after, the two women learned that Tinoy had been found dead in Pulilan. He was one of the five persons whose bodies had been brought by constabulary troopers to the municipal hall allegedly after an armed encounter. The others who were killed with him – all unarmed – were Teresita Llorente, Edwin Borlongan, Danilo Aguirre and Renato Manimbo.²

The police authorities made it difficult for Lita and her mother to retrieve Tinoy’s remains. Church workers helped them in the recovery, which took ten days.

Reflecting on the life and death of Constantino Medina, one of his friends said: “He served without asking for anything in return. He knew how impossible it would be to solve our society’s problems, and yet he was brave enough to try.”³ ■

1 Interview with Carmelita Medina Sevilla (his sister), July 7, 2012, in Hagonoy, Bulacan.

2 Llorente, Borlongan, Aguirre and Manimbo are also featured in this volume. See pp. 139-140, 35-36, 5-6, and 155-156.

3 Interview with Ricardo Mansilungan, July 7, 2012, in Hagonoy, Bulacan.

ALFREDO L. MENDOZA



BORN

November 10, 1947 in Manila

DISAPPEARED

September 1973 in Davao City

PARENTS

Mariano Mendoza and Gregoria Lano

SPOUSE/CHILD

Ruby Rivera / 1

EDUCATION

Elementary: Cotabato Elementary School,
Cotabato City
Secondary: Notre Dame of Cotabato High
School, Cotabato City
College: Notre Dame College of Cotabato
Postgraduate: Asian Social Institute, Manila

“From 1970 to March 1986, the Marcos regime caused the disappearance of 619 Filipinos – farmers, workers, students, church ministers and lay workers, professionals and businessmen.”¹

Of this number, more than half of the cases, or 329 people, were recorded in Mindanao. According to Amnesty International, a person is considered to have disappeared when “there are reasonable grounds to believe” that he or she was “taken into custody by the authorities or with their connivance.” The military or police usually deny any knowledge of what happened to the person, and therefore he or she is presumed to be “missing.”²

Alfredo Mendoza was one of those. To this day, the authorities have not been able to explain why his family has not seen him despite all their efforts since he was supposedly given permission to leave the constabulary stockade on Christmas day in 1973.

Mendoza was a “most competent, energetic, sincere and committed” staffmember of the Mindanao Secretariat of Social Action (MISSA) under the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.³ He had worked as an announcer and broadcaster at the Notre Dame radio station in Cotabato City, where he grew up and studied. At MISSA, he became involved in the struggles

of the poor and tried to help the resistance to the newly decreed martial law dictatorship.

On Sept. 10, 1973, Mendoza was working at the MISSA office in Davao City when soldiers came to arrest him. He was then brought to his residence where an old typewriter and mimeographing machine were confiscated. At the constabulary camp, he was visited several times by his superior, an American priest. No formal charges were filed.

That Christmas season, Mendoza's family and co-workers started to look for him, but the military only said that he had failed to return to the prison after being allowed to leave.

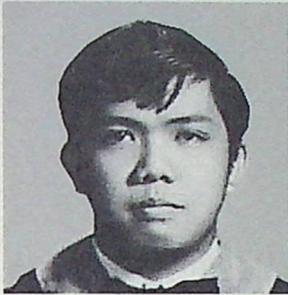
Even after the ouster of the Marcos dictatorship, so many families have questions which remain unanswered. ■

1 In "619 Missing in the Philippines," leaflet published by Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, Quezon City, for Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance on International Week of the Disappeared, May 26 to June 1, 1986.

2 Ibid.

3 Letter of Fr. Thomas Marti, MM, to Emelia Mendoza dated April 28, 1986.

ARMANDO L. MENDOZA



BORN

July 11, 1949 in Manila

DISAPPEARED

October 17, 1975 in Quezon

PARENTS

Mariano Mendoza and Gregoria Lano

EDUCATION

Elementary: Cotabato Elementary School,
Cotabato City
Secondary: Notre Dame College High
School, Cotabato City
College: University of Santo Tomas,
Manila

“He risked his life so that others would, in the future, enjoy a better life.”¹

Twice, Armando Mendoza was arrested and detained by the military. He never betrayed any secrets even when his captors were snuffing out cigarettes on his bare skin, beating him to a pulp, forcing him to say what he knew.

He escaped from prison the first time and rejoined the guerrilla forces fighting the Marcos dictatorship in the countryside of the Southern Tagalog region. The second time, the military just took him and three others somewhere outside the camp and shot them dead, burying them near a schoolhouse in Quezon.

Thus, Gregoria Mendoza for the second time sacrificed a son. Three years earlier, Armando’s older brother, Alfredo,² had been arrested in Mindanao -- only to disappear mysteriously from military custody, never to be found again.

What was it that moved these young men to offer their lives for the sake of the nation? Their sister Amelia tried to explain Armando’s decision, even after knowing that Alfredo had gone missing and was most probably dead: “Having been taught by our parents the meaning of what it means to be a good person and to care for others, Armando participated in the struggle because that was

what a good person should do during that period in our country's history."³

A working student at the University of Santo Tomas, he became politically active during the First Quarter Storm of 1970. He dropped out of school and resigned from his job in 1972, telling his brothers and sisters – they were eight in all --that "the citizenry should not just watch as Marcos builds a regime of corruption, human rights violation and oppression."⁴

Those early years of martial law were difficult for the Mendozas. After the death of their father in 1968 (for many years he had been assigned in Cotabato by the National Bureau of Investigation), Alfredo and Armando had been helping their mother to support the family. Then there was the extreme anxiety of searching for the two brothers.

In the few years that Armando Mendoza spent among the rural folk, he was admired for his personal integrity and organizational leadership at a time when intensive military operations were taking a heavy toll among the guerrilla forces.⁵ ■

1 "Armando Lano Mendoza," by Amelia Mendoza, handwritten, undated.

2 Alfredo Mendoza is featured in this volume. See pp. 163-164.

3 "Armando Lano Mendoza," by Amelia Mendoza, handwritten, undated.

4 Ibid.

5 "Tunay na may mgaleon at agilaangrebolusyon," parangal para kay Kasamang Armando Mendoza, Komiteng Partido sa Kagitingan, Partido Komunistang Pilipinas-Timog Katagalugan, Nobyembre 30, 1976.

LA VERNE D. MERCADO



BORN

December 4, 1921 in Magalang, Pampanga

DIED

July 23, 2003 in Manila

PARENTS

Constancio Mercado and Juana Diwa

SPOUSE

Nellie Lacson Mercado

EDUCATION

Elementary: Gabaldon Elementary School,
Bamban, Tarlac
Secondary: Pampanga National High School
College: Union Theological Seminary,
Manila
Postgraduate: Garrett Theological Seminary
Northwestern University,
Illinois, USA

La Verne Mercado served as secretary-general of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), from 1973 to 1987, a most crucial time for the country and its Protestant churches.

Combining diplomacy and courageous leadership, Bishop Mercado kept the NCCP member-churches together during the turbulent years of martial law. His gentle and friendly demeanor and his unquestioned integrity inspired respect and deep admiration not only among Protestants here and abroad, but also among leaders of the Catholic church and others. In the world ecumenical movement, he was one of the best-known religious leaders in the Philippines.

He was a moving spirit behind the ecumenical movement in the country, in which the various Christian churches worked in cooperation and mutual respect to defend and promote human rights and the people's welfare in general. "He opened wide the windows to ecumenical thoughts and values," one co-worker said. "He led the path towards pluralist ideas and respect for those who differed in their views."¹

Under his leadership, NCCP issued public statements on issues such as human dignity, national sovereignty, church-state relations and morality in government, among others, and inspired staff members to boldly

implement programs that served the victims of injustices, including political detainees and their families. He himself administered pastoral care: “he nurtured the spiritually broken and helped heal those who needed to start life after prison.”²

Mercado was coeditor of the book *Human Rights Violations in the Philippines*, published by the World Council of Churches in the Philippines in 1986, and wrote a chapter in the book *Rice in the Storm: Faith in Struggle in the Philippines*, published in 1989.

The son of a Methodist pastor and a deaconess, he was ordained minister of the United Methodist Church in 1961.

Together with several other persons, he was detained at Camp Crame in June 1974 and released after one week on the personal order of President Marcos.

He died in 2003 at the age of 81. ■

¹ “Bishop La Verne Mercado, our teacher and healer,” testimony of June Rodriguez, June 4, 2003.

² Ibid.

PASTOR MESINA



BORN

March 14, 1953 in Davao City

DIED

February 4, 1971 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Pastor Mesina Sr. and Rosario Relampagos

EDUCATION

Elementary: Jose Rizal Elementary School,
Pasay City
Secondary: Philippine Science High School,
Quezon City
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

Not even 18 at the time a bullet hit him in the forehead, Sonny Mesina was among the early casualties of the student movement that the authorities were determined to “nip in the bud” in the early 1970s.

Mesina was not one of those who gave fiery speeches and talked about revolution. He had crushes on nice chubby girls. He was into Jimi Hendrix, Santana, Led Zeppelin, and also Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young.

He wanted to be a doctor and liked to wear trendy clothes.

“A typical teenager from a typical Filipino middle-class family,” was how one friend described him. Mesina was “not at all radicalized like many of us who joined the student activist movement. He was in it because his friends were in it.”¹

Mesina’s first taste of mass action was when he joined his fellow government scholars at the Philippine Science High School in a march to Malacañang. They wanted adequate space for their school, instead of the small, one-story building that it was occupying in a temporary location. The students succeeded in calling the government’s attention to the problem, and PSHS today has its own campus in Quezon City.

While studying chemistry as a pre-medicine course, Mesina joined the Samahang

Demokratikong Kabataan in UP Diliman. It was one of many student organizations that had proliferated, militantly challenging President Marcos on one national issue after another: the devaluation of the dollar, rising prices, military build-up and recruitment through local militias, and most of all Marcos' not-so-hidden plans to stay in power by declaring martial law.

Mesina was aware of these issues, and he supported the stand of his organization. The week that he died, his organization had called for solidarity for the jeepney and bus drivers who were striking to oppose the recent increase in the price of gasoline. Harassed by the police and military, the students at UP Diliman began barricading the main entrance to the campus. Vehicles were being diverted to other roads.

One faculty member, a mathematics professor known to be a firm advocate of "peace and order," was angered by the action. After being turned away, he returned, this time with a shotgun. The students were jeering and throwing stones. He fired his .22 caliber rifle and hit Mesina who was helping to carry a roadblock.

Sonny Mesina's death three days later led to the student uprising known as the Diliman Commune. He had become an "unexpected hero"² who inspired others to study, learn

and make a stand against injustice in Philippine society. ■

¹ Email to Soliman Santos from Emile Sanchez, September 23, 2007.

² See Rolando Soncuya's account, "The death of my unexpected hero," June 2015.

ANTONIO S. MIJARES



BORN

June 13, 1961 in Ibaday, Aklan

DIED

April 20, 1984 in Ibaday, Aklan

PARENTS

Diomedes Mijares and Rebecca Sabuya

EDUCATION

Elementary: Ibaday Elementary School, Aklan

Secondary: Melchor Memorial High School,
Ibaday, Aklan

College: University of Santo Tomas,
Manila
Aklan College

Antonio Mijares, called Diore, grew up in the small coastal town of Ibaday, Aklan. A few families were better off, and many more had to make do with what they could get from the sea or a small piece of land.

The youngest son of middle-class parents, Diore Mijares did well in school and even in non-academic activities such as writing, dramatics, sports, and military training.

He was just a boy when martial law was declared. Because the family lived next door to the municipal jail, they could hear the beatings that were inflicted by the police on criminal or suspected subversives. The young Diore's heart went out to these torture victims who suffered during the night, and early in the morning he would buy a bag of freshly-baked pandesal and slip it to them through a small window, together with some hot ginger tea.

For his birthday, Mijares told his parents that he had invited two dozen of his best friends to come to their house. "I found out that these were people who hung out in the public market, in the plaza...laborers, boys in rags, unwashed...all of them poor," said his father. "Why are you always with them? I asked. And Diore replied that they have stories to tell, and that someone has to speak for them."

Sent to Manila after high school (enrolling in a philosophy course at UST), he made many new friends and read many books. By this time, campuses were again becoming hotbeds of student resistance, this time to the martial law dictatorship. After a couple of years Mijares transferred to Aklan.

In his new school, he became very active in moving for the revival of the campus paper and became its literary editor. He also helped organize the provincial chapter of the College Editors Guild. Through their publications, news and opinions that were otherwise suppressed in the Marcos-dominated press could be disseminated.

Mijares soon attracted the attention of the military. The PC provincial commander tried to recruit him to spy on his classmates and townmates, but he refused to betray his friends. Knowing that his life was now in danger, he joined the armed guerrillas operating in the hills of central Panay.

They moved among the poor peasants, learning about their problems and trying to help solve these. He would amuse the children by sketching their faces, the trees, the birds, the forest. "He was always writing," one farmer recalled.

In 1984, constabulary troopers ambushed Mijares and his companions in a remote

village. Three were captured alive and tortured before being killed. It was after 3 p.m. in the afternoon of Good Friday, causing some people to make a comparison of their suffering and death with the sorrow and agony of Jesus Christ. ■

VICENTE A. MIRABUENO

BORN

December 29, 1951 in Manila

DIED

February 6, 1988 in General Santos City

PARENTS

Narciso Mirabueno and Triposa Adre

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Aurora Cariño / 3

EDUCATION

Elementary: South Elementary School,
General Santos City
Secondary: Notre Dame of Dadiangas,
General Santos City
College: San Beda College and
Manuel L. Quezon University,
Manila

Contrary to its own interests, the Marcos dictatorship gave rise to a noble new calling: defenders of the people's social, political, economic and cultural rights, now known as human-rights lawyers. Before then, most of the thousands of lawyers in the Philippines served the needs of wealthy individuals and corporations. Occasionally, lawyers would take on the cases of poor people as a kind of charitable undertaking because these were clients who obviously could not pay.

Although the Marcos regime benefited from the services of prominent lawyers, its abuses were so brazen and widespread as to stir honest and decent professionals into action. A handful of brilliant lawyers like Jose W. Diokno and Jovito R. Salonga sharply questioned the regime's very existence before the Supreme Court. They were kept busy arguing for the release of political detainees before the military tribunals. They also nurtured the next generation that would assist and take over from them.

Vicente Mirabueno of South Cotabato was one lawyer who never hesitated to serve as legal counsel to arrested persons and families that were harassed during the government's counter-insurgency operations, the urban poor fighting the demolition of their homes, and striking public school teachers.

He anchored a local radio program where ordinary people could air the problems of their communities. True to the title of his program, "*Gising at Manatiling Gising!*" he continually urged his listeners to stand up for their rights and to press for democratic reforms. He himself filed a case of illegal logging against a powerful individual because of his concern about deforestation in Cotabato.

Later, he became provincial chair of the Free Legal Assistance Group and the multisectoral people's organization Bagong Alyansang Makabayan.

In January 1986, the authorities slapped rebellion charges against Mirabueno and four others (two priests, a nun and a doctor); the case was later dismissed.

Aside from earning very little from his work as a lawyer, there were real threats to his life that friends had warned him about. But he accepted it as "God's will" should anything happen to him. On the day that he died, Vic Mirabueno had been standing quietly at the entrance of the public market in General Santos City when two men approached. Each one fired a bullet into his chest. He was dead on arrival at the hospital.

Investigation revealed that one of the two men was a former soldier, a civilian agent who was easily able to escape while in police custody. ■

WRIGHT M. MOLINTAS JR.



BORN

March 14, 1963 in Baguio City

DIED

July 6, 1987 in Bagulin, La Union

PARENTS

Wright B. Molintas and Mandy D. Mencio

SPOUSE / CHILD

Ma. Visitacion Perez / 1

EDUCATION

Elementary: Lucban Elementary School,
Baguio City
Secondary: University of Baguio Science
High School
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

Tall, powerfully built and inclined to military action, Wright Molintas Jr. was a natural leader, who stepped up to the forefront of the young people's bold response and challenge to the Marcos dictatorship.

Born into two prominent families of the Cordillera region, the fifth of seven brothers, he was a child when martial law was imposed. Though his family lived in the city, he grew up in close contact with the Ibaloi indigenous community to which his family belonged.

When Molintas entered college in 1979, open resistance to the martial law dictatorship was already well established at the University of the Philippines Diliman. He easily gravitated to the activist organizations and clearly saw the connection between such issues as demolition of urban poor homes, food security, poor working conditions, etc. and the problems in his native region.

Rampant military abuses and landgrabbing accompanied the attempts by Marcos and his cronies to plunder the rich resources of the Cordilleras for their own profit and enrichment. Big mining and logging corporations took advantage of their connections with the regime. Dam projects, such as the plan to build one on the Chico

River, were being undertaken despite the opposition of the communities affected and whose ancestral lands were being taken.

Ironically, for the young generation of Cordillerans it was the collective resistance of the mountain tribes during this period that led them to assert their pride and identity as Igorot people, *Kaigorotan*.

In 1981, at the age of 18, Molintas decided to return to the highlands and join the struggle there. He became widely known as Ka Chadli, a cheerful and friendly man with many talents. He was admired by the village elders for embracing the harsh life of a guerrilla fighter “even if he could have made it big in the world.”¹

He was among those who laid the groundwork for the establishment of the Cordillera People’s Democratic Front (CPDF) and served as its spokesman at its first congress in Sagrada, Mountain Province.

But other plans had been laid out for him. One day in July 1987, his wife received the news that Molintas, travelling unarmed, had been killed somewhere in the triboundary of La Union, Ilocos and Benguet. At his wake in Baguio City, crowds of people came to pay their last respects. ■

¹ “A Cordillera Son Comes Home,” *Liberation*, January-February 1988, p. 12.

NICASIO M. MORALES



BORN

May 1, 1955 in Manila

DIED

November 1, 1999 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Rogelio Morales and Belen Manalo

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Dalia Carlos / 3

EDUCATION

Elementary: De La Salle Grade School,
Manila
Secondary: Ateneo de Manila High School,
Quezon City
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman
Postgraduate: University of the Philippines
Diliman

Nicky Morales was one of “those many countless heroes that stayed in the background, not seeking attention, but quietly doing their work in the resistance.”¹

Raised in a family that valued nationalism and people’s rights, Nicky was already interested in radical politics in high school. His father Rogelio Morales² also fought against dictatorship. Entering college just as martial law was imposed, he and his friends found ways of spreading the antidictatorship message (sticking handwritten slogans inside the toilets, hanging small placards on the stray cats walking around the campus). These and other, more serious activities eventually landed Morales in Fort Bonifacio, where his father was also being detained by the military.

He was able to graduate, however, and even earned a master’s degree in industrial relations. But Morales was not distracted from his personal commitment to be part of the resistance to the regime. As head of the Alpha Phi Omega fraternity, it was his idea to launch the “Oblation run” in which fraternity members ran around the campus wearing only masks and political statements painted on their bare bodies. The stunt was a big success, and is considered a campus tradition to this day.

Seeking a vehicle for reaching more people – most independent organizations were

then banned – Morales joined the Kilusang Mamimili ng Pilipinas which he transformed into a mass-based advocacy group. This became part of an umbrella organization, the Citizen's Alliance for Consumer Protection, which brought to public attention such issues as oil price hikes, the Bataan nuclear power plant, and other health and safety concerns that inevitably led to criticism of the regime's policies and programs.³

Once again facing threats to his safety, in 1980 Morales hurriedly left for the United States. There he devoted his time and efforts to the campaign to inform the American people and their leaders about the abuses of the Marcos government, and to lobby for an end to the support that it was getting from the US.⁴ And when, on February 26, 1986 a group of activists victoriously occupied the Philippine embassy in Washington, DC “in the name of the Filipino people,” Morales was right there in the front line.

But there was more work to do. The new, post-Marcos government needed all the support it could get, and Morales' Alliance for Philippine Concerns lobbied for that with the US Congress.

In 1990, Nicky Morales and his family returned home to the Philippines, where he died of a heart attack in 1999. ■

1 Testimony of Walden Bello (November 9, 2013), Bantayog archives.

2 See Rogelio Morales, pp. 179-180 of this volume.

3 Testimony of Mary John Mananzan, OSB (August 28, 2013), Bantayog archives.

4 Testimony of Dante C. Simbulan (November 28, 2013), Bantayog archives.

ROGELIO C. MORALES



BORN

November 5, 1922 in Manila

DIED

February 19, 1993 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Benito Morales and Angela Concepcion

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Belen Morales / 3

EDUCATION

College: Philippine Nautical School,
Manila

Having roamed the seas, pored over many books and participated in the workers' movement for many years, Rogelio C. Morales saw the resistance to the Marcos dictatorship as part of "mankind's struggle to be free," and he therefore contributed to it his resources, encouragement and thoughtful opinions.

Coming from a family of seafarers, Morales was a respected leader of the Filipino maritime community. In the 1950s, he founded the Federation of Maritime Workers, and was president at the same time of the Philippine Marine Officers Guild. He led many, and oftentimes protracted, strikes in the ports of Cebu and Manila. These efforts won benefits for underpaid seafarers, longshoremen and ligherage crews.

In the 1960s, Morales served for many years as superintendent at the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy, the country's premier training institution for ship officers. He valued the job because he saw himself as an educator, teaching not only the technical side of the profession but also the moral and social principles that he applied in practicing it. But his stubborn independence of mind led to his dismissal from the position, on trumped-up charges, in 1969.

Morales was commissioned to the Philippine Navy with the rank of captain. He crafted a method of adjusting ship compasses

that proved to be highly beneficial to the maritime industry.

Morales had joined the Socialist Party of the Philippines because he was convinced that the socialist ideology was the best guide in going forward. He was assigned to its education and organization bureaus, then elected SPP vice chairman in 1972. Morales was detained for three months in Ipil Rehabilitation Center at Fort Bonifacio in 1974; he spent his time in reading more books.

Morales founded the Concerned Seamen of the Philippines in 1983. Manpower export, including the deployment of thousands of Filipino sailors, was propping up the Marcos regime. CSP became a vehicle for the international mobilization of anti-martial law forces in the global maritime industry. Morales gave speeches abroad soliciting support for the struggle against authoritarian rule.

The home of the Morales family in Quezon City became a busy hub of activities, and a safe refuge as well, as the antidictatorship movement gained momentum. All the while, the gruff old man never tired of promoting unity and mutual understanding among the activists.

Rogelio Morales passed away in his sleep in 1993, at the age of 71. ■

CECILIA MUÑOZ-PALMA



BORN

November 22, 1913 in Bauan, Batangas

DIED

January 2, 2006 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Pedro Muñoz and Emilia Arreglado

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Rodolfo Palma / 3

EDUCATION

Elementary: St. Bridget Academy,
Batangas, Batangas
Secondary: St. Scholastica's College, Manila
College: University of the Philippines
Postgraduate: Yale University, USA

“We shall be judged by history...not by what we want to do and can't, but by what we ought to do and don't.”

Cecilia Muñoz-Palma was associate justice of the Supreme Court when she spoke these words in a speech on International Law Day. It was the third year of President Marcos' martial law regime, and despite being herself a Marcos appointee to the high court in 1973, she was pleading for the return of the rule of law. It was an astoundingly brave stance, implying that Filipinos needed to resist the dictatorship despite their fear of it. The audience gave her a five-minute standing ovation. (But a senior justice called her “*ingrata*” – which made her proud.)

Under Marcos, magistrates sitting in the country's highest tribunal had been turned into docile justifiers of his rule. Not Muñoz-Palma. She declared: “My oath of office is an oath of loyalty to the Constitution, to justice and the people and is not an oath of fealty to the appointing power.”¹

When opposition leader Jose W. Diokno petitioned the court to order his release from military custody – having been detained without charges for more than two years – the other justices wanted to turn him down; she dissented. Diokno was released even before the decision was made public.

When Benigno Aquino Jr. asked to be tried before a civilian court, the other justices agreed with Marcos that he should face a military tribunal; Muñoz-Palma dissented. She was thinking of the effect such a majority ruling would have on the rest of the citizenry: "There rose before my eyes," she explained, "this gruesome specter of one, a hundred, a thousand civilian Filipinos being dragged by the mighty arms of the military before its own created and manned tribunals...for offenses, real or imaginary...."²

After retiring from the Supreme Court in 1978 and desiring to continue serving the country, she sought election to the Batasang Pambansa that same year, representing Quezon City.

When Marcos was forced to call for a snap election in 1985, Muñoz-Palma played an important role in unifying the various opposition groups behind the candidacy of Corazon Aquino. Appointed by the new president to be a member of the 1987 Constitution and elected by the delegates to be the chairman, she fulfilled her task with integrity, foresight and statesmanship.

Cecilia Muñoz-Palma died in 2006 at the age of 92. ■

¹ "The Mirror of My Soul: selected decisions, opinions, speeches and writings" by Cecilia Muñoz-Palma, Supreme Court Printing service, Manila, 2001.

² *100 Women of the Philippines: Celebrating Filipino Womanhood in the New Millennium* by Joy Buensalido and Abe Florendo, Buensalido and Associates, Makati City, 1999.

FELIXBERTO OLALIA



BORN

August 5, 1903 in Bacolor, Pampanga

DIED

December 4, 1983 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Anastacio Olalia and Florentina Santos

SPOUSES/CHILDREN

Basilia Mariano; Isabelita Tolentino

Labor leader Felixberto Olalia won respect and prominence in championing the interests of the Filipino working class, despite the unease and apprehension that many businessmen felt about him.

In 1970, he was head of the country's biggest labor (National Federation of Labor Unions) and peasant (Masaka) organizations when President Marcos personally designated him to visit China and explore the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. Two years later, martial law was declared while he was in China again, where he had been leading a worker-peasant delegation. He refused the asylum offered by Chinese leaders, and was arrested at the airport upon his arrival in Manila in October.

Jailed for four and a half months in the early days of martial law, he was ordered arrested for a second time and detained in military prison in 1983, when he was already an old man and in frail health. It was this last ordeal that hastened his death at the age of 80.

Going to prison for his beliefs never stopped Olalia. A member of the old Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas, he had already served a sentence of more than four years in the 1950s. In the 1970s after his release, he went right back to trade union organizing despite the many prohibitions imposed by

the Marcos regime. He also lent his prestige to the formation of advocacy organizations that documented and denounced the violations of labor and other human rights, here and abroad.

The ranks of organized labor swelled, and hundreds of strikes broke out, as the people shouldered the heavy burden of an economic program that only benefited Marcos, his cronies, and their foreign partners. The militant Kilusang Mayo Uno, launched in May 1980 under Olalia as its first chairperson, boldly proclaimed its anti-dictatorship stand. From then on, KMU took its place among the leading organizations that set the pace for the dictatorship's downfall in 1986.

Knowing that his life was about to end, on his death bed Olalia told his son Rolando: "*Huwag kayong mabibigo...magtagumpay kayo!*" (Don't give up! you must win!)

Felixberto Olalia's life was an extraordinary journey. The son of poor farmers from Pampanga, he migrated to Manila at the age of 17 after serving as a wealthy family's houseboy. He found work as a laborer at a small factory that made shoes and slippers. It was a time of social ferment, and Olalia eagerly absorbed progressive and nationalist ideas. He read a lot, though his formal schooling stopped at grade four. For sixty years, his life was dedicated to serving and

leading the working class; indeed, it may be said that his role in the antidictatorship resistance was just one chapter in that life.

A handsome, well-built man with a confident demeanor, Olalia could stand his ground even when interacting with the powerful and the very rich. Yet, he was always guided by his own integrity and sense of devotion to the interests and welfare of the Filipino worker. ■

ROLANDO M. OLALIA



BORN

September 3, 1934 in Manila

DIED

November 13, 1986 in Antipolo, Rizal

PARENTS

Felixberto Olalia and Basilia Mariano

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Feliciana B. Capistrano / 3

EDUCATION

Elementary: Lubao Elementary School,
Lubao, Pampanga
Secondary: Jose Abad Santos High School,
Manila
College: Manuel L. Quezon University,
Manila

It was not easy to be the son of a famous labor leader, for whom family time was not a priority compared to the demands of the Filipino workers' collective struggle for a better life.

Still, Rolando Olalia went on to follow in the footsteps of Felixberto Olalia¹ – Ka Bert and a father figure to many in the workers movement – and met his tragic, untimely death because of it.

The young man would have preferred to take up journalism as a career, but Ka Bert wanted him to study law, and so he did, as a working student. Ka Bert encouraged him to spend time doing labor organizing, and Rolando joined the newly-organized National Federation of Labor Unions. In 1962, he was arrested for the first time, for his involvement in a factory strike in Pasig. At school, campus activism also came naturally to him; he was active in Kabataang Makabayan.

When President Marcos declared martial law in 1972, Rolando Olalia, already a labor lawyer by then, was among those who were rounded up and detained for alleged subversion. In August 1982, he was again imprisoned and detained for political reasons. Both times, his father was also arrested and jailed separately; neither one was convicted.

The labor movement was steadily intensifying especially after the formation of the Kilusang Mayo Uno in 1980. The broad antidictatorship movement, of which it was an important part, was also spreading throughout the land. As his father grew older, Ka Lando increasingly took on greater responsibilities. He was elected NAFLU president in 1983, and KMU chair in 1984. He led the Pambansang Koalisyon ng mga Manggagawa Laban sa Kahirapan.

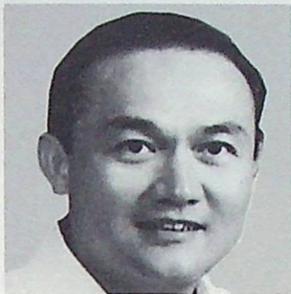
During the tumultuous years after the assassination of Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr., citizen outrage swept the nation and Rolando Olalia rose to prominence on his own merits as a dedicated leader of a powerful people's movement. When the Nationalist Alliance for Justice, Freedom and Democracy was organized, he was elected to its national executive council. He also served as the first president of the militant alliance Bayan, with youth leader Lean Alejandro as secretary-general. And immediately after the dictator's ouster in 1986, Olalia helped establish the Partido ng Bayan political party which participated in the first national elections under the government of Corazon Aquino. He was the Party's first secretary-general.

But military renegades – backed up by powerful figures in the new government – were determined to destroy what they considered the excessive influence of

“communists” in the new government. Rolando Olalia was kidnapped and brutally killed, along with his driver Leonor Alay-ay, on November 13, 1986. It was widely believed that they were the victims of that plan, and indeed, charges were brought against some military officers. But to this day, no one has been punished for the Olalia-Alay-ay murders. ■

¹ See Felixberto Olalia in pp. 183-184 of this volume.

JAIME V. ONGPIN



BORN

June 15, 1938 in San Juan City

DIED

December 7, 1987 in Manila

PARENTS

Luis Ongpin and Lourdes Velayo

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Maria Isabel Garcia / 5

EDUCATION

Elementary: San Juan Elementary School, San Juan City
Secondary: Ateneo de Manila, Quezon City
College: Ateneo de Manila, Quezon City
Postgraduate: Harvard University (USA)

For a long time, like most Filipino businessmen, Jaime V. Ongpin kept quiet. But the time came, in the early 1980s, when he began speaking up, forcefully, against the one-man rule of Ferdinand Marcos.

Born into a middle-class family, Ongpin was a hardworking, principled man who earned his own way into power. He headed Benguet Corporation and Engineering Equipment, Inc., which were among the country's biggest companies.

Increasingly, however, he was frustrated by the derailing of a free-enterprise economic system that encouraged growth through competition. In early 1981 he wrote a letter to the editor of the *Asian Wall Street Journal*, denouncing the use of public funds by the Marcos government to bail out failing business enterprises. These companies had been placed in the hands of Marcos relatives and friends, for the dictator's ultimate benefit. This was "crony capitalism," he declared, and the term stuck.

That public declaration struck a responsive chord in the business community, even as it alarmed those who were closely associated with Marcos and his wife. (Roberto V. Ongpin, Jaime's brother, was the minister of finance, in charge of carrying out those same policies.)

It came at a time when resistance to the dictatorship was rapidly coming out into the open. Multisectoral protests against human rights violations and political repression were mobilizing greater numbers of people, and spreading all over the country. The New People's Army was gaining more support even from the middle class.

Ongpin soon found himself a much sought-after speaker at opposition gatherings, where he discussed his incisive analyses of the economic and political situation. In the beginning his friends warned him: "don't go too far." But the assassination of Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. in 1983 pushed caution aside, although Ongpin continued to advocate the prescribed process – impeachment by the Batasan – of getting rid of Marcos.

Through his personal participation in demonstrations and other mass protests, interviews in the media, fund-raising efforts for the opposition, Ongpin contributed to the rising clamor for the ouster of the dictatorship. He rallied the business sector through the Makati Business Club and Manindigan, both of which he was a founding member. With Corazon Aquino¹ and Lorenzo Tañada,² Ongpin formed the Convenor Group that spearheaded the united opposition in the 1985 snap election against Marcos.

With the formation of a new government against Mrs. Aquino, Ongpin served as secretary of finance, helping shape policy and setting a new direction for the collapsed economy. He did not last long, and died in 1987. ■

¹ Corazon Aquino is featured in this volume, see pp. 13-14

² See pp. 201-202 of Volume 1 of *Ang Mamatay Nang Dahil Sa'yo*.

SEDFREY A. ORDOÑEZ



BORN

September 1, 1921 in Gapan, Nueva Ecija

DIED

November 10, 2007 in Metro Manila

PARENTS

Domingo Ordoñez and Consolacion Andres

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Josefina Vijandre / 4

EDUCATION

Elementary: Laur Elementary School,
Laur, Nueva Ecija
Secondary: Nueva Ecija High School
College: University of the Philippines
Manuel L. Quezon University
Philippine Law School
Postgraduate: Ateneo de Manila University,
University of Minnesota (USA)

The deception and abuses of the Marcos dictatorship did not happen overnight. They were planned and carried out methodically. And opposition was there even at the start, which kept growing as the regime faced crises of its own making – which in turn generated greater resistance.

Sedfrey Ordoñez was one of those who already opposed dictatorial rule when Marcos was laying the groundwork for it. At the 1971 Constitutional Convention, where he sat as the elected representative of the 2nd district of Nueva Ecija, he was one among the minority of delegates that consistently denounced the attempts by Marcos to manipulate the basic document so as to favor his own plan to stay in power. When Eduardo Quintero was harassed for exposing the payment of bribes by Imelda Marcos to fellow delegates, Ordoñez was there to defend him. Later, when it was learned that the draft constitution would be subjected to ratification by citizens' assemblies, Ordoñez objected to the sham referendum; by that time, one had to be more than brave to be against Marcos, as he had already declared martial law.

Under the dictatorship, Ordoñez was kept busy handling the legal defense of many political prisoners, among them Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. who was being tried by a military court. He also became active in

the Civil Liberties Union of the Philippines and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines on the committees on human rights, due process and legal aid.

As a longtime managing partner of the highly respected law firm that he had formed with Jovito Salonga and Pedro Yap, Ordoñez had stayed in the background, working quietly. President Corazon Aquino, however, called him to serve in her government as solicitor general, then as secretary of justice, and later Philippine permanent representative and resident ambassador to the United Nations. As solicitor general, he led the initial efforts to recover the ill-gotten wealth plundered by the Marcoses.

After his term as chairman of the Commission on Human Rights, to which he had been appointed by Fidel Ramos, Ordoñez continued his civic involvements as chairman emeritus of Bantay Katarungan and trustee of Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation.

This eminent legal advocate was also a poet and playwright, his published works expressing thoughtful insights about the concerns he had had to deal with as a Filipino and a public servant. He also wrote an autobiography, "50 Years in Law and Letters."

Ordoñez passed away in 2007 at the age of 86. ■

VIRGIL M. ORTIGAS



BORN

December 29, 1952 in Iloilo City

DIED

July 25, 1973 in Antique, Panay

PARENTS

Restituto Ortigas and Felisberta Montero

EDUCATION

Elementary: Central Philippine University,
Iloilo City
Secondary: Central Philippine University,
Iloilo City
College: Central Philippine University,
Iloilo City

Born and raised in Iloilo City, at an early age Virgil Ortigas became aware of the tremendous inequalities among the people of Panay island.

Brought up on such values as compassion, self-sacrifice and a belief in genuine democracy (the father was a Baptist minister, while the mother was a teacher), Ortigas naturally took the side of the poor as he learned more about their lives.

The industrial production of sugar for export, based on vast plantations on Panay and Negros island, was then one of the country's leading sources of income. Families owning and controlling thousands of hectares of land lived like kings on their haciendas. Even more, these "old rich" clans were dominant in Philippine politics on the national level.

This great wealth was rooted in their monopoly of fertile farmland, where seasonal migrant *sacadas* (workers) toiled for several months a year, for very low wages and in miserable living conditions. Most of these farmworkers were brought to the haciendas from far away, impoverished villages all over Panay island (comprising the provinces of Iloilo, Antique, Aklan and Capiz).

Thus, in the late 1960s advocates of social justice were already denouncing

the treatment of *sacadas* in the haciendas of Western Visayas. But Virgil Ortigas and his friends went beyond that. Their radical analysis saw the problem not just as a local one, but as an issue of national concern. They linked it to the dominance of the country's politics and economy by a land-based elite and their allied foreign (American) interests.

At the Central Philippine University in Iloilo City, a Protestant institution where he studied from grade school to college, Ortigas joined the Federation of Ilonggo Students (FIST), which had already begun marching in the streets along with their counterpart activists in Manila.

After President Marcos suspended the writ of habeas corpus in 1971, Ortigas was all the more convinced that people had to be prepared for what Marcos would do next in order to perpetuate himself in power. Then only 20 years old, he went about organizing numerous groups of students, youth, peasants and workers; these later became the basis for the sustained resistance in Panay to the dictatorship.

When martial law was declared in 1972, Ortigas and other youth leaders went underground. In June the following year, they held a meeting in Antique to discuss, among other plans, how to deal with a sham referendum that would ratify the

new Marcos constitution. A military checkpoint intercepted Ortigas' group and they were ordered to transfer to another vehicle. He tried to escape but he was shot dead.

The violence did not end there. On July 27, the day of the referendum, Edmundo Legislador¹ was killed followed by three other on July 29, including Ferdinand Arceo.² ■

¹ Edmundo Legislador is featured in *Ang Mamatay Nang Dahil Sa'yo*, Volume 1, pp. 127-128.

² See Ferdinand Arceo in *ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

JOJI S. PADUANO



BORN

November 2, 1961 in Bacolod City

DIED

May 11, 1984 in Ibajay, Aklan

PARENTS

Lito Paduano and Zenaida Salupeza

EDUCATION

Elementary: Bata Elementary School,
Bacolod City
Secondary: Bata High School, Bacolod City
College: St. Paul College, Manila
West Negros College,
Bacolod City

For a very long time, sugar was the main export commodity produced in the Philippines. It sustained the fabulous lifestyle of the so-called sugar barons who owned thousands of hectares planted to sugarcane. Because of sugar, the Philippine economy became heavily dependent on the United States, whose system of preferential tariffs ensured America's political control over the country.

The enormous wealth enjoyed by the landowning elite of Negros and Panay in Western Visayas only meant, however, backbreaking labor and starvation wages for the countless workers that harvested the sugarcane, loaded them into trucks, and replanted the fields. Usually, these *sacadas* (farmworkers) were recruited from the impoverished villages of Antique and Aklan. Labor contractors rounded them up and brought them to haciendas in Negros. There they toiled like slaves during the working season, after which they received a measly amount to take back home to their families.

Born in Bacolod City, the heart of what was then known as Sugarlandia, Joji Paduano learned about the inhuman existence that the *sacadas* were forced to live. She was a very bright girl, the pride of her family and teachers, and a warm and friendly person. Her mother, a church worker, was once barangay captain of their place. Haydee Yorac¹ was an aunt, her father's cousin.

The Marcos dictatorship controlled the sugar industry through Roberto Benedicto and Eduardo Cojuangco, both businessmen and landowners who were very close to Marcos. But a social action program initiated by the Roman Catholic church, led by Bishop Antonio Fortich, resisted the unjust system within the industry.

Influenced by the church program, Paduano became politically active while in high school, attending seminars and rallies in defense of the people's rights against the dictatorship. She started the Pagbutlak Cultural Theater, a diocesan organization of students. In 1978, she was elected president of the Student Catholic Action in Negros Occidental.

Paduano was 18 years old and a college student when she went underground in order to avoid arrest by the military. She went to Aklan, where she was put in charge of the local underground newspaper *Daba-daba* (Flame). As "Ka Kristine" she boldly refuted the military's propaganda line by writing letters to the newspapers or even making telephone calls to the radio stations.

Once, she wrote to her mother, "Mama, whatever happens... be proud of me because I dedicate my life to defending our rights and defending our freedom. I'm happy here with the *masa*."

One early morning, army soldiers surrounded and fired on the hut where Paduano had been working late, typing an article. When they left, her companion was already dead while Joji was dying from her wounds. The villagers for whose sake she had given up her life then took her body carefully and buried her. ■

¹ Also honored in the Bantayog ng mga Bayani Wall of Remembrance. See 247-248 of this volume.

ARMANDO D. PALABAY



BORN

February 18, 1953 in San Fernando, La Union

DIED

November 27, 1974 in Sallapadan, Abra

PARENTS

Francisco Palabay and Felicidad Ducusin

EDUCATION

Elementary: San Fernando Community
School, La Union
Secondary: La Union High School
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

Armando Palabay died in a remote area in the mountains of Abra on November 14, 1974. Less than a month later, his brother Romulo¹ was also killed, this time in the mountains of Ifugao.

The story of the two brothers tells a lot about the painful, but willing sacrifices that families made during the Marcos dictatorship. It also shows how these young men's intent to bring about social justice was violently suppressed by a dictatorial regime.

Armando Palabay (called Mandrake by his friends and siblings) was third to the youngest of nine brothers and sisters. Romulo was born two years ahead of him. They were brought up to be hardworking, generous, fair and compassionate. As high school students in La Union, they were already aware of the many problems brought about by great economic, social and political disparities. Both joined the radical Kabataang Makabayan, and Romulo became chairman of the local KM chapter.

At the University of the Philippines Diliman, the two promptly became involved in the whirlwind of activism that was the First Quarter Storm. Mandrake, in particular, discovered how cultural work – poetry, songs and plays – could serve as a powerful expression of protest, anger, solidarity and hope. Panday Sining was his group.

Then they decided to return to La Union in order to bring the message of revolution straight from the campus. The Palabay household soon turned into a sort of headquarters, with many young people holding meetings there and staying overnight, eating and studying. The boys' other siblings were also drawn into activism.

Shortly after the declaration of martial law, Romulo and Armando were arrested, as was another brother, Crisanto. All three were tortured during interrogation. Their parents supported them all the way, regularly bringing food and other necessities to Camp Olivas in Pampanga, until they were released from detention in April 1973.

Although Mandrake returned to his studies in Diliman after that, he quickly resolved that conditions had changed and that joining the armed resistance was a better option for him. Responding to an urgent call for Ilocano-speaking activists, he made his way to Abra to begin organizing work among the local people.

Organizing the resistance meant building mutual trust first of all, while learning how the community could be helped. Being able to do acupuncture treatment was a great help for Mandrake, while he himself was taught by the villagers about herbal medicine.

But it was very risky work. Constabulary troops hunted down Armando Palabay's group, killing him and his three companions and burying them all together in an unmarked grave near the banks of the Abra River, where they remain until today. ■

¹ Romulo Palabong is featured in volume 1 of the book, *Ang Mamatay Nang Dahil Sa'yo*. See pp. 159-160.

JACINTO D. PEÑA



BORN

March 26, 1949 in Iloilo City

DIED

November 11, 1979 in Gattaran, Cagayan

PARENTS

Faustino M. Peña and Gorgonia Dechavez

EDUCATION

Elementary: Ilaya Elementary School,
Iloilo City
Secondary: Iloilo High School, Iloilo City
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

One of the methodical steps taken by President Marcos when he declared martial law was to immediately seize control of the mass media. Troops were sent to padlock the different newspaper offices and radio and television stations. Many journalists were detained by the military; the rest lost their jobs. Sometime later, the regime began allowing the mass media to operate again, but under strict surveillance and, eventually, self-censorship.

A tiny underground press immediately sprang to life, scrambling to disseminate the information, analysis and calls to action that were eagerly awaited by the antidictatorship resistance.

As soon as they could, those student activists who had not taken to the hills, or been arrested or killed, went into action by reviving the campus press. They moved cautiously at first, limiting themselves to the discussion of nonpolitical, "safe" issues. But it did not take long for the school publications to become vehicles for consolidating the resistance. Even before the legal opposition's commercial publications emerged, the campus press was already publishing articles analyzing programs and policies of the dictatorship, as well as interviews with the victims of human rights violations.

During the early phase of the struggle against martial law, Jacinto Peña was a key figure among those who proudly called themselves revolutionary propagandists in the tradition of Rizal, Lopez Jaena and Antonio Luna. At the University of the Philippines Diliman, he was a reporter for the *Philippine Collegian*. While devoting much of his time to organizing and training student journalists in other campuses, he pursued his studies and graduated with a journalism degree in 1975.

In 1978, Peña joined the campaign for the LABAN candidates led by imprisoned Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. that contested the Interim Batasang Pambansa elections. Although they knew that Marcos would not allow anyone from the genuine opposition to win, still Peña and his colleagues worked hard to voice the message of resistance and to strengthen the people's unity against the dictatorship.

By that time, the underground press had taken root in all the regions of the country, keeping pace with the growth of the organized resistance. Despite the use of primitive technology, and the very real danger to the safety of their staff members, these regional newspapers helped spread the message of struggle and liberation from tyranny. Jack Peña was then asked to train grassroots activists how to gather

accurate news reports, how to write for their intended audience, and how to produce an attractive newspaper.

It was on one of those trips to the countryside that Jack Peña was caught in a military operation. He had just arrived and was preparing to travel on foot further inland, when government forces dragged him out of a house. After forcing him to admit that he was a member of the New People's Army (which he was not), they shot and killed him in cold blood. ■

RAYMUNDO O. PETALCORIN



BORN

May 29, 1949 in Nabunturan, Davao del Norte

DIED

February 27, 1976 in Matilo, Compostela Valley

PARENTS

Crispin Petalcorin and Alberta Ortega

EDUCATION

Elementary: Mainit Elementary School,
Nabunturan, Davao del Norte
Secondary: Assumption College of
Nabunturan
College: University of Mindanao,
Davao City

“Maulaw ako nga aduna pay tawo nga pobre pa kanako.” (“I am ashamed that there are people even poorer than I am”). These words of deeply felt compassion are engraved on the tomb of Raymundo Petalcorin, words that he was often heard to say.

Petalcorin was killed at the age of 27, after four years of living among the poor people of Nabunturan, Davao del Norte (now part of Compostela Valley province). His parents were peasant settlers from the Visayas; they had worked hard for a better life, and his father eventually led their home village of Mainit as barrio captain from 1972 to 1994.

Rhyme, as he was called, was active in church and he had many friends. Taking a cue from the peasant struggles that were breaking out in Mindanao, he cofounded the Young Christian Liberation Movement (YCLM) among the young people of barrio Mainit, which soon expanded its membership and influence in the neighboring villages. They joined group discussions conducted by the Khi Rho provincial chapter based in Tagum. Martial law had not yet been declared and the organized guerrilla groups were not yet operating in the area, but many YCLM members were already thinking that taking up arms was the only way to bring about significant social change.

In September 1972, with the imposition of martial law, Rhyme and his group looked for an armed guerrillas in the Mount Apo area. It took many months for this to happen. Meantime, they moved from village to village, armed with only a few old rifles – many of them homemade and offered by the farmers themselves. They talked about the people's rights, explaining the situation, motivating them to resist oppression and defend their families and homes.

With his easygoing manner, his guitar and his ability to heal illnesses with acupuncture and herbal treatments, Rhyme became a popular figure in the countryside. He composed songs in which the villagers recognized their own experiences: "*Alimacoy*," "*Ay Ferding*," "*Atong komposohon*," "*Gitonto mi*," "*Ikaw gidagmalan*."¹ These were written in the style of the traditional Visayan komposo, featuring a light, humorous touch and improvised lyrics to reflect a given situation.

Rhyme Petalcorin became an important guerrilla leader in the provinces of Davao, targeted for elimination by a notorious politician in Nabunturan. Early one morning, he and his two companions were sleeping when they were surrounded and overpowered by the politician's armed followers. The three fought back with their *paltik* handguns, but they were all killed.

As he had wished, two sentences were written on Petalcorin's tombstone; the first was quoted at the start of this article. The second was an acronym of his name that he had composed himself: "(R)emember (H)uman (Y)ou're (M)y (E)verything." ■

¹ Jimmy Lanoy, "Rhyme Petalcorin (Ka Reming)," undated manuscript, Bantayog archives.

NEMESIO E. PRUDENTE



BORN

December 19, 1927 in Rosario, Cavite

DIED

March 28, 2008 in Cavite

PARENTS

Mamerto Prudente and Felicidad Encarnacion

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Ruth Y. Garcia / 3

EDUCATION

Elementary: Rosario Elementary School, Cavite
Secondary: University of the Philippines Cavite Provincial High School
College: US Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, New York (USA)
Postgraduate: San Francisco State College, San Francisco, California (USA); University of Southern California (USA)

Nemesio E. Prudente served for many years as president of what is now the country's educational institution with the largest student population – the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP). He was president of the Philippine College of Commerce (PCC)¹ from 1962 to 1972; and PUP from 1986 until his retirement in 1992.

It was not a coincidence at all that Prudente's years of service did not include the martial law years. In 1971, he had already been detained for several months in a military stockade after President Marcos suspended the writ of habeas corpus. Still he continued to campaign actively against repressive government policies, and encouraged PCC students and faculty to engage in militant protest actions during those turbulent years.

With the declaration of martial law in 1972, Prudente resigned his position and went underground while his family went into exile in the United States. He had many friends from all walks of life, and they provided him with material and political support. His analysis of the country's situation and suggestions for carrying out the resistance were valuable contributions to the antidictatorship movement.

Prudente was again arrested and detained for the next six years in various military camps. After his release, President Corazon Aquino

appointed him president of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, in 1978.

Democratic governance, nationalism, critical thinking, academic freedom, humanism, solidarity with the poor, student and faculty welfare were among the hallmarks of Prudente's leadership as an educator. Even after the Marcos dictatorship had been brought to an end, he continued to denounce human rights violations under the new government. Once, he outraged the military by opening the gates of PUP and welcoming into the campus scores of villagers escaping from militarization.

Though firmly committed and a passionate believer in radical change, Prudente was a man who preferred to stay in the background. Still, two assassination attempts were made against him: one in November 1987 in which his lawyer was killed, and another in June 1988 where three of his companions died and he himself was seriously wounded. Five members of the Manila police force were convicted in 1999 for their role in the second ambush.

Doc Prudente – as he was fondly called by generations of activists – died in 2008 at the age of 81.

¹ The Philippine College of Commerce (PCC) became the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) in 1978.

MIGUEL G. PURUGGANAN



BORN

November 18, 1931 in Cabagan, Isabela

DIED

July 7, 2011 in Ilagan, Isabela

PARENTS

Jose Purugganan and Remedios Gatan

EDUCATION

Elementary: Cabagan Elementary School,
Cabagan, Isabela
Secondary: Immaculate Conception Minor
Seminary, Vigan, Ilocos Sur
College: University of Santo Tomas
Central Seminary, Manila
Postgraduate: Pontifical Gregorian University,
Rome (Italy)

In the dawn hours of August 24, 1983, with the nation reeling in shock from the cold-blooded assassination, barely three days earlier, of former Senator Benigno Aquino Jr., about 100 fully-armed, rough-mannered men conducted a midnight raid on the bishop's palace in Ilagan, Isabela.

Although the military operation drew relatively little public attention at the time, it was a scandalous event nonetheless, for the dictatorship's constabulary troops had invaded the residence of a very high-ranking official of the Roman Catholic church, Bishop Miguel Purugganan. The operation was a failure as the raiders found none of the persons or documents they were supposedly looking for.

The raid was not too surprising, however, especially since the regime had become very suspicious of Bishop Purugganan – fondly called *Apung Mike* by the local people -- and his social action programs.

Under the dictatorship, Isabela and the entire Cagayan Valley had become heavily militarized. The reason being given was the growing strength of the New People's Army in the region. But the armed forces were actually enforcing the business interests of Marcos' allies against the efforts of the people to defend their rights to the land, their dignity and their livelihood.

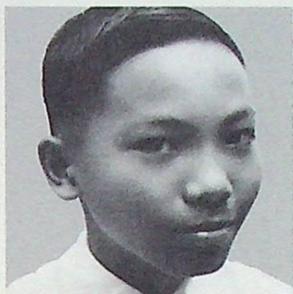
The diocese under Bishop Purugganan bannered social justice and human rights, a policy that he defined as “translating the social teachings of the Church into concrete programs and services for [the] total human liberation” of the people.¹ Many religious and lay workers, inspired by his teachings and example, volunteered to serve in these programs and services and even joined cause-oriented groups with similar goals.

Notably, the diocese threw its strong support behind the struggle of the peasants in the Hacienda San Antonio and Hacienda Santa Isabel. This case involved some 20,000 farmers and their families who had long been working on the two haciendas’ 11,000 hectares; the land was being taken over by a corporation owned by Marcos’ close associate Eduardo Cojuangco. The people organized themselves to resist the takeover, being enforced by the military and civilian guards – resulting in mass arrests, torture of the people’s leaders, and houses being burned. Marcos himself had to defuse the situation by declaring the land to be under agrarian reform – but this has not happened until now.

Bishop Purugganan passed away in 2011 at the age of 79. ■

¹ Fr. Edwin C. Ramirez, “The Graced History of the Diocese of Iligan” pp. 10-12.

RONALD JAN F. QUIMPO



BORN

June 18, 1954 in Iloilo City

DISAPPEARED

October 29, 1977 in Manila

PARENTS

Ishmael Quimpo and Esperanza Ferrer

EDUCATION

Elementary: San Beda College, Manila
Secondary: Philippine Science High School,
Quezon City
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

“There was a series of sightings of Ronald Jan during the time of his disappearance. Some of his friends, all former activists, said they had seen him in several public places: standing on a busy walkway in Cubao, taking a snack in a popular restaurant frequented by students, or on a bus, seated by the window.

“Ronald Jan, they said, behaved rather oddly. Each time a friend approached him or came close, Jan gave him or her the snub, deliberately it seemed, even pretending not to recognize the individual. Sensing that something was probably wrong, they moved on without greeting Jan. They surmised that the military had probably captured him and were using him as a sort of a bait or a ‘tracer.’

“Military or police undercover agents would then have followed, or pounced on anyone who greeted or sat down to talk to him.”¹

These scenes could have been lifted straight from a movie, a thriller involving counterespionage and casual assassins. Unfortunately, Ronald Jan Quimpo’s family had to accept the plausibility of such stories that would explain why he failed to return home after telling his sister one morning that he would be back for dinner that night.

Ronald Jan was an activist and tortured in 1973 by government agents. Many of his

friends had been similarly detained, tortured or forcibly disappeared. It was a brutal time for those who opposed the Marcos dictatorship.

Already espousing radical politics since high school, he dropped out of college after less than a year in order to “go full-time” in the antidictatorship movement. In 1973, he was with two other friends from school when they were arrested by a constabulary antinarcotics unit (though illegal drugs were never involved in the case). Every evening, they were severely beaten and subjected to extreme forms of physical punishment. In an adjacent room, two women were also being tortured, resulting in the death of one, Lilosia Hilao.²

Released after three months, Quimpo returned to school and kept mostly to himself. But his younger brother Ishmael Jr. joined the armed guerrilla underground in 1976. In October 1977 the Quimpo residence was raided by constabulary soldiers looking for Jun.

Two weeks after the raid, Ronald Jan vanished. Did the military mistake him for his brother? To this day, there have been no answers. ■

¹ From an account of the life and disappearance of Ronald Jan Quimpo, written by Susan Quimpo dated October 2009, Bantayog archives.

² Lilosia Hilao is featured in volume 1 of *Ang Mamatay Nang Dahil Sa'yo*, pp. 95-96.

³ See Ishmael E. Quimpo Jr., in *ibid*, pp. 173-174

VICTOR D. REYES



BORN

December 18, 1951 in Quezon City

DISAPPEARED

May 11, 1977 in Manila

PARENTS

Mauro Reyes and Anastacia Dandan

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Agnes H. Calda / 2

EDUCATION

Elementary: Kamuning Elementary School,
Quezon City

Secondary: Quezon City High School

College: FEATI University, Manila

Victor D. Reyes was a young labor activist who disappeared without a trace, in 1977, together with a well-known lawyer.

His family searched everywhere for him after being told that Reyes had failed to show up the night before at a meeting that he and Hermon Lagman¹ had scheduled with the leaders of a workers' union in Manila. His parents died without seeing him, the youngest of their six children, again, and his two young children grew up without memories of their father. The authorities have failed to provide any answer since then.

Reyes had been an engineering student at FEATI University in Manila before martial law. It was a time when thousands of young people were being inspired by the hope of radical change in society, and many flocked to join the militant organizations that offered comprehensive analysis and programs of action. They were given assignments to spread out and form new chapters in other schools, in communities in the countryside, factories and other work places. Usually, they began by doing "social investigation" (inquiring about the people's specific problems) and then finding solutions through collective action.

A member of the Samahan ng Demokratikong Kabataan (SDK), Victor Reyes joined jeepney drivers and shop

workers in Malabon in their efforts to improve their working conditions. He mobilized support for restive workers in a large knitwear factory in Caloocan. He established working relations with labor leader Crispin Beltran² who in the 1960s was a union organizer of the Confederation of Labor of the Philippines, a small federation some of whose members were big unions in the Southern Tagalog region.

By the time martial law was imposed in 1972, Reyes was already a full-time labor organizer. The Marcos dictatorship instituted new and repressive laws. It placed the workers sector firmly under its thumb through the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines. Independent union organizing was considered subversive. To learn how to navigate the new terrain, Reyes took a course at the University of the Philippines Labor Center in 1975. His work had become more difficult and more dangerous, but he persisted.

Quietly performing the many tasks necessary to keep the movement going forward, Victor Reyes always remained in the background. He seemed to prefer it that way. “He believed in the good in human beings and the protection of human rights,” explained his wife Agnes. “He devoted his life to the struggle for equality and social justice.” ■

¹ Herman Lagman is featured in *Ang Mamatay Nang Dahil Sa'yo, Volume 1*, pp. 119-120.

² See pp. 31-32 of this volume

CIRILO A. RIGOS



BORN

March 29, 1932 in Candelaria, Quezon

DIED

June 21, 1996 in Makati City

PARENTS

Juan Rigos and Paula Aquino

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Lydia de Guia / 2

EDUCATION

Elementary: Candelaria Elementary School,
Candelaria Quezon
Secondary: Tayabas Academy, Quezon
College: Union Theological Seminary,
Manila
Postgraduate: Union Theological Seminary,
New York
San Francisco Theological
Seminary, California
University of Chicago (USA)

The imposition of martial law in the Philippines in September 1972 instantly created a climate of fear that kept most people from saying or doing anything that might offend the government. It became impossible for friends to meet in public places because they feared that spies would be listening to their conversations. It became especially dangerous to be associated with persons who were known to be independent-minded or at least not pro-Marcos.

A Protestant church in the heart of Manila was able to open a window that allowed a bit of fresh air into the stifling atmosphere. In 1973, just a few months after the declaration of martial law, the Wednesday Forum began meeting at the Cosmopolitan Church on Taft Avenue. The forum brought together not only Protestants but also other religious leaders, professionals, academics, opposition politicians, and even some members of the Marcos government.

Every week they gathered at the social hall of the church to discuss public concerns: "The purpose was to know the true facts, as distinguished from the reported 'facts' in the controlled media, and thereafter to proclaim the truth and work for freedom and justice and human dignity, at a crucial time when so many had been deprived of their basic human rights."¹ Not surprisingly, a number of those who attended were later arrested and detained by the military.

It was Cirilo Rigos, the courageous pastor of Cosmopolitan Church, who convened and hosted Wednesday Forum. From the pulpit, he continued to deliver passionate, stinging sermons criticizing the injustices perpetrated by the regime. Due to pressure from some conservative members, however, he felt he had to resign from his position in 1977. This resulted in Rigos, and Wednesday Forum, transferring to Ellinwood Church, where he served for the next 11 years.

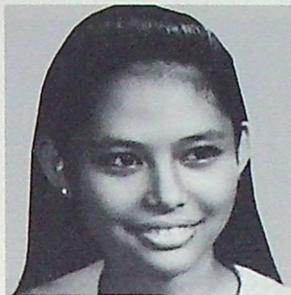
Pastor Rigos was also instrumental in organizing the Paglingap ministry of his church, which attended to the needs of political detainees and their families. He worked for the release of many such detainees.

After the ouster of Marcos, Rigos was appointed by President Corazon Aquino to the Constitutional Commission which drafted the 1987 Constitution.

Cirilo Rigos served as pastor of Cosmopolitan Church for a second time in 1993, until his death from cancer in 1996. ■

¹ In Jovito R. Salonga, "Who we are and what Cosmopolitan Church stands for," message delivered during the 61st anniversary celebration of Cosmopolitan Church on March 20, 1994.

JESSICA M. SALES



BORN

Oct. 20, 1951 in Manila

DISAPPEARED

July 31, 1977 in Makati City

PARENTS

Jorge Sales and Eufrocina Mendez

EDUCATION

College: Centro Escolar University,
Manila
Postgraduate: University of the Philippines
Los Baños

From all accounts, Jessica Sales was an exceptionally good teacher. Right after graduation with a degree in social sciences from Centro Escolar University (which she obtained *cum laude*), she began teaching at the University of the Philippines in Manila, and later at UP Los Baños.

During the early years of the Marcos dictatorship, she continued to handle her classes in sociology and political science. She always advised her students to look for the truth, and not act “as if there was no martial law at all...calling a spade a spade.”

Believing that it would be wrong to dissolve campus organizations because of security concerns, she encouraged the students to form all kinds of associations, from trekking groups to poetry clubs and rodeo clubs. It was she who initiated the formation of the Student Christian Movement in UP Los Baños. No wonder the young people loved her, inviting her to be their adviser or honorary member.

Sales also had close relationships with her peers. She was active in discussions with her colleagues in the faculty on how to continue being relevant in spite of the constraints on academic freedom and other civil liberties. The Los Baños chapter of the teachers’ organization Kapisanan ng mga Gurong Makabayan (KAGUMA) came about as a result of these discussions. She even joined

the Folk Medicine Society, whose members included physicians and nurses, sociologists and biology students, to promote the knowledge and use of traditional herbal medicine.

As a serious teacher, she made time to pursue further studies; she was getting ready to defend her master's thesis in rural sociology at UP Los Baños. Her involvement with the Student Christian Movement was not a superficial one, for in May 1977 she was sent to Hong Kong to represent the organization at a conference of the Asian Youth Mission. In the following month, she attended an assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia in Penang, Malaysia.

In mid-August of that year, Sales' mother learned that she had not been seen in Los Baños for the past two weeks. Seven others of Jessica's friends, it was further learned, had also gone missing at about the same time. Mrs. Sales and other relatives went to the military, but got no credible answers. As the weeks and months went by, the anguish of her family only worsened upon hearing that Jessica had been mysteriously sighted at different times and locations.

Though the bodies of Jessica's seven companions have been found, there has been no trace, until today, of what happened to her. ■

AUGUSTO S. SANCHEZ



BORN

August 6, 1932 in Manila

DIED

February 15, 2003

PARENTS

Fernando K. Sanchez and Josefa D. Santos

SPOUSE / CHILD

Lolita Panton / 5

EDUCATION

Elementary: Pasig Elementary School,
Pasig, Rizal
Secondary: Rizal High School, Rizal
College: San Beda College, Manila

Augusto S. Sanchez continues to be remembered today as the Minister of Labor and Employment who was forced out of the government – for being pro-labor.

It was during the long years of the Marcos dictatorship that Bobbit Sanchez found his calling as a human rights lawyer, defending people “whom we did not know...[being] called even in the middle of the night... ready to go to a meeting at any hour and getting no reward except the personal satisfaction that we helped,” according to his fellow lawyer, Joker Arroyo.¹

Elected delegate of the second district of Rizal to the Constitutional Convention of 1971-1973, Sanchez led the Movement of Attorneys for Brotherhood, Integrity and Nationalism (MABINI) as its founding chair in 1980-1984, returning to the position in 1987-1993. (His leadership of the group was interrupted when he ran and won a seat, representing Pasig and Marikina, in the Batasang Pambansa of the final Marcos years.)

From the lucrative practice of corporate lawyering, the martial law experience developed in Sanchez a fierce advocacy of working-class rights, derived no doubt from closer interaction with the many poor people that he had committed to defend. He was not only a lawyer, but a prominent member of the “parliament of the streets” that mobilized

massive popular protests against the Marcos regime.

Thus, he was named by President Corazon Aquino to her first Cabinet as Minister of Labor and Employment. For the first time, it was said, the highest government official in charge of labor concerns was one who enjoyed the trust and confidence of the workers themselves. But his open advocacy of the sector's interests – as well as his progressive views on land reform, onerous foreign debts, the United States military bases in the Philippines – made him unacceptable to the big businessmen, the military, and conservative politicians who supported the new government. They called him a communist, and there were threats to his life.

Sanchez lasted less than a year in the job that was “by far the one he loved most.”² After a questionable defeat in the 1987 senatorial elections, he returned to active involvement in public issues and his private law practice. He died in 2003. ■

¹ “A nationalist to the Bone,” February 19, 2003.

² In Winnie Jimenez, “Progressive hope,” *Midweek*, April 29, 1987, p. 14.

LAZARO P. SILVA



BORN

March 4, 1952 in San Jose, Nueva Ecija

DIED

August 13, 1976 in Zambales

EDUCATION

Elementary: Pio del Pilar Elementary School,
Quezon City
Secondary: Philippine Science High School,
Quezon City
College: Ateneo de Manila University,
Quezon City

He was *kalog* (fun-loving and lighthearted). Having gained admission to a high school with strict academic standards, he refused to be known as a nerd, claiming that all he wanted was to “pass, and have a good time”¹ with his *barkada*, the guys he hung out with.

Lazzie Silva went on to enter college in 1970, and it was there, as an Ateneo freshman, that he began joining rallies: at first by himself, and then as a member of the radical Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan. The protest actions escalated. In February 1971, someone he knew from high school (Pastor Mesina) was shot dead at a barricade at the University of the Philippines campus in Diliman. Then, a few months later, he witnessed how government troops fired at a rally, killing four workers.

These experiences made a lasting impact on Silva. He now got serious, doing organizing work among the youth and the poor communities in Marikina and Quezon City. Eventually he left school to devote himself full-time to the movement. His commitment only grew stronger when President Marcos declared martial law.

In late 1973, he was arrested outside a printing press where he and another activist had been mimeographing a political manifesto. Silva was jailed for six months in Fort Bonifacio before being released (the fact that his father was a constabulary officer

probably helped). While in detention, the many communal activities kept him busy; he even learned how to sew pants for himself and others.

Although he went right back to his organizational tasks afterwards, Silva had made up his mind to leave the city and join the armed guerrillas in the countryside. In the remote communities of Zambales, where he was assigned, life was very hard especially for a city-bred youth. But he was determined to share his life with the people: they taught him how to plow, plant and harvest; once, he helped to deliver a baby. When his girlfriend suggested that he take a few days' break back home in the city, he refused because "he might be tempted to stay." She knew that he had "set a standard for himself and he was set on meeting that goal." He asked her to come and visit him instead.²

But before that could happen, Silva met his death in an isolated hut somewhere in the hills. On August 13, 1975, a military unit was able to surround his group undetected. As they opened fire, Lazzie Silva decided he would stay on and hold off the attackers so that his comrades could escape the cordon.

He was so young, just 23, said his girlfriend many years later. "The happy-go-lucky guy that I met turned out to be a real hero. He

died fighting for his beliefs and in service to the people he loved."³ ■

¹ Personal communication, D. Bibat, March 16, 2001.

² Email, L. Castilla, March 2, 2001.

³ Ibid.

JAIME L. SIN



BORN

August 31, 1928 in New Washington, Aklan

DIED

June 21, 2005 in San Juan City

PARENTS

Juan Sin and Maxima Lachica

EDUCATION

Elementary: New Washington Elementary School, Aklan
Secondary: Seminary Menor, Iloilo City
College: St. Vincent Ferrer Seminary, Jaro, Iloilo City

Cardinal Jaime L. Sin's unforgettable moment in Philippine history came when he called on the Filipino people to protect the military mutineers who had turned against President Marcos, setting off the events that ended many long years of struggle against the dictatorship.

"We must have a buffer of peaceful civilians to prevent violence and bloodshed," he said in a message broadcast over the Catholic station Radio Veritas. "Come out to Edsa!"

In a very short time, the space in front of Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City was filled up with thousands and thousands of people, prepared to block the heavily-armed troops that had been sent to put down the mutiny. By the fourth day, the Marcos regime had fallen. The dictator and his family were rescued by American military helicopters, taken out of Malacañang and into exile in Hawaii. Jubilant crowds poured into the presidential residence and did what they wished there, in symbolic vengeance.

As preeminent head of the Roman Catholic Church in the country, Sin threw the weight of the institution behind the new government led by Corazon Aquino. Until his retirement in 2003, he continued to register the Church's views in what he deemed to be matters of public morality.

More controversial was the cardinal's role under the dictatorship, especially during the early years when he declared a policy of "critical collaboration" with the Marcos regime. Progressive members of the clergy, priests and nuns alike, disagreed, saying that such a stance tolerated one-man rule and condoned human-rights abuses. Some bishops supported the people's resistance to martial law.

Opposition to the dictatorship kept on growing, and in 1983 Senator Benigno Aquino Jr. decided to return home, only to be killed at the airport. Until then, Sin had been careful to balance "collaboration" with "criticism," but that was the tipping point. The prelate used his personal prestige and the influence of his position to exalt Aquino's sacrifice, further emboldening the people to fight on for the Marcos regime's ouster. When the dictator was forced to hold snap elections, the Catholic Church was one major player in ensuring that the people's votes would be counted fairly, through its support for the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL).

Jaime Sin was born in Aklan. He was the seventh of 16 children born to Juan Sin, an immigrant from China, and Maxima Lachica. Ordained to the priesthood in 1954, he was appointed bishop of Jaro, Iloilo in 1967, and archbishop after five years.

Martial law was already in place when Sin was named archbishop of Manila in 1974. A further recognition of his ecclesiastical leadership came in 1976, when he was elected cardinal at the age of 47.

Cardinal Sin died in 2005 and was buried in a crypt at the Manila Cathedral after a week of national mourning. ■

MODESTO C. SISON



BORN

September 3, 1947 in Muntinlupa, Rizal

DIED

August 14, 1977 in Mauban, Quezon

PARENTS

Pantaleon Sison and Soledad Castro

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Eileen Belamide / 2

EDUCATION

Elementary: Nafco Elementary School,
Kapalong, Davao del Norte
Secondary: Ateneo de Davao High School,
Davao City
College: Ateneo de Davao, Davao City

“I was not surprised when I first heard what happened to him. He had always rooted for the underdog. This, plus his conviction about what was right and wrong, and how he acted like a protective big brother... it was true to form.”

Bong Sison, according to his childhood friend Tommy Tongson, looked after him when they were kids, even if they were the same age, because he was not as strong as Bong. This was in Davao, where they both grew up and where Bong’s father, a World War II veteran, was an official at the Bureau of Prisons.

After graduating from Ateneo de Davao with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1969, Sison taught social science subjects at the Maryknoll High School in Sigaboy, Davao Oriental. He became an active member of the Basic Christian Community in his parish, and through this program he was introduced to Khi Rho, the youth arm of the Federation of Free Farmers.

Sison and his future wife Eileen became Khi Rho activists, helping the small farmers fight for their rights over the land they had been tilling. The logging industry was booming in Mindanao and with the use of the military and their own private armed groups, the big logging companies were running roughshod over the farmers (many of them settlers). Sison was later designated the coordinator

for Khi Rho in Mindanao. There were chapters in Agusan and the three Davao provinces. But already, a sizable group of organizers, he and his wife among them, were finding a more attractive or effective option in the radical national democratic movement.

After martial law was declared, his wife, Eileen Sison relocated to Manila and began staying with their two children with her family in Cavite. He eventually followed and an underground group that was organizing the antidictatorship resistance in the Southern Tagalog region.

His worried about his family's safety and so they got used to seeing him just once in a while. But when he failed to return home for his son's first birthday on July 29, Eileen sensed something wrong. Searching for him, his wife learned that his group had not been accounted for since August 31, when they were last seen in the vicinity of a big hospital in Makati.

Weeks after their disappearance, the military reported the death of several persons in Mauban, Quezon in an alleged encounter between government troops and armed guerrillas. On September 27, the body of Bong Sison was found by his family in a common grave in Lucena City. They then gave him a proper burial, engraving these words on his final resting place:

Buhay inialay sa sambayanan, bunga kalayaan
(Freedom is the fruit of a life lived for the people.) ■

TERESITO D. SISON



BORN

October 3, 1930 in Angeles City, Pampanga

DIED

November 30, 1980 in Angeles City, Pampanga

PARENTS

Paulino Sison and Catalina De Guzman

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Ana M. Cortes / 4

EDUCATION

Elementary: Holy Family Academy,
Angeles City
Secondary: Holy Family Academy,
Angeles City
College: San Jose Seminary, Manila

When a teacher is remembered with much respect and affection by his or her students, who continue to visit and say their thanks long after leaving school, it is a source of quiet pride for the mentor – more than enough compensation for the modest pay and the long hours of preparation and classroom work.

Teresito Sison was one such teacher. He was handling English classes at Holy Family College in Angeles City when he became a political activist due to the influence of his students. In the late 1960s, their bold declarations of nationalist fervor and solidarity with the working people struck a sympathetic chord in the teacher's heart. Not only did he become a dependable ally but even better, he began to undertake his own initiatives to realize their common goals.

Radical activism came to Angeles City in the 1960s, at the height of the United States' war in Vietnam. The city hosted Clark Air Force Base – a premier US military facility in the world at the time – and the related issues of national sovereignty, economic dependence and social issues were familiar problems for the activists of Angeles.

Among Sison's friends were national youth leaders like Rodolfo Salas and Nilo Tayag; the Benedictine deacon Carlos Tayag (an activist who later became a victim of enforced disappearance) was his

contemporary at the San Jose Seminary. He joined them at rallies and demonstrations, and became a member of Kabataang Makabayan. Representing his sector, he attended the conference of the Movement for the Advancement of Nationalism (MAN) convened by Senator Lorenzo M. Tañada in 1969.

During that tumultuous period before martial law, Sison organized the Salaguinto Dramatic Guild in his school; it was able to present three plays, selected for their progressive social message. At the same time, he also organized a teachers' union. Pressing for recognition and asserting their economic and democratic rights, they launched a strike. When the next semester began, the union chairman, Sison, and the other leaders, all lost their teaching jobs. In addition, Sison's house was sprayed with bullets by a local armed group. He then decided to move back to his adoptive parents' home in Concepcion, Tarlac, where he stayed close to the farmers and workers of Hacienda Luisita.

In 1971, President Marcos suspended the writ of habeas corpus, which meant that persons could be detained even without any warrant of arrest. Teresito Sison was one of those picked up. Already in frail health and in his 40s, he was tortured and locked up in Camp Crame. He was charged with

subversion along with 13 others, and was released only in 1973. He was again locked up for a brief period in 1974.

Sison's ordeals during his two prison confinements aggravated his poor health (he was diabetic and had developed kidney disease). But until his death at the age of 50, his former students still visited him. He continued to believe in the nationalist cause and tried his best to still keep contributing his share to the common struggle. ■

NICOLAS M. SOLANA JR.



BORN

February 13, 1949 in Davao City

DIED

April 17, 1975 in Davao Oriental

PARENTS

Nicolas Solana and Paulina Moralizon

EDUCATION

Elementary: Davao Central Elementary
School, Davao City
Secondary: Ateneo de Davao
College: Ateneo de Manila University
(Quezon City)
Ateneo de Davao

The jokes, the drinking sessions, the basketball games, the beloved guitar – all these were part of Nick Solana’s life as a “regular college guy” who lived in the dorm and received an allowance from home.

He acted in plays, too, and sang in the glee club, for a while even becoming a member of a popular singing group (the Ambivalent Crowd). Having been national champion in the widely known Voice of Democracy oratorical contest, he easily stood out among his peers.

Perhaps seeking answers that would satisfy his inner questioning, Solana joined a Catholic renewal movement for the youth, Days with the Lord. The experience led him to become “fully and totally committed” to loving and serving others, the basic principle of being a Christian.

After graduating with a degree in economics, Solana returned to Davao City and enrolled at the Ateneo de Davao’s school of law. He responded to the turmoil of the times – the social unrest and repression being felt in Manila had been festering also in Mindanao – by introducing Days with the Lord to the slums of his home city. Together with a Jesuit mentor, Fr. Antonio Cuna, he immersed himself in the urban poor areas, particularly in the area known as “Boulevard,” a teeming coastal community.

But if Solana succeeded in “taming” the local toughies in these places, he was being transformed as well. He was appalled by the poverty and unemployment prevailing in the slums. Through his conversations with the people, he found that most of them had come to the city after losing their livelihoods – driven away from the land they had been tilling because of the rapid expansion of plantations owned by multinationals and the local big businessmen. Thus, his brother Joe recalled, he began talking about “land for the landless.”

At the same time, Solana joined another school-based group, the Malayang Lipunan, which assisted to victims of calamities and supported various causes such as the farmers’ protest against aerial spraying in a giant banana plantation. He rallied fellow students behind a wage strike staged by elementary school teachers at the Ateneo. He tried to correct some of their mistaken ideas arising from what he termed, “miseducation.”

By the time he finished law school in 1973, martial law had been declared. Realizing the futility of pursuing the peaceful path to social reforms, Solana decided not to take the bar and become a practicing lawyer. Instead, he chose to join the guerrillas fighting the dictatorship.

The poor people in the mountains of Davao came to know Nick Solana as Ka Noni, who totally committed himself in love and service to them. He was killed in an ambush in 1975. ■

ARTURO M. TACA



BORN

February 11, 1945 in Manila

DIED

February 11, 1997 in Missouri, USA

PARENTS

Vivencio Taca and Basilisa Montemayor

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Maria Teresa Calvo / 5

EDUCATION

Elementary: Letran College, Manila
Secondary: Letran College, Manila
College: University of Santo Tomas,
Manila

Arturo M. Taca was a young doctor who was able to seek safety in the United States not long after martial law was declared in the country. His parents, both members of the oppositionist Liberal Party, had been removed from the government positions they had been holding. Arturo also lost his job in the city hospital of Manila and was briefly detained for questioning in February 1973.

It took four years for the American government to approve Arturo Taca's application for political asylum. Meanwhile, he was able to practice medicine and bring his wife and children to the United States.

But Taca did not forget the dire situation that he had left behind. A prolific writer – he began his own campaign for Senator Benigno Aquino's release by writing letters to influential US senators. Senator Aquino was a close friend of his family and his wedding *ninong*(sponsor).

In 1977, Taca was elected to lead the Movement for a Free Philippines (MFP) chapter in St. Louis, Missouri, where he lived. With zeal and dedication, he did his best to mobilize support among the Filipinos in the area. He spent his own money and time in publishing and circulating a newsletter containing news from home, analytical pieces, and commentaries reflecting opposition to the dictatorship's abuses and wrong policies. He welcomed

MFP leaders and members in his home whenever they came around. When Aquino was finally allowed to go into exile himself, Taca was there to give assistance ninong.

In pursuing these activities in behalf of the Filipino people back home, Taca found out for himself how much the Ronald Reagan administration was protecting Marcos. Assigned by the MFP to research in the American military archives concerning the dictator's records during World War II, Taca spent years trying to take a look at the Marcos files. Repeatedly denied access, his efforts were unsuccessful. It was only later that an American scholar was permitted to study the documents proving that indeed, Marcos was not a war hero as he claimed to be.

Moreover, Filipinos opposed to the dictatorship were subjected to harassments and violation of civil rights by the American authorities, at the instigation of a well-funded network of Marcos intelligence agents. Called to testify before a grand jury in San Francisco (California), Taca refused to participate in an investigation that he said was "intended to silence legitimate opposition to the Marcos dictatorship."

After the regime had been toppled in 1986, Taca returned to the Philippines for the first time in 13 years. He had always remained a Filipino citizen. As a token of recognition,

President Corazon Aquino gave him an honorary appointment (at a salary of PHP1.00 a year) as attaché to the Philippine Mission to the United Nations in New York City.

Taca's intense involvement in the antidictatorship movement was believed by his family to have worsened his health problems (he had emphysema). He died in his sleep on his 52nd birthday in 1997. ■

CRISPIN S. TAGAMOLILA

BORN

January 7, 1945 in Tubungan, Iloilo

DIED

April 16, 1972 in Echague, Isabela

PARENTS

Manuel Tagamolila and Casiana Sandoval

SPOUSE

Elda Bala

EDUCATION

Elementary: La Paz Elementary School, Iloilo
Secondary: Iloilo High School
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman
Ateneo de Manila University
Philippine Constabulary Law
School

In 1967, at the age of 22, Crispin Tagamolila joined the Philippine Army where he was initially assigned to do administrative work and allowed to take up law studies.

It took only a few years for him to fully realize that the organization of which he had become a part was not where he should be. For someone who wanted to help those in need – “*gusto kong tumulong sa mahihirap at inaapi,*” he often said – being a lieutenant in the Armed Forces of the Philippines was an eye-opening experience.¹

He observed how army officers treated enlisted men like servants, and the prevalence of “palakasan” or political patronage.

Training to be a military lawyer, at the same time handling classes in nationalism at the Philippine Constabulary Law School, Tagamolila began reading voraciously. He spent most of his allowance on books about history and political science. He was also taking up a masteral course at the Ateneo de Manila University.

It was during this time of intensive study and observation of the situation around him that Tagamolila’s radical politico-social outlook took shape. He began contributing small amounts to finance the activities of the student activists pouring into the streets. He stayed away from anti-riot duties. He

actively campaigned for ex-Major Bonifacio Gillego, whose liberal views set him against the military establishment, to win a seat in the Constitutional Convention of 1970. Later that year, Tagamolila's best friend, Lt. Victor Corpus, made a sensational defection to the New People's Army.

Just three months later, Tagamolila also defected. In a statement, he said: "I have realized that the AFP is the primary instrument of suppression of the righteous dissent of the suffering masses." He went on to "testify and witness" to the extent the United States' control of the Philippine military, of the corruption of the armed forces by President Marcos to ensure their loyalty to him, and the elimination of activists by military intelligence units and liquidation squads.

Crispin Tagamolila was killed in a gunbattle with government troops in Isabelala in 1972. Two years later, his younger brother Antonio,² died in an encounter in the mountains of Panay. ■

¹ See "The Defectors: Part 2 / Lt. Crispin Tagamolila joins Corpus," by Millet G. Martinez, *The Sunday Times Magazine*, April 25, 1971, pp. 10-11.

² Antonio Tagamolila is featured in *Ang Mamatay Nang Dahil Sa'yo*, Volume 1, pp. 199-200.

MARY CHRISTINE TAN



BORN

November 30, 1930 in Manila

DIED

October 6, 2003 in Metro Manila

PARENTS

Bienvenido Tan, Sr. and Salome Limgenco

EDUCATION

Elementary: St. Scholastica's College, Manila
Secondary: St. Scholastica's College, Manila
College: St. Scholastica's College, Manila

Among the most formidable opponents of the Marcos martial law regime were Filipino nuns, once notable only for their religious piety and faithful service to the Catholic church and its hierarchy.

They accompanied families to military camps, looking for missing relatives. They visited detention centers, providing them bags of food, clothes and other basic necessities. They signed petitions, attended rallies and bore placards denouncing the regime's abuses. They whispered words of comfort to political detainees who had been tortured. They circulated underground news bulletins. They kept records of information they received. They sheltered activists who were being hunted down by the military.

Sr. Christine Tan, RGS, was the fearless leader of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of Women in the Philippines, known for her militancy and staunch defense of human rights, especially of the poor. In 1970, her congregation, the Good Shepherd sisters, had elected her to be the first Filipino superior of the Philippine province.

With the imposition of the Marcos dictatorship, Tan did not hesitate to support the opposition. Cory Aquino, the wife of imprisoned Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr., had been her schoolmate. Many prominent detainees were also her friends. "Ninoy and I appreciated very much her strong and

courageous stand against the dictatorship,” Mrs. Aquino said. “She made us feel that she would always be there for us. She would attend Ninoy’s trial before the military commission. She was also very good to our children and they all liked her and felt they could open up to her.”¹

Tan had many friends in high places (having been born to a socially prominent family), but her heart was really with the poor. After the end of her term as RGS superior, she went to live in Leveriza, a slum community in Manila, with some other nuns. There they helped the poor help themselves through the livelihood programs and cooperatives of the Alay Kapwa Christian Community. For the next twenty years

Tan would be part of the people’s lives, an experience that gave deeper meaning to her religious calling.

When President Corazon Aquino came to power after the ouster of the Marcos regime, she appointed Tan to be a member of the commission that would draft the country’s new constitution. There she aligned herself with the progressive bloc of commissioners, making valuable contributions to the discussions on agrarian reform, anti-dynasty and other important provisions.

Before her death due to cancer in 2003, Sr. Christine Tan continued to speak out in behalf of the poor on various public issues. ■

¹ Quoted in “Sister Christine Tan: friend of the poor,” by Ceres P. Doyo, *Sunday Inquirer Magazine*, April 16, 2000.

RAQUEL EDRALIN TIGLAO



BORN

June 26, 1947 in Manila

DIED

February 28, 2001 in San Juan City

PARENTS

Leo Edralin and Teresa Aricheta

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Rigoberto Tiglao / 3

EDUCATION

Elementary: Pagadian Central School,
Pagadian, Zamboanga del Sur
Secondary: St. Columban College,
Pagadian, Zamboanga del Sur
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

Raquel Tiglao was born in Manila but spent most of her childhood in Mindanao where her father was assigned by the Bureau of Lands. Her mother was a nurse, a strong woman who raised eight children.

In the student movement that was in the front ranks of the antidictatorship opposition, Tiglao learned to value the various roles that women could play in society and revolution. She was a psychology student at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, a member of Kabataang Makabayan, and a well-known figure, already known as “Rock,” in the political mass actions before martial law. She helped organize the first unions of women workers in 1970.

Knowing she would be targeted for arrest with the declaration of martial law, Tiglao went underground in 1972. She quit her studies and married Rigoberto Tiglao. Later they were captured and detained for almost two years in Fort Bonifacio with their little daughter Ria, from whom Rock refused to be separated.

Released from detention and placed under house arrest, Tiglao tried at first to resume her university studies. But because the military continued to keep her under strict surveillance, she decided to drop out of school again and devote herself to the movement.

New challenges were arising by this time: there were so many women activists in detention, as well as fulltime organizers in the antidictatorship resistance, and many of them had young children. Their families needed help. Sometimes their grandparents were unable to care for the children. Military harassment threatened their safety. Thus, Parents' Alternative Inc. was organized as a community day care center. Tiglao served as its executive director from 1980 to 1982. Aside from conducting Lamaze training courses (to prepare pregnant women for natural childbirth), she had also begun counseling couples.

Studies in the United States – where she accompanied her husband in an extended stay in 1987 – broadened these experiences. She took courses in psychology and women's studies in Harvard University. She surveyed centers for battered women, did an internship at Boston Public Health and Hospitals, and went on exposures at New York hospitals to develop protocols for battered women and rape survivors. She trained in feminist counseling.

Upon her return to the country, Tiglao was invited by her fellow activists to help set up the Women's Crisis Center, initially intended for survivors of military rape. She served as its executive director for 10 years, steering it to become what it is today: a hospital-based

and the premier crisis care facility for the survivors of gender-based violence against women.

Devoting the last two decades of her life to women's issues and concerns, Raquel Tiglao worked hard even as she fought, and won her own battles against ill health. Lung cancer claimed her life in 2001. ■

ALEX TORRES



BORN

October 8, 1953 in Quezon City

DISAPPEARED

1975 in Baguio City

PARENTS

Gregorio Torres and Eugenia Gabriel

SPOUSE

Nimfa del Rosario

EDUCATION

Elementary: Kamuning Elementary School,
Quezon City
St. Louis Boys School,
Baguio City
Secondary: University of the Philippines
High School, Quezon City
College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

There has been no trace of Alex Torres since he was last seen being taken to Camp Dangwa in Baguio City. There has been speculation that from there he was brought to Manila. That he may have been arrested while on a trip to Pangasinan, accompanied by another person. That he may have been killed and his body was buried somewhere inside the military camp, like so many others who disappeared.

After many long years, his brother Renato can now say that Alex and his wife Nimfa del Rosario “were truly happy with their lives.” For Nimfa was herself killed by government troops in 1976, not long after Alex’s disappearance. It was the young couple’s decision to pursue their dream of a better life for the people, fully accepting the possibility of dying for it.¹

But Alex Torres’ choice in life also mirrored a sharing of experiences and loving relationships that bound families together in the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship.

Born one year apart, Renato was called Boy in the family and Alex was Baby. As children they were always together, doing the same things and fighting some of the time.

They both became members of the Samahan ng Demokratikong Kabataan (SDK) taking part energetically in organizing its chapters

and “learning from the masses.” At the University of the Philippines in Diliman, they also joined the Nationalist Corps’ Serve the People Brigade where Alex met Nimfa who was a member of Kabataang Makabayan (KM). From then on the three worked closely together.

In 1973, the two brothers were tortured together in Camp Crame in Quezon City; Nimfa had also been arrested. The three were detained in various jails for nine months and after their release, they shared an apartment. Later, Alex and Nimfa told Renato that they had decided to join the resistance in the countryside. Alex was assigned to a guerrilla unit in the Cordillera region while Nimfa handled a local newsletter and made radio broadcasts through a portable transmitter. When she was killed, Renato travelled with her family to retrieve her body from Ifugao.

Alex's brother, Renato, stayed put for a time quietly supporting the struggle, before leaving to care for their mother who was living in the United States where she joined the antidictatorship movement and became known to many activists as Nanay Genia (she passed away in 1994).

“Alex and Nimfa did what they had to do,” said Renato. They “lived a full life, defending the people, learning from them and serving them.” ■

¹ “Tribute to Alex Torres and Nona del Rosario,” by Renato Torres, July 7, 2008, Bantayog archives.

TEOFILO B. VALENZUELA



BORN

March 1, 1940 in Samal, Bataan

DIED

January 25, 1975 in Samal, Bataan

PARENTS

Roman Valenzuela and Isabel Barcenas

SPOUSE / CHILDREN

Erlinda Timbreza / 2

EDUCATION

Elementary: Samal Elementary School,
Bataan

Even when he was alive, Teofilo Valenzuela, whom everyone called Jope, was already an authentic hero in the eyes of his townmates in Samal, Bataan.

Thus, after he was killed by government troops in a dramatic gun battle, thousands came to his funeral even though it was the height of martial law. It is said that entire villages were emptied of people that day as everyone had gone to pay their last respects to Jope.

The eldest son of a poor peasant couple, Valenzuela had little formal schooling beyond the elementary grades, but he was conversant in a broad range of topics. At the age of 15, after his father died, he took over the duties of caring for his mother and four siblings. He worked at a nightclub in Olongapo, worked as a construction laborer in Manila, and then as a politician's bodyguard. Eventually he found a regular job at the pulp and paper mill that was the town's biggest employer.

Student activists started coming to Samal in the late 1960s, and they found ready support in the community. Jope and his two brothers joined the Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan. Their house became the group's headquarters. Among his first projects as an activist was to organize the local young people to help out in planting and harvesting rice from the farmers' fields.

After the declaration of martial law, Jope tried to continue with his activities but soon left home to join the armed guerrilla movement already active in the Bataan-Zambales area. This was of course a time-honored recourse of those with legitimate grievances against the authorities: they “took to the hills” where at least they had a chance of putting up a good fight.

Valenzuela was a mature man respected by all – easygoing and generous, someone who told funny stories and sang *kundiman* (Tagalog love songs). The townspeople understood and accepted his decision to go underground.

Soon he became Ka Miguel who, in behalf of the local farmers, bargained with the landowners for better terms and conditions. Confronting the environmental pollution being caused by the pulp and paper mill, he persuaded his townmates to protest by writing letters and launching mass actions. As a result, the management installed an antipollution mechanism at the factory site. Valenzuela also helped the workers to pressure for higher wages and better working conditions.

The authorities sent troops to hunt down the people’s champion. In a surprise attack one early morning, Valenzuela was hit in the knee in the first volley of fire. Knowing that his team’s firearms were no match for the

high-powered rifles of their adversaries, he firmly ordered them to escape while he stayed behind. For hours, he was able to hold them off with just his old carbine and careful use of his remaining ammunition; he was even able to grab and use an automatic rifle that had rolled near him during the gunfight. By mid-afternoon, however, Valenzuela had been overpowered, his body peppered with bullets. He was 35 years old when he died. ■

GENE VIERNES



BORN

August 16, 1951 in Yakima, Washington, USA

DIED

June 1, 1981 in Seattle, Washington, USA

PARENTS

Maximo Viernes and Betty Ann Viernes

EDUCATION

Elementary: Wapato Elementary School,
Yakima, Washington
Secondary: Wapato High School,
Yakima, Washington
College: Yakima Valley Community
College
Central Washington University,
Washington
San Francisco State University,
California, USA

It was not just in the Philippines that the Marcos dictatorship's apparatus of repression operated against those who were fighting for democracy and freedom. By the end of the 1970s, the resistance movement in the country was finding many supporters among Filipino communities abroad, as well as citizens of countries across the world.

In the United States, exiled Filipinos were active in mobilizing support for the struggle back home. They raised awareness of the regime's abuses and tried to persuade American leaders to cut the U.S. government's vital assistance to the Marcos dictatorship. For them, patient organizing was important because the dictator enjoyed the loyalty of many Filipino-Americans especially those from the middle class and those whose family roots were from Ilocos, his home region.

The machinery of repression against Filipino activists in the U.S. included diplomatic and consular officers assigned in key cities, military intelligence operatives, long-time Marcos loyalists, and even some criminal elements.¹

Gene Viernes and Silme Domingo² were young labor leaders who were killed by hired gunmen in 1981 in front of their union office in Seattle. The murder plot was eventually traced back to the network operations of the Marcos dictatorship.

Viernes was born in the U.S. to a Filipino immigrant from Pangasinan and his American wife. His father picked apples and worked in the salmon canneries of Alaska while his mother took restaurant and warehouse jobs. As a young boy (the middle child among 10 siblings) he was already working in the fields with his father. At age 15 he began working in Alaska, experiencing corruption and racism in the labor union system. It was then that he made up his mind to fight for workers rights, equality and organizational reforms. Rising through the ranks, Viernes was soon recognized as a leader by his fellow workers.

Not long after taking a stand against the dictatorship's abuses in the Philippines, hired killers felled Viernes and Domingo with submachinegun. Domingo was able to name their attackers before he died. Among those sent to prison for the crime was a union boss linked to a wealthy Filipino doctor, a friend of the Marcoses. In 1989, an American jury found that Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos had ordered the murders, and awarded \$15 million to the victims' families.³ ■

¹ In a statement submitted to the American court trying the Domingo-Viernes murder case in Seattle, Bonifacio Gillego detailed his extensive knowledge of the Marcos intelligence apparatus in the United States. undated.

² See Silme Domingo pp. 77-78 of this volume

³ Imelda Marcos paid a final settlement of \$3 million. See historylink.org "Filipino Cannery Workers" and other articles.

VENERANDO VILLACILLO



BORN

August 23, 1951 in Iligan City

DISAPPEARED

June 10, 1985 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Lucio Villacillo and Adelaida David

SPOUSE/CHILD

Ma. Isabel Aquino / 1

EDUCATION

Elementary: Iligan City Central School
La Salle Academy, Iligan City
Secondary: La Salle Academy, Iligan City
College: Philippine College of
Criminology, Manila

He was tall and well built, with a voice like that of a radio announcer. He was full of resolve and militant determination, someone who could frankly and firmly express his views and ideas. Yet he was also a man who could express himself indirectly and sensitive to the feelings of others. He personally took care of the hungry and the wounded.¹

Venerando Villacillo – Ka Ibarra in the forests of Cagayan Valley and Ka Benny in the mountains of Mindanao – was a natural leader, described as very likeable, hardworking and dedicated to serving the revolutionary cause. On visits to his family, his relatives and neighbors would ask him for advice on all kinds of problems from financial, legal, marital, to political and social issues.² He was a good example of those who came to be known as the “nice people around” – a popular term for the rebel guerrillas who fought the Marcos dictatorship.

A well-known student leader in Mindanao, whose older brother was also a political activist, Villacillo volunteered to join the guerrilla forces who were then starting out in northern Luzon. It was a very difficult time: food was scarce, the volunteers had little experience, and they were vastly outgunned and outnumbered by the government troops pursuing them. Villacillo suffered serious

wounds in one encounter and recovered, thanks to the efforts of paramedics and his own will to live.³ From organizing local communities in Isabela, he went on to undertake expansion work in Cagayan and Nueva Vizcaya provinces.

Eventually Villacillo returned to Mindanao, where he applied his experiences from years of political organizing and military training in the north. This time it meant confronting the menace of paramilitary fanatical cults, as well as helping local farmers in dealing with such problems as cattle rustling.⁴ He met and married his wife, Isabel Aquino, also an activist, and they had a child together. In 1983 he rejoined his former comrades in Cagayan.

It was on a visit to his family in Manila that Villacillo was abducted in broad daylight, taken away by a dozen armed men in front of his little daughter. He was never seen again. ■

1 Mia May Paglaum, "Sino nga ba si Venerando Villacillo," *Ulos* 2005, p. xxx.

2 Profile written by Ma. Isabel Aquino, in Bantayog archives.

3 Affidavit of Arturo P. Garcia, Los Angeles, California, USA, in Bantayog archives.

4 Statement of Angie Ipong, April 16, 2014, Bantayog archives.

MARCELINO M. VILLANUEVA

BORN

March 3, 1955 in Manila

DIED

May 21, 1985 in Quezon City

PARENTS

Mariano Villanueva and Lagrimas Mercado

CHILDREN

2

EDUCATION

Elementary: Isabelo de los Reyes Elementary School, Manila
Secondary: Philippine Science High School, Quezon City
Torres High School, Manila

“When I grow up, Inay, I will build you a beautiful house, with ten maids to help you. We’ll fill it with nice furniture too!”

His mother remembers her boy’s childhood promise, a dream that did not seem too strange at the time. Marcelino was bright and hardworking. After school, he helped his mother sell fruits in the crowded foreshoreland area of northern Manila where they lived. Instead of playing with the other youngsters, he attended to chores around the house.

Mrs. Villanueva’s second son was then on his way to getting a topnotch education, having passed the highly competitive examinations to enter the Philippine Science High School. He and his brother were the first two graduates of their public elementary school in Tondo to be admitted to PSHS, where they enjoyed full scholarships from the government.

But it was the beginning of the turbulent 1970s, when many were warning that Philippine society was like a volcano about to erupt. Marcelino Villanueva joined an activist organization, the Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan (SDK). Here he found answers to his troubling questions about glaring inequalities and what the future held for young people like him. He left PSHS and transferred to a high school in Tondo. He began organizing in the urban

poor communities that were so familiar to him.

Abandoning his studies and his childhood dream of becoming a rich man, Villanueva instead began advocating the need to reject apathy, to be more aware, and most of all to undertake purposeful collective action in order to bring about real social change. He volunteered to join Zone One Tondo Organization (ZOTO), a church-assisted federation of community organizations. To combat the drug problem, he thought of involving the youth in sports and other activities like cleaning the drainage canals running through their neighborhoods.

In 1977 Villanueva was arrested and detained for four months in Bicutan Rehabilitation Center. Upon his release, he went to Central Luzon where he spent two years working among the small peasants. Then he returned to his old base in Manila, where the groundwork had been laid years before and now the center of mass protests against the dictatorship.

The martial law authorities marked Villanueva as a wanted man. In 1985, he was killed by constabulary troopers in a rented house in Project 7, Quezon City. ■

MA. ANTONIA TERESA V. VYTIACO



BORN

April 13, 1953 in Bulan, Sorsogon

DIED

November 10, 1972 in Bulan, Sorsogon

PARENTS

Antonio Vytiaco and Marita Villa

SPOUSE

Nicanor Vergara

EDUCATION

Elementary: Bulan Elementary School,
Sorsogon
Centro Escolar University,
Manila

Secondary: University of the Philippines
Preparatory School, Manila

College: University of the Philippines
Diliman

Nanette Vytiaco was a vivacious young woman from Bikol, studying in Manila and thoroughly energized by the hectic pace of student activism. Plunging her heart and soul into that life was not enough for her – she wanted to share it with her friends and family.

In those days before everyone had a cellphone and got connected through social media, people sent letters to each other in what is now called “snail mail.” Writing back home to her cousin Bing, Vytiaco described a typical day: “If I was not very busy today I should have gone to the picket at Retelco in Pasig.” Earlier, she had attended a rally in support of a jailed youth leader. She was planning to join a group visit on a “Learn from the People” trip to Central Luzon. She confided that she would still go even if her father would disapprove.

Torn between her father’s worries and her own enthusiasm to serve, Vytiaco mused: “Surely I love him so much,” she told Bing, “I know I will disappoint him. I, too, am aware that he has high expectations and dreams for me. But what can I do? Should I give in to Papa’s call or the Lord’s? The matter with us is that we are too selfish and this is what makes our country stagnant... Honestly, how do you judge me at present? Do you think I should return to the same

old me or continue pursuing my new-found life?”

President Marcos was then well on his way to declaring martial law, so that Vytiaco and many others found it easy to abandon their studies and devote themselves full-time to the political resistance. She met and married Nicanor Vergara, a fellow activist, and together they began organizing chapters of Kabataang Makabayan (KM) in the Bikol region, starting in her hometown of Bulan, Sorsogon. They also networked with government employees, coconut farmers, *cargadores* who carried goods at the seaport, and fishermen. People who worked on their family land gave her shelter in their homes.

Although the situation had become especially dangerous, Vytiaco remained in close touch with her loved ones. She was so happy to see her mother one day in November 1972, bringing her favorite food. She was expecting a baby for the third time, having already suffered two miscarriages.

“Your Papa wants you to surrender and says not to worry because the chief of police is our relative,” Mrs. Vytiaco said. Nanette refused, saying: “Tell him that I have chosen this life.”

That same evening, a message was received from the town mayor, informing Mr. Vytiaco that a pregnant rebel, who could be his

daughter, had been killed. Her father narrated, “So I went up to the *munisipyo* and saw her body trussed up and hacked by a bolo... practically hacked to pieces. I did not say anything. I carried my daughter home.” ■

ROLAN Y. YBAÑEZ



BORN

November 13, 1958 in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro

DISAPPEARED

July 11, 1985 in Cebu City

PARENTS

Luis Ybañez and Consuelo Ylagan

EDUCATION

Elementary: M.P. Leuterio Memorial School,
Naujan, Oriental Mindoro
Secondary: Naujan Academy, Naujan
College: Adamson University, Manila

The case of Rolan Ybañez, who was abducted early one afternoon in Cebu City, shows how hard it was for most victims of the Marcos dictatorship to get justice, and even just believable answers to their questions.

Ybañez, called Levy by his friends, was working very closely with Fr. Rudy Romano¹ in planning and organizing the massive protests in Cebu that would echo the antidictatorship rallies being held almost daily in Manila.

As the regime's repressiveness became clearer, Ybañez dropped out of his engineering studies at Adamson University to join the antidictatorship movement. He chose Cebu, his father's home province (although he was born and had grown up in Mindoro).

Mostly, Levy Ybañez stayed in the background, performing the many big and small tasks that needed to be done in planning and sustaining the protest movements, ensuring the participation of organizations especially at the grassroots level, looking after the safety of participants, arranging for their transportation and lodging, assigning marshals, and keeping in touch with the media, local officials and supportive personalities.

Ybañez may have become the target of surveillance, his friends said, because he was part of the secretariat or support staff of the Coalition Against People's Persecution (CAPP), the Cebu Oust Marcos Movement for Nationalism and Democracy (COMMAND), and local chapters of national organizations like the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan.

A bigger target of surveillance and "neutralization," however, was aimed at Father Rudy Romano, being one of the most well-known leaders of the movement in the Visayas.

On the day that Ybañez and Romano were abducted, they were supposed to attend a meeting. Several hours after they both failed to arrive, an alarm was raised, and it was learned that bystanders had seen how the two were separately taken away by men in plainclothes.

These witnesses provided detailed descriptions of the abductors and their vehicles. They even saw how Ybañez tried to dispose of some pieces of paper that a military asset picked up from the street. They narrated that the tinted car into which he was forcibly loaded took off in the direction of a big military camp.

Despite all these leads, desperate appeals for help from the Supreme Court, and

the dictatorship's fall not long afterward, no one, except the guilty parties know, to this day, what exactly happened to Fr. Rudy Romano and his loyal assistant, Rolan Ybañez. ■

¹ Father Rosaleo "Rudy" Romano, a Redemptionist Priest, is featured in *Ang Mamatay Nang Dahil Sa'yo*, Volume 1, pp. 189-190.

HAYDEE B. YORAC



BORN

March 3, 1941 in Saravia (now E. B. Magalona),
Negros Occidental

DIED

September 12, 2005 in Evanston, Illinois, USA

PARENTS

Jose M. Yorac and Josefa Bofill

EDUCATION

Elementary: Saravia Elementary School,
Saravia, Negros Occidental
Secondary: Colegio de Sta. Teresita,
Silay, Negros Occidental
College: University of the Philippines
Postgraduate: Yale University (USA)

Very few public officials were like Haydee Yorac who was held in such high regard by her countrymen for her integrity and intelligence in government service.

Yorac was among the first batch of individuals who were rounded up upon the declaration of martial law. Released from Camp Crame after several months, she thereafter distinguished herself as an exacting professor at the University of the Philippines college of law. She also volunteered her services to the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG), staying in the background most of the time.¹ In 1981 she earned a master of laws degree at Yale University in the United States.

It was after the dictator's ouster in 1986 that Yorac emerged as a key figure in the Filipino people's clamor for change – the eradication of corruption, nepotism and greed that were hallmarks of Marcos' long rule.

At the Commission on Elections, which she served as chairman from 1989 to 1999, her firm grasp of the law and, more importantly, her principles, restored the people's faith in the democratic process of choosing their leaders. She also tried to build institutional strength through collective decision-making, role modeling, and firm but compassionate leadership. It was a difficult job for which she was uniquely suited, as she refused to be allied or influenced by the families of

traditional politicians that were trying to make a comeback.

Her next stint in a high-profile government position was as chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government from 2001 to 2005. This was a most formidable challenge, which meant fighting the Marcos family with all the resources they still commanded, and, at the same time, undertaking a massive housecleaning operation within the bureaucracy. She did her best within the limitations. In 2003, she won a Supreme Court decision that recovered \$700 million for the government in Marcos ill-gotten wealth that had been frozen for years. She also won a decision that declared the coconut levy funds (collected from farmers during the dictatorship) to be government money and not privately-owned as claimed by Marcos crony, Eduardo Cojuangco Jr.

Yorac received a Ramon Magsaysay Award for Government Service in 2004 and other public recognitions (ironically, however, she lost in the senatorial race in 1998.)

As a private person, Yorac treasured the company of her family and friends, and she enjoyed good food, books and films. She continued to work after a stroke in 2003. She died from cancer in 2005. ■

¹ She defended the artists Lino Brocka and Behn Cervantes from charges of inciting to sedition in 1984. For a more detailed narrative of Yorac's life, see biography of Lorna K. Tirol biography in the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation's website: <http://www.maf.org.ph/>.

RIZAL C. K. YUYITUNG



BORN

September 16, 1922 in Manila

DIED

April 19, 2007 in Toronto, Canada

PARENTS

Yu Yi Tung and Kak Sui Kok

SPOUSE/CHILDREN

Veronica Lim / 7

“A prelude to the proclamation of martial law,” was how Rizal Yuyitung described the ordeal that he and his elder brother Quintin suffered when President Marcos caused them to be arbitrarily deprived of their freedoms, imprisoned for crimes they did not commit, and forced to live in exile for many years.

It is now well-known that Marcos had been scheming for years how to carry out the plan that would ensure his continuing stranglehold on power. In 1970, well before actually imposing one-man rule, he “decided to test the waters with actions against [us], believing that we are the weakest link in the Philippine press,” said Rizal Yuyitung.¹

Rizal was the editor-in-chief of the *Chinese Commercial News* (CCN) and Quintin was its publisher. Before World War II, it was their father, Yu Yi Tung, who had been the newspaper’s publisher; he was executed by the Japanese in Fort Santiago for refusing to allow it to be used for their propaganda.

Named after the national hero, Rizal was born, raised and educated in the Philippines. An agriculture graduate, he and Quintin revived CNN after the death of their father. Under their leadership, it went on to resume its place as a respected voice of the Chinese-Filipino community.

In keeping with the highest standards of professional journalism, CCN prized its independence as embodied by Yu Yi Tung. (CCN and the brothers were also strongly advocating for a less difficult process of acquiring Filipino citizenship for ethnic Chinese like them.) But it was tagged “pro-communist” because it had been printing reports translated from western news agencies about developments in what was then tagged as “Red China.” The Marcos government therefore kidnapped and flew them to Taiwan (which they did not recognize as their country because they considered themselves Filipinos). There they were hastily tried and sentenced to prison: Rizal for three years and Quintin for two.

In persecuting the two brothers, Marcos was toeing an ideological line that was also anti-Chinese – thinking that nobody would care to speak up in their defense. But after the Yuyitungs were deported, 170 Filipino journalists, students and academics signed a manifesto in protest. Prominent lawyers and journalists rushed to their side.

By the time Rizal Yuyitung was released from prison in Taiwan, Marcos was already tyrannizing the entire Philippines with his dictatorial rule. Rizal’s wife Veronica had also suffered a period of detention. The couple then decided to live with their children in Canada.

After Marcos’ downfall in 1986, Rizal and Quintin Yuyitung returned to the Philippines and resumed the publication of *Chinese Commercial News*. Even after their deaths, it continues to exist today. ■

¹ See Yvonne T. Chua, “The Father and Sons Yuyitung,” Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, May 6, 2007.

About Bantayog ng mga Bayani (Heroes' Memorial)

Bantayog ng mga Bayani Foundation Inc. is a non-stock, non-profit organization in the Philippines founded in 1986 to build a memorial for those who unselfishly and courageously participated in the struggle against the regime of terror and repression of president-turned-dictator Ferdinand Marcos, and to support efforts aimed at guarding against the recurrence of repressive regimes in the Philippines.

In line with its objectives, Bantayog runs programs that include research and documentation which also include the taking down of oral histories, museum operations which include tours and exhibits, commemorative events, cultural activities and discussion forums, publications, membership-building, network-building and fund generation projects.

The Foundation operates the Bantayog center, located along Quezon Avenue near EDSA in Quezon City. There today stands the Bantayog museum, library and archives, a Hall of Remembrance, an auditorium, and an open-air amphitheater fronted by the granite Wall of Remembrance. The center serves as frequent venue for meetings, forums and other activities in line with the Foundation's objectives. It also hosts distinctive Filipino art, which include photographs, protest paintings and posters from this historical period.

Bantayog's 2015-2016 Board of Trustees include Wigberto Tañada (chair), Alfonso T. Yuchenco (chair emeritus), Jose P. de Jesus (vice-chair), Ma. Cristina V. Rodriguez (Corporate Secretary and Executive Director), Felipe L. Gozon (treasurer), Mary Rose G. Bautista, Edith T. Burgos, Jose Manuel Diokno, Ester C. Isberto, Myrna H. Jimenez, Carolina S. Malay, Alan T. Ortiz, Rafael M. Paredes, Marie Jopson Plopinio, Edicio E. dela Torre, Solomon Y. Yuyitung and Juan Antonio A. Perez III.

Contact details:

bantayogbayani@gmail.com

www.bantayog.org

Bantayog Bayani (Facebook)

