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Makibaka!:

Feminist Social Histories of the Transnational Filipina/o American Anti-Imperialist Left,

1968-1992

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Feminist Studies

by

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June 2018

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June 2018

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by

Karen Buenavista Hanna

DEDICATION

For the women, mothers, and LGBTQ kasamas of all movements,
and for those whose stories we may never know.

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I must begin by expressing sincere gratitude to the narrators I interviewed. I obviously would not be able to share their stories without them first sharing them with me. There are dozens of people who I am unable to recognize publicly because they have chosen to be anonymous. I cannot thank all of my narrators enough for believing our time together might be worthwhile, even while they may not all agree with the ideas I presented in this dissertation. As numerous people declined being interviewed for this project, I also recognize the many stories that remain publicly untold and honor the invisible emotional work that led many of them to say no. Special appreciation goes to Delia D. Aguilar and E. San Juan, Jr., Prosy and Enrique Delacruz, Jaime Geaga, “Cecilia Gonzalez,” Estella Habal, Angela “Ging” Agustin-Mascarenas, Bruce Occena, Trinity Ordon, John Silva, Trinity Ordon, “Julio Ramos,” Masao Suzuki, “Likas Tapang,” and Ermena Vinluan, who especially extended their time to support my learning. To the trailblazers with whom I was blessed to cross paths before they passed: Aurora Fernandez, Bal Pinguel, “Uncle Bob” Santos, Esther Simpson: I honor you. To those I never got to meet, including Ester Soriano-Hewitt, Ray Hewitt, Lorena Barros, Bobby Lee Bowens, Charito Planas, Dong Tizon: I honor you too.

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Studies provided fellowships and grants that allowed me to conduct fieldwork, travel to conferences, and write uninterrupted. In 2013 to 2014, I was awarded two Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships from the U.S. Department of Education. which paid for me to participate in a Filipino immersion course for two summers. Meanwhile, the Davis-Putter Foundation generously granted me a scholarship that enabled me to assist two organizations, Ugnayan and Damayan in New York City, while studying full-time. Over the years, a severe chronic illness hindered me, making this funding especially timely and necessary.

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ABSTRACT

Makibaka!:

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1968-1992

by

Karen Buenavista Hanna

The literature about Filipina/o American anti-imperialist organizing in the 1970s and 1980s has expanded in the past few years to include the participation of women leaders. Yet, few studies have examined the gender and sexual politics of its groups. This dissertation asks: What was the role of U.S. based women, mothers, and sexual minorities in the transnational anti-imperialist movement against Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos and in the years following his removal? How did these social actors address issues of gender and sexuality within and beyond their groups while also organizing against a dictatorship? Using 100 oral history interviews, archival research, and textual analysis of primary source documents from 24 archival collections from 4 countries, *Makibaka!* argues that women, mothers, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and other sexual minorities were instrumental in the creation, sustenance, and evolution of diasporic Filipina/o anti-imperialist activism from 1968 to 1992. Their stories reveal the invisible work, or the typically gendered acts that are routinely erased and devalued, that these social actors undertook to make their interventions. *Makibaka!* recognizes the interpersonal relationships- in unity and times of conflict- that are critical for catalyzing and creating new forms of liberatory politics.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

(with location, affiliated organization, and short explanation where applicable)

AADAP – Asian American Drug Abuse Program (Los Angeles)

ACWA – Alaska Cannery Worker Association (Seattle)

AMLC – Anti-Martial Law Coalition (United States, primarily led by KDP)

APC – Alliance for Philippine Concerns (United States)

APC-SC – Alliance for Philippine Concerns- Southern California

ATOM – August Twenty One Movement (United States, Canada, Philippines)

BAGL – Bay Area Gay Liberation (Bay Area)

CAMD – Coalition Against the Marcos Dictatorship (United States, KDP, replaced AMLC)

CAMDI - Coalition to Advance the Movement for Democracy and Independence (United States, KDP, replaced CAMD in name after Marcos ends martial law in 1981)

CCHRP – Church Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines (National)

CEP – Congress Education Project (Washington D.C., Friends of the Filipino People)

CIRCA Pintig – Center for Immigrant Resources & Community Arts Pintig (Chicago)

CJDV – Committee for Justice for Domingo and Viernes (Seattle, Line of March)

COINTELPRO – Counter Intelligence Program (United States, FBI)

CPP – Communist Party of the Philippines

CTF – Congress Task Force (United States, KDP)

EDSA –Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (site for “People Power” in 1986, Philippines)

FACLA - Filipino American Community of Los Angeles

FANHS- Filipino American National Historical Society

FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation (United States)

FFP – Friends of the Filipino People (United States)

FND- Filipinos for National Democracy or Mga Pilipino Para sa Pambangsan Demokrasya (Chicago)

FQS – First Quarter Storm (Philippines)

FYA – Filipino Youth Activities (Seattle)

GABRIELA – General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership, and Action (Philippines)

GABNet – GABRIELA Network (United States)

GALA – Gay Latino Alliance (Bay Area)

GAPA – Gay Asian Pacific Alliance

IAFP – International Association for Filipino Patriots (Canada, KDP)

I-Hotel – International Hotel (San Francisco)

ILWU – International Longshore and Warehouse Union

JAJA – Justice for Aquino, Justice for All (United States, Canada, Philippines)

KALAYAAN – Katipunan ng Kababaihan Para sa Kalayaan or Organization of Women for Freedom (Philippines)

KDP – Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino or Union of Democratic Filipinos (United States)

KM – Kabataang Makabayan or Nationalist Youth (Philippines)

KMU – Kilusang Mayo Uno or May First Labor Movement (Philippines)

LOM – Line of March (United States)

LFS – League of Filipino Students (Philippines and United States)

MAKIBAKA – Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan or Free Movement of New Women (Philippines)

MFP – Movement for a Free Philippines (United States)

MLEP – Marxist Leninist Education Project (United States, Line of March)

ML-MTT- Marxist-Leninist-Mao Tse Tung Thought

NAM – Ninoy Aquino Movement (United States, Philippines)

NCRCLP – National Committee for the Restoration of Civil Liberties in the Philippines (United States)

NDF - National Democratic Front (Philippines)

NDM - National Democratic Movement (Philippines)

NEB – National Executive Board (KDP)

NISPOP- Network in Solidarity with the People of the Philippines (United States)

NPA – New People’s Army (Philippines)

PACE – Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment (Los Angeles)

PETA – Philippine Educational Theater Association (Philippines)

PhilCIR- Philippine Center for Immigrant Rights (New York)

PILIPINA – Kilusang ng Kababaihang Pilipina or Movement of Filipino Women (Philippines)

PKP- Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (Old Communist Party of the Philippines)

POCAN - People of Color Against AIDS Network (Seattle)

PRC – Philippine Resource Center (Berkeley)

PSG – Philippine Study Group (Chicago)

PSN – Philippine Solidarity Network (National, KDP)

RA/RJ- Reaffirmist/Rejectionist

REB – Regional Executive Board (KDP)

SAMAPI- Samahang Makabayan Pilipino (Chicago)

SCDP – Support Committee for a Democratic Philippines (New York City)

SDK – Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan or Democratic Youth Association (Philippines)

SNA – Solidarity for the Nationalist Alliance (Los Angeles)

SIPA – Search to Involve Pilipino Americans (Los Angeles)

SMG – Sunday Morning Group (Los Angeles)

TWGC – Third World Gay Caucus (San Francisco)

UC Berkeley – University of California, Berkeley

UCLA – University of California, Los Angeles

UP- University of the Philippines

Movement Chronology (adapted from Gaerlan 2003 with permission)

1965	Ferdinand Marcos elected president of the Philippines
1968	Beginning of “Third Wave” of Filipino students and professionals to the U.S. resulting from the Hart-Cellars Immigration Act of 1965
1966-1973	Active phase of Vietnam War for United States
Dec. 26, 1968	Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founded
Mar. 29, 1969	New People’s Army (NPA) organized by the CPP founded
1969	Marcos elected for a second term
Sept. 21, 1972	Martial law secretly declared by Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines
Sept. 22, 1972	Martial law proclaimed in Manila
Sept. 23, 1972	National Committee for the Restoration of Civil Liberties (NCRCLP) formed in San Francisco
March 18, 1973	Marcos blacklist of U.S. residents revealed in Los Angeles, CA
July 28, 1973	<i>Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino</i> (KDP- Union of Democratic Filipinos) founded in Santa Cruz, CA
Sept. 22, 1973	Movement for a Free Philippines (MFP) formed in Washington D.C.
Oct. 20, 1973	Friends of the Filipino People (FFP) formed in Philadelphia, PA
Dec. 28-29, 1974	First Anti-Martial Law Movement Unity Conference, Chicago, IL
1975	Sunday Morning Group formed in Los Angeles, CA
Nov. 2, 1975	Anti-Martial Law Coalition (AMLC) formed, New York, NY
1978	Bakke Decision; SMG dissolves
1978-79	FFP/KDP split
1979	Ugnayan founded, Chicago, IL
1980	Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino released from prison and allowed to travel to U.S. for heart surgery

1981	Marcos nominally lifts martial law
June 1, 1981	Seattle labor leaders and KDP activists Gene Viernes and Silme Domingo murdered in their union hall
1983	NDF representatives sent to U.S. from Philippines
Aug. 21, 1983	Alliance for Philippine Concerns (APC) informal grouping created by uniting Ugnayan and Philippine Support Committee (PSC), San Francisco, CA
Aug. 21, 1983	Benigno Aquino assassinated at Manila airport on return from U.S.
1983	Ninoy Aquino Movement (NAM) and Justice for Aquino, Justice for All (JAJA) split off from MFP
Dec. 1983	KALAYAAN launches in the Philippines
Mar. 1984	GABRIELA forms in the Philippines
Nov. 3, 1985	Marcos announces “snap election” for presidency for Jan. 17, 1987 on American television- Date for election postponed to Feb. 7, 1986
Feb. 7, 1986	Snap election proclaims Marcos winner
Feb. 23, 1986	Partial military revolt in Manila inspires People Power/EDSA
Feb. 25, 1986	People Power/EDSA successful: Marcos leaves Philippines for Hawaii after Ronald Reagan withdraws support
May 26, 1986	Alliance for Philippine Concerns (APC) formally launches, San Francisco, CA
1986	Pintig splits from Philippine Forum/APC, Chicago, IL
1991	Pintig Cultural Group formally established as a 501c3
Sept 16, 1991	Philippine Senate refuses to approve U.S.- Philippines bases treaty
Dec. 26, 1991	The Communist Party of the Philippines’ Central committee releases its “Reaffirm Our Basic Principles and Rectify Errors” document
1992	“RA”/”RJ” split impacts the ND solidarity groups
1992	U.S. bases removed from the Philippines

Introduction

I became aware of a “transnational Filipina/o American Left” because I was a part of it. In 2006, I was a public school teacher living in New York City when I first attended a workshop series called “Philippines 101.”¹ Otherwise known as “Phils 101,” the series was facilitated by a grassroots Filipino youth organization called *Ugnayan ng mga Anak ng Bayan* (“Linking the Children of the Motherland” in Filipino). Ugnayan offered this four-part overview of “Filipino people’s history of migration to the U.S., history and root causes of poverty in the Philippines, and forms of resistance” as part of its “Education for Action” program, which offered affordable educational programs to the region. I had looked forward to Phils 101 for years after learning about it one summer at a New York City’s annual Philippine Independence Day Parade. Progressive groups like Ugnayan attended the “celebration” to both promote their organizations and counter the idea that the Philippines was truly “independent,” given its ongoing debt to transnational financial institutions like the World Bank and IMF, position as a military outpost for the United States, and dependence on overseas Filipino worker (OFW) remittances. During Phils 101, I learned more about the political economy of the Philippines than I had in any college course I had taken prior.

According to the website of Ugnayan Youth for Justice and Social Change (the current iteration of Ugnayan ng mga Anak ng Bayan):

¹ “*Filipina/o*.” Like historians Dorothy Fujita-Rony (2003) and Dawn Bohulano Mabalon (2013), I use Filipina/o to refer to men and women of Filipina/o ancestry who lived in the past. While I support kasamas use of Filipinx for the contemporary context to decolonize a gender binary that assumes that people of Filipino descent identify as either Filipina or Filipino, I have chosen to use Filipina/o for consistency’s sake throughout my entire dissertation.

Realizing that Filipino youth in the US share many common problems and issues, Ugnayan was first formed as a project within the Network in Solidarity with the People of the Philippines (NISPOP) in 2003. The collective...returned to the Philippines for an immersion trip in 2004 exposing them to the marginalized sectors of Philippine society – youth, workers, peasants, and women. Inspired by the trip, they visualized the strategic importance of a grassroots Filipino youth organization in the US as a potent force for change. The initiative to form Ugnayan as an independent youth organization happened on November 30, birthday of Andres Bonifacio, leader of the 1896 Philippine Revolution against Spain. A few months later, with the assistance of NISPOP and Damayan Migrant Workers Association [a local organization], Ugnayan ng mga Anak ng Bayan was founded as an independent grassroots organization on November 31, 2004 by eight im/migrant and US-born women of Philippine ancestry (Ugnayan 2013).

Drawn to the potential of being a “force of change” and after learning about the labor trafficking of Filipina immigrants at an “educational discussion” (also known as an “ED”) hosted by Damayan Migrant Workers Association (Ugnayan’s “sister” organization at the time) at an Ugnayan member’s home, I joined Ugnayan as a volunteer organizer in 2006.

As an organization, we planned EDs like Philippines 101 and discussions about other issues like systemic racism. We conducted “know your rights” trainings for undocumented Filipina/os navigating the higher education system and threats of deportation under the Bush and Obama administrations. Through the Justice for Adriane campaign, we joined Adriane Padilla, who had endured years of sexual harassment and wage theft from her Filipino

restaurant owner employer, and eventually helped her win her case. We advocated for the rights and dignity of Filipino World War II veterans, whose promised claim to benefits had been reversed after Harry Truman signed the Rescission Act of 1946. Through Ugnayan's "basic sector integration" program, we also worked closely with Damayan, a group consisting of primarily Filipina/o domestic workers, many trafficking survivors, to fight for their own labor and immigrant rights.

I liked Ugnayan because it helped me learn about and connect to issues in the Philippines, where my mother was born and raised. For example, every September 22nd, we commemorated Ferdinand Marcos's 1972 declaration of martial law. In 2007, we also raised funds to try to elect the *Kabataan* Partylist, a progressive youth party, in the Philippines.

Finally, I appreciated Ugnayan's consistent aim to connect Filipina/o issues with those of other communities. At demonstrations, we yelled, "*Makibaka! Huwag matakot!*" ("Struggle! Don't be afraid!"), "*¡El pueblo unido, jamás será vencido!*" ("The people united will never be defeated!") side by side our Latina/o brothers and sisters. Most of us (including me) did not know that the phrase "Makibaka..." came from the anti-Marcos movement's militant cries of opposition. In Washington D.C., we marched holding hand-painted banners resisting the war in Iraq. In my five years as a volunteer member of Ugnayan, I took on leadership roles as a board member and its financial officer. I was a committed member of the organization, equally invested in the friendships I built with my *kasamas* (or comrades in Filipino).²

² The literal translation for *kasama* is "companion," or "to be together or included" and can be used to refer to one's life partner. It infuses sentiments of family, friendship, and love. In the Philippine revolutionary movement, *kasama* became a word used for comrade, while

I first considered applying to Ph.D. programs in 2010 when my friend Lucia, a professor, recommended it. “I can’t afford it,” I said. She corrected me explaining, “Some programs pay you.” Lucia’s suggestion was appealing. I felt I knew a great deal about many things but none as deeply as I wished. Further, I was ready to begin a new chapter in my career after almost a decade of teaching grade school and adult education. Meanwhile, the leaders of Ugnayan had recently learned about the concepts of “intersectionality” and “invisible labor,” the latter being the typically gendered contributions routinely erased and devalued.³

Our kasamas, Kim Baglieri and Ana Liza Caballes, had introduced both of these academic terms to us. We thought about how the interconnectedness of race, gender, and class applied to Ugnayan, reflecting on the fact that the majority of our leaders were women and/or queer. Moreover, we realized that women and/or queer people typically did cooking for our events and handled unglamorous administrative duties in the office. It seemed contradictory that our organizational analysis did not consider the ways that gender and sexuality shaped injustice. We were stunned. These theoretical questions intrigued me enough to return to graduate school.

also infusing sentiments of family, friendship, and love. I did not know during my early years of organizing that those who fought the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines in the 1960s to 1980s commonly referred to one another as kasamas.

³ The term “intersectionality” has its origins in legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw’s “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: a Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics” (1989) but is rooted in a long history of Black feminist and socialist organizing and writing, including the Combahee River Collective statement (1981). In order to introduce the concept of intersectionality to our collective, Baglieri asked us to read the introduction to Andrea Smith’s *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (2005). While Caballes introduced the idea of “invisible labor” to us in a general way, the term itself originates from the work of Arlie Hochschild (1979).

Beginning the Research in 2011

In the Fall of 2011, I began my Ph.D. program in Feminist Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. I immediately delved into reading about the history of feminist consciousness in the 1960s and 1970s Asian American Movement, a period that had always fascinated me.⁴ I immediately noticed the scarcity of literature about Filipina/o American radicalism in Asian American Movement historiography.

After more research, I found more publications. Most were from the perspective of *Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino* (KDP or the Union of Democratic Filipinos), and almost all were in the form of short essays. Helen Toribio's "Dare to Struggle: The KDP and Filipino American Politics" (2000) and "We are Revolution: A Reflective History of the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDP)" (1998) offered a rich overview of the KDP's work, while Estella Habal's *San Francisco's International Hotel: Mobilizing the Filipino American Community in the Anti-Eviction Movement* (2007) provided a thorough book-length examination of a KDP local campaign that also held importance in the larger Asian American community. Revealing insight into gender and sexuality contradictions of the KDP were Gil Mangaoang's "From the 1970s to the 1990s: Perspectives of a Gay Filipino American Activist" (1994), Habal's "How I became a Revolutionary" (2000), and Trinity Ordoña's dissertation, "Coming Out Together: An Ethnohistory of the Asian and Pacific

⁴ I have immense gratitude for Diane Fujino for taking me on as a student and preparing our first independent study together during my second quarter of my M.A./Ph.D. program. She patiently validated my presumptions (based on my organizing experiences rather than any previous scholarly knowledge, as I came from an Education background) while helping me to raise new questions.

Islander Queer Women and Transgendered People's Movement of San Francisco" (2000). Valuable too were personal accounts from KDP members, Carol Ojeda-Kimbrough and Rose Ibanez in *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment*, edited by Steve Louie and Glenn Omatsu (2000). The release of Ron Chew's *Remembering Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes* (2012) also added to the KDP's body of personal reflections, but focused solely on KDP work in Seattle.

Meanwhile, Max Elbaum's *Revolution is in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao, and Che* (2002, newly re-released in 2018) also offered a glimpse of KDP's work, contextualized within the "New Communist Movement." Of the few books written from an "outsider" perspective were Catherine Ceniza Choy's *Empire of Care* (2003) and Lucy Burns' *Puro Arte* (2012). Both include specific insights into KDP's local nurses campaigns and cultural work group *Sining Bayan* respectively. Finally, Augusto Espiritu's "Journeys of Discoveries and Difference: Transnational Politics and the Union of Democratic Filipinos" (2009) served as an important text for its overall historicization of KDP as an organization, as well as its recognition of KDP as a transnational contributor to the national liberation and democratization of the Philippines.

That there was such a substantive collection of scholarship and writing from former KDP members signified to me the KDP's importance in the history of the Filipina/o American anti-imperialist left. This observation led me to reflect: why had Ugnayan not read about or discussed KDP's involvement in the anti-Marcos movement?

Further complicating this question was learning the existence of non-KDP groups that were also anti-imperialist. Prosy Abarquez-Delacruz's "Holding A Pigeon In My Hand:

How Community Organizing Succeeds Or Falters” in Steve Louie and Glenn Omatsu’s *Asian Americans: The Movement and the Moment* (2000) discusses her joining the National Committee for Restoration of Civil Liberties in the Philippines (NCRCLP). Meanwhile, in Karin Aguilar-San Juan and Delia D. Aguilar’s chapter, “Feminism Across Our Generations,” (2005) in Melinda L. de Jesús’ *Pinay Power: Theorizing the Filipina/American Experience*, Aguilar references her participation in the Marcos opposition movement that organized in support of the anti-imperialist, national democratic movement of the Philippines. Yet she does not name the groups. After reading these short chapters, I was impressed by the vibrancy of participation, but I was unclear how each group related to one another. Thus, perhaps the most instructive overview of the Filipina/o anti-imperialist left was Ninotchka Rosca’s “Living in Two-Time Zones” (2000) in *Legacy to Liberation* (2000), edited by Fred Ho, Diane C. Fujino, Caroline Antonio, and Steve Yip. Rosca discusses the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), Communist Party USA (CPUSA), the *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* (PKP, or Old Communist Party of the Philippines), KDP, Alliance for Philippine Concerns (APC), and GABNet (GABRIELA Network) from her political vantage point. Still, its brevity provoked even more questions.

When Jose Fuentecilla released *Fighting From a Distance: How Filipino Exiles Helped Topple a Dictator* (2013), I was thrilled that there finally might be a book-length overview of the U.S. based anti-Marcos movement. *Fighting From a Distance* provided additional insight, but it centered the Movement for a Democratic Philippines (MFP), which was primarily led by former Philippine politicians, including former Philippine Senator Raul Manglapus. It did not offer an organizational overview of the “grassroots” anti-imperialist movement that I was seeking.

As a whole, the literature was rich, but not cohesive. There was not a single book that offered an overview of the anti-imperialist movement as a whole from multiple perspectives. I suspected that the scattered nature of the literature related to factionalism in the Filipina/o community, of which I had been both acutely aware and unclear about during my organizing days with Ugnayan.⁵ While factionalism is not unique to the Filipina/o community by any means, it holds significant consequences for political organizing and movement sustainability. Factionalism has dissuaded many vibrant and intelligent young people from becoming involved in the Filipina/o political community and has caused many to leave.

I decided to make an intervention. I sought to knit together the history of anti-imperialist Filipina/o American groups that worked in solidarity and tension during the 1970s. At the same time, I would build the history of women's and queer/LGBT members' contributions to radical movements. I wondered if they too had played leadership roles "invisibly" in a similar dynamic to the one we experienced in Ugnayan. Bright-eyed and perhaps a bit naïve, I hoped that this history would help groups summarize what happened during that period as a whole and help discuss it across multiple organizational perspectives. I also envisioned this research as offering a historical roadmap for "disoriented" young people who had become disillusioned by the fractures in the Filipina/o American community.

⁵ I later learned that my organization Ugnayan had broken off from an ND solidarity grouping in the 1990s due to organizational (not ideological) reasons. The Ugnayan of which I was a member was not directly related to the Ugnayan from 1978 to 1983 (described in Chapter 3), but the lineage of both Ugnayan groups connected by way of a Canadian youth organization by the same name.

I opened “Pandora’s box.” I soon learned that it was impossible to understand Filipina/o American anti-imperialism during the 1970s without learning about Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos’s administration (1965-1986), Marcos’s martial law in the Philippines (1972-1981), the Philippine Left (specifically the history of the Communist Party of the Philippines), and the Communist Party USA. I was embarking on a transnational Asian American Studies project that crossed into Communist Studies, social movement studies, and diaspora studies. Plus, I was attempting to conduct it from a Feminist Studies vantage point. Needless to say, the task at hand was intimidating. But I embraced the challenge, hopeful for a united future for the Filipina/o American community.

Early in my fieldwork, I met Barbara Gaerlan, an anti-Marcos activist and professor at UCLA, who generously shared her unpublished paper, “The Movement in the United States to Oppose Martial Law in the Philippines, 1972-1991: An Overview” (2003) with me. I had been searching for an overview like this one. Her paper provides a stunning overview of the major demographic and ideological groupings of the Anti-Martial Law Movement in the United States in less than 30 concise pages, but it does not examine gender. I also met scholar Ligaya Domingo who had recently completed her dissertation, “Building a Movement: Filipino American Union and Community Organizing in Seattle in the 1970s” (2011). Domingo supportively shared it and offered suggestions to help me create a plan of action.

In my last two years of writing, several books have been released, adding to the historiography of the anti-Marcos movement. These include two books from KDP’s perspective: *A Time to Rise: Collective Memoirs of the Union of Democratic Filipinos*

(KDP), edited by former KDP leaders Rene Cruz, Cindy Domingo, and Bruce Occeña, et al. (2017) and former KDP member Mila De Guzman's *Women Against Marcos: Stories of Filipino and Filipino American Women Who Fought a Dictator* (2016). Manuel Lahoz's (2017) *Of Tyrants and Martyrs* also offers Lahoz's personal recollections of organizing in Chicago and the Philippines. I hope that *Makibaka!* adds a new perspective to the robust literature that has emerged since I began my project in 2011, as its interrogation of the gender and sexual politics of the U.S.-based anti-Marcos movement continues to be unique.

Seven years later, the Marcos era has re-entered American mainstream consciousness. With the controversial burial of Marcos in the *Libingan ng mga Bayani* (Heroes' Cemetery) in 2017, comparisons of elected President Rodrigo Duterte as a Marcos "in new clothes," and rumors of the return of the Marcos family to Malacañang Palace after the near-win of Marcos's son, "Bongbong," in the 2016 Vice Presidential election, there is an urgent need for new studies of the Marcos period to counter "historical revisionism" that continues to erase the Marcos regime's dark past. Furthermore, studies of the anti-Marcos movement are critical as people engage in diasporic transnational activism under new conditions and platforms (e.g. the era of Facebook and social media) that also mirror the past. Thus, I am grateful that a new generation of scholars has emerged along with me to take on this work about diasporic anti-Marcos opposition in the 1970s and 1980s. Recently published work includes Michael Schulze-Oechtering Castaneda's "The Alaska Cannery Workers Association and the Ebbs and Flows of Struggle: Manong Knowledge, Blues Epistemology and Racial Cross-Fertilization" (2016), James Zarsadiaz's "Raising Hell in the Heartland: Filipino Chicago and the Anti-Martial Law Movement, 1972-1986" (2017), Sharon Quinsaat's "Diaspora Activism in a Non-Traditional Country of Destination: The

Case of Filipinos in the Netherlands” (2017), Mark John Sanchez’s “Human Rights and the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines: Religious Opposition to the Marcos Dictatorship, 1972-1986 (2017), Jason Magabo Perez’s *This is for the Mostless* (2017), and Christine Balance’s “Afterlives of Martial Law project,” which aims “to digitally preserve archival materials and present public programs that document the history of Philippine martial law and its impact upon Los Angeles-based communities” (2017-2018).

The Transnational Filipina/o American Anti-Imperialist Left’s Roots

Activists and scholars document the emergence of a Filipina/o American Left in the 1920s and 1930s (Fujita-Rony 2003; Toribio 1998; Rosca 2000; Chew 2012). According to historian Dorothy Fujita-Rony, one of the first Filipina/o American leftist organizations was Dimas Alang (2003, 161). Filipino revolutionary leader Andres Bonifacio created Dimas Alang at the turn of the 20th century in the Philippines as part of the Katipunan’s (*Kataastaasang Kagalangalangan Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan* or KKK) resistance movement against Spain, which was informed by a three-century-long struggle against Spanish colonization. The “Katipunero” spirit remained as Filipina/o nationalists organized branches of Dimas Alang in protest of U.S. colonization after the turn of the 20th century. Around the year 1922, it spread overseas and established branches in the United States, including in Hawai’i and Seattle. Filipino newspapers, like the *Philippine Advocate*, *Philippine-American Review*, and *The Philippine Chronicle*, contributed to the development of a diasporic national consciousness. These periodicals regularly featured news from “home” in the Philippines, Tagalog-language columns, and articles that advocated and celebrated Philippine independence (Fujita-Rony 2003, 161). Furthermore, nationalist

organizations like the Balagtas Society promoted the Tagalog language, which nationalists promoted as the language that united the various regions of the Philippines against imperialism (Fujita-Rony 2003, 160). Via these channels, Filipino nationalism spread as communities in different parts of the Filipina/o diaspora kept in touch with one another.

Filipino nationalist sentiments intersected with Filipina/o immigrants' experiences as agricultural and cannery laborers in the US, blurring their national identities and commitments. Former KDP and Line of March leader Bruce Occena describes Filipino "agricultural proletariats," mostly men, as comprising the "first wave" of Filipina/o migration to the United States from 1906 to 1955 (1985). These workers faced immense racial and national discrimination, as whites viewed Filipinos, like other Asian ethnic groups, as their competitors, particularly during the Depression. These material conditions ripened Filipinos for union participation. Two unions in particular drew substantial involvement from Filipinos. First, the Trade Union Unity League (TUUL) engaged the participation of a great number of Filipinos who organized farmworker strikes and mutual aid associations and unions. Second, the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), especially Local 142 in Hawaii and Local 37 in Seattle, yielded considerable numbers of Filipino leaders and members (Toribio 1998).

Filipina/os during this period developed an international class-consciousness concomitant with their lived experiences as workers in the United States. In other words, they understood their oppression as rooted in a global system of capitalism. The late Asian American Studies scholar and KDP activist Helen Toribio defines internationalism as "the sense of solidarity that activists demonstrated by working with and supporting domestic struggles beyond their own ethnic, racial, or national group" and "supporting struggles

outside the United States, e.g., third world liberation movements” (Toribio 2000, 45).

Applying this definition, Filipina/o American agricultural and cannery workers’ multiracial organizing efforts illustrate their practice of internationalism.

Their internationalist consciousness was undoubtedly connected to their memberships and affiliations with the Communist Party USA (CPUSA). In fact, it was the CPUSA that established the TUUL and formally supported the Communist-led Hukbalahap in the Philippines during and after World War II (Toribio 1998, 157). CPUSA member and journalist James S. Allen documented relations between the CPUSA and *Partidong Komunista ng Pilipino* (PKP or the Old Communist Party of the Philippines), emphasizing the party’s internationalist position (1985). Furthermore, Filipina/o American writer and labor activist Carlos Bulosan, member of both the PKP and CPUSA, reflects on the burgeoning internationalism among Filipino workers of his time:

Now I knew that I was living in the collective era...I read Marxist literature. Russia was then much in the minds of the contemporaries. In the Soviet system we seemed to have found a workable system and a common belief that bound races and peoples together for a creative purpose...Socialist thinking was spreading among the workers, professionals and intellectuals. Labor demanded immediate political action. For the first time a collective faith seemed to have appeared. To most of us it was a revelation- and a new morning in America.

Bulosan’s writing invokes a sense of connection and hope that united Soviet, American, and Filipino communists, among others. In sum, evidence shows that Bulosan’s generation viewed Philippine independence, socialism in the Soviet Union, and labor and civil rights in the United States as part of the same freedom struggle.

Some historians argue that political activity among Filipina/os (and other leftists) slowed during the 1950s due to anti-communist repression and the United States' relative economic stability post-World War II (Toribio 1998; Chew 2012). However, it was labor organizing during this decade by Filipina/os, like Chris Mensalves, Rudy Delvo, Philip Vera Cruz, and Larry Itliong, that ultimately influenced the legendary grape strike of 1965. For decades prior to the strike, Itliong organized agricultural and cannery workers in Alaska, Washington, and California. By 1965, Itliong was leading the AFL-CIO union Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, a majority of whom were Filipinos. While it is not documented whether Itliong was a card-carrying communist, many of his mentors, such as Mensalves, were known communists (Mabalon 2014). Thus, it was possible that he was exposed to internationalist views that encouraged him to build solidarity with workers of other racial and ethnic groups. The grape strike ultimately merged the Filipinos in the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee with the predominantly Mexican National Farm Workers Association to form the United Farm Workers (UFW).

While working class experiences, CPUSA affiliations, labor organizing, and nationalist influences shaped the internationalist radicalism of this generation of Filipina/o leftists, it was the Communist Party of the Philippines that primarily influenced the roots of a new generation. By the early 1960s, some communists in the Philippines had grown critical of the Soviet model and the PKP's ideological approach. Under the leadership of Jose Maria Sison, these communists underwent a "rectification and re-establishment" process to form the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist "Communist Party of the Philippines" (CPP). They eventually broke from the PKP to formalize the CPP in December 1968 and set up the New People's Army in 1969 (Weekley 2001). The CPP deployed comrades to other

countries to conduct solidarity work in support of the newly established National Democratic (ND) Movement, a broad-based alliance of progressive individuals and organizations seeking social, economic, and political justice in the Philippines. These countries included France, Belgium, Holland, Japan, the United States, and Canada (Quimpo 2012).

“Makibaka!”: The Rallying Cry Against a Dictator

On September 21, 1972, the president of the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos, signed Proclamation 1081, otherwise known as martial law. Leading up to his declaration were decades of rising mass discontent. Students, teachers, religious clergy, nuns, factory and office workers, and peasants protested Marcos’s corruption and role in the nation’s economic crisis. Some activists and scholars refer to this time as an “awakening” of Filipino consciousness. Michael Tan, for example, reflects,

More than Marcos and Martial Law, it was a nation coming of age, awakening and grappling with the identity and history. From one of Asia’s most promising economies, we had become the region’s basket case, a country of mass impoverishment amid opulence of the tiny wealthy minority. Marcos’s excesses were only an extreme manifestation of what had been going on for decades” (Llanes 2012, vii).

Through what he called “martial law,” Marcos authorized the Philippine military and police to utilize tactics of torture, incarceration, and disappearances to quell any opposition. With a total population of about 42 and 48 million between 1975-1980, scholars estimate that his fourteen-year dictatorship led to over 3,000 extrajudicial killings, 35,000 torture victims, 70,000 incarcerated, and at least 750 activists who have not yet been found (Philippine

Statistics Authority 1983; McCoy 1999).

Under the banner of “national democracy,” the program of the new Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) established in 1968, self-proclaimed revolutionaries rallied against Marcos’s brutal dictatorship in their wish to attain national freedom from foreign, particularly American, influences and economic control. They raised left fists high and united under the rallying call and response, “Makibaka! Huwag matakot!” refusing to let fear thwart their visions for justice.

Makibaka!: Feminist Social Histories of a Transnational Filipina/o American Anti-Imperialist Left, 1968-1992 begins with the arrival of activist exiles to North America in the late 1960s. Some activists were students attending universities in the United States. Some had parents who petitioned them, fearing for their children’s safety. Some migrated on travel visa, while others were deported by the Marcos government after Marcos declared martial law. These Filipina/o activists did not leave behind their political convictions once abroad. Rather, they united with other concerned Filipina/os and non-Filipina/os to create “transnational” organizations before the term transnational was created. Some of their groups maintained direct links to the Philippine Left and prioritized ousting a U.S. government-supported dictatorship and the establishment of Philippine national sovereignty. The activists viewed their organizing abroad as an extension of the Philippine revolution, and their organizing style mirrored organizing practiced in the Philippines. *Makibaka!* reveals that the Philippine struggle was not simply a site for inspiration, solidarity, and study, but that activists in the Philippines had trained many organizers in North America to support the National Democratic struggle there.

Numerous immigrant activists remained in the United States past the time they originally intended, afraid that Marcos might retaliate if they returned to the Philippines. Marcos viewed these activists as a threat, evidenced by what was commonly known as the “Marcos Blacklist.” It listed the names of Filipina/o American activists, “some of whom had never been to the Philippines like Florante Ibanez” and those “[uninvolved] in anti-Marcos activities like Fred Cordova” (Ishizuka 2017, 185).⁶ The Marcos Blacklist caused pervasive alarm and suspicion, creating a major division in the Filipina/o American community. Thus, regardless of whether one was part of the anti-Marcos movement, the Marcos period holds historical significance for Filipina/o American activism.

Many studies about the anti-martial law movement end in 1986, as it was the year that the EDSA/”People Power” revolution formally ended the Marcos’s 21-year reign. For anti-Marcos activists in the United States and in the Philippines, on the other hand, the end of Marcos’s reign created new terrain for activists invested in the project of national democracy. For anti-imperialists, Aquino re-introduced elite democracy to the Philippines, which, to them, would not bring genuine liberation and reform to the country. They refused to stop organizing.

Thus, *Makibaka!* ends in 1992. It was the year the Philippine government ordered the United States to remove its naval bases after almost a century of military presence and mass protest. 1992 was also a culmination of the Communist Party of the Philippines’ second “rectification movement,” a period of internal fragmentation for the Party, which many

⁶ Dorothy Cordova in discussion with Karen Ishizuka, April 20, 2013; Florante Ibanez in discussion with Karen Ishizuka, January 29, 2014.

activists argue caused its U.S.-based formations to collapse.⁷ It was not the end of U.S. based anti-imperialist solidarity for the Philippines by any means, but 1992 did mark an end to one chapter of U.S.-based anti-imperialist history. Thus, like activist-historian Max Elbaum, I challenge a movement declension narrative that starts in the 1960s and ends in the 1970s and 1980s. Instead, I suggest that the 1970s and 1980s was the *beginning* of a new U.S. based national democratic line of organizing. Using 100 original oral history interviews (including 96 activists involved before 1992) and the examination of primary source documents from 24 archival collections from 4 countries, *Makibaka!* shows that the anti-imperialist anti-Marcos movement in the United States planted the seeds for a diasporic anti-imperialism in the United States that continues today.

Feminist Social Histories

Grand narratives of political movements often omit the stories of splits; the stories of the ones who went “rogue” or those who left for reasons called “personal.” Understanding contradictions as a point of lesson and possibility requires us to look closely at conflict instead of away from them. Through oral histories, we have the opportunity to learn multiple versions of a political story. The opportunity allows us to fill in gaps and weave different versions together, making sense of divisions. This process transforms previous understandings of history. Oral historian Horacio Roque Ramírez testifies, “For marginalized communities constantly involved in struggles for visibility, political identity, and space- the business of “cultural citizenship” – testimonies about their existence are critical acts of documentation” (2005, 116).

⁷ According to the CPP, this movement sought to “rectify...errors and shortcomings” particularly from 1984 to 1989 “in order to unite the Party and the people along the correct revolutionary line” (Sison, “The Critical and Creative Tasks” 1993).

Unlike most movement scholarship that centers heterosexual male leaders, *Makibaka!* foregrounds the lives and voices of women, mothers, gay and lesbian organizers, undocumented activists, and the rank and file through a feminist analysis of power relations within the movement. It echoes concerns of activists and scholars that social movements do not operate separately from the systems that are embedded within them, in this case what theorists name capitalist heteropatriarchy (e.g. Blackwell 2011; Brown 1992). In addition to documenting how state and interpersonal violence in the forms of murder and government surveillance, along with sexism, ageism, homophobia, capitalism, and migration, impact resistance movements, I investigate how activists sometimes reinforce these same forms of violence in their own organizations. Central to my observations is the critical role of women, mothers, immigrants, youth, lesbians, and gays in confronting these same forms of violence. Their efforts have led to the development of a movement. By centering their voices, I reveal their work in producing new ways of thinking and organizing.

I argue that the basis of new political imaginaries produced by women and LGBT activists are the interpersonal relationships in which they take part. Thus, rather than one ideological history, which I originally intended to write, *Makibaka!* is a collection of social histories reflecting these relationships. *Makibaka!* does not presume to be *the* history of the movement, but rather a group of histories that are part of it. As a feminist project, it recognizes that different histories reside in time, experienced by people with sometimes oppositional and sometimes similar goals and grievances.

Makibaka! therefore offers a window into understanding interpersonal relationships among different groups in the movement, as well as within them. I demonstrate that interpersonal relationships are not simply determinants for decision-making outcomes, but

they are formative in the development of political ideology. I do not wish to place the “social” and the “ideological” as opposites, but rather I remind that they are dialectically related in the maintenance and evolution of political organizations. By drawing out connections between the social and the ideological, I reveal how they are also simultaneously influenced by capitalism and heteropatriarchy.

Outline of the Dissertation

Makibaka! argues that women, mothers, immigrants, youth, and LGBT people were instrumental in the creation, sustenance, and evolution of the Filipina/o American anti-imperialist left from 1968 to 1992. Their stories reveal the invisible work of these typically “marginal” social actors and the interpersonal relationships- in unity *and* times of conflict- that created new pathways to liberatory politics. Invisible work receives little recognition or monetary reward and is typically gendered and racialized.

Scholars refer to invisible work as work that is “informal and unregulated- outside of bureaucratic rules and obligations” (Daniels 1987, 409). Sociologist Arlie Hochschild famously outlined a specific form of invisible work in the construction and maintenance of interpersonal relations: that of “emotion work” (1979). According to Hochschild, emotion work involves: (1) considering how a setting affects other people; i.e. putting one’s self in another’s “shoes;” (2) attentively ruminating about the past and planning for the future; (3) considering the sensibility of one’s own judgments based on the behavior of participants in an interaction; and (4) maintaining a comfortable and friendly disposition in concern for or

interest in another to place them at ease.⁸ I add to this list the intellectual work of creating theory to challenge oppression.

Community organizing and activism is a particular kind of work in which successful organizers undertake all of these forms of emotional work all the time. Yet, the problem arises when they fall on one person or group- namely women, people of color, and sexual minorities- and invisibly add to the already heavy load that political organizers bear. Thus, it is not enough to render invisible work visible. Breakthroughs happen when people catalyze awareness and restructure social spaces so that invisible work does not fall on the shoulders of the same people, namely women of color and LGBT people of color, as it typically does.

Makibaka! examines the anti-Marcos movement, highlighting organizations' and individuals' navigations of the contradictions that lead to the engagement of invisible work. Stories like these help broaden perspectives about what social justice work looks like and how people get there. Thus, I reveal the "hidden transcripts" of social movements, in the tradition of Robin D.G. Kelley (1994) who contests traditional definitions of political action that rely on involvement in elections, political parties, and grassroots social movements. By relying on such traditional definitions, we risk missing an integral part of understanding how resistance functions; that is, the everyday acts of resistance- in this case resistance *within* grassroots movements- that accumulate and motivate disenfranchised working people to continue to engage in more visible forms of politics.

In Chapter 1, "Centerwomen" and the "Fourth Shift": Revolutionary Intimacies and

⁸ Arlene Daniels (1987) offers an example of "good hostesses" who "look for signs of how well people are enjoying a party, whether or not anyone appears will at least or left out" (409).

a Study of Best Practices, 1972-1992,” I highlight the role of Ester Soriano-Hewitt as an invisible but critical social network connector, or as Karen Sacks calls a “centerwoman,” who linked former Black Panther Party Minister of Education Ray Masai Hewitt, former BPP comrade Bobby Bowens, and Filipino national Enrique de la Cruz as roommates in Los Angeles. Their connection yields the movement of organizational “best practices” over three decades and across three organizations: the Black Panther Party, the Sunday Morning Group (SMG), and Alliance for Philippine Concerns-Los Angeles (APC-LA). I reveal that Soriano-Hewitt instilled in the latter two groups a non-hierarchical democratic style. In the latter part of the chapter, I illuminate the invisible work of immigrant women like Prosy Abarquez Delacruz who galvanized other women in her Los Angeles APC chapter to take their husbands/male comrades to task for not doing their share of reproductive labor. It was in the women’s unity and conflict with male comrades that future shifts were able to take place: immediately in the organization and later in the lives of their grandchildren thirty years later.

In Chapter 2, “Being Gay in the KDP: Making and Taking Space Together in a Filipino American Revolutionary Organization, 1973 to 1986,” I trace the KDP’s evolution of homosexual politics, revealing the invisible and emotional labor of gay, lesbian, and bisexual members like Jaime Geaga, Cecilia Gonzalez, Sandy Aguila, John Silva, Gil Mangaoang, and others.⁹ While fighting a dictator, these activists navigated internalized homophobia, made and took space for their gay, lesbian, and bisexual selves in a movement that stigmatized homosexuality, and helped to lay groundwork for the AIDS movement in the 1980s. These activists sometimes clashed with their organization, but also found

⁹ Sandy Aguila and Cecilia Gonzalez are pseudonyms. Gonzalez does not want to be identified and I was unable to reach Aguila to re-confirm her consent.

moments of joy and affirmation that helped them keep fighting in different areas of political work. Their stories also demonstrate the interconnection and flow of movements into new ones. In addition to showing gay and lesbian KDP members' paths into the 1980s AIDS movement, I describe how today's immigrant rights movement has roots in the work of KDP members. Revealed are the undocumented gays and lesbians who were active in both the anti-Marcos movement and fight for immigrant rights. We might consider these activists the "undocuqueers" of the 1970s and 1980s.

Chapter 3, "Hindi Ka Na Nag-iisa" ("You Are No Longer Alone"): The Role of Relationships in the Transnational Development of Filipina Nationalist Feminist Thought, 1968-1986," acknowledges the invisible emotional and intellectual work of transnational Filipina feminist ideologues like Delia Aguilar and the women of KALAYAAN, one of the first feminist organizations in the Philippines. Aguilar and the women of KALAYAAN developed new theories in the creation of a new "nationalist feminism" that brought together gender, class, and national liberation. From Connecticut to Washington D.C. to Manila, these women doubly challenged bourgeois western feminism and a version of revolutionary politics that suggested gender equality would be won once women gained access to the production line. Furthermore, Aguilar rejected U.S. racism and cultural chauvinism in her Marxist feminist study group. She and other women of color created another group devoted toward developing Third World feminism, a newly emergent paradigm. I also reveal the intervention of attorney and human rights defender Charito Planas in fighting against intra-organizational sexism in Friends of the Filipino People (FFP). In the early 1980s, Planas initiated an informal women's caucus, which brought women together to discuss their common struggles. This caucus asserted to male comrades that the women of FFP refused to

be silenced in the fight against Marcos.

Finally, in Chapter 4, “The Foremothers of CIRCA Pintig: The Emergence of an Intergenerational Diasporic Organizing Model, 1983-1992,” I describe how immigrant working class women in Chicago’s Philippine Forum/APC resisted a practice of nationalism that favored “protest politics” over cultural work and developed their own diasporic nationalist imaginaries. Through the story of Angela “Ging” Agustin-Mascarenas, I also consider how activist mothers’ reproductive politics converged with their strategic framework to push them to break away from the Filipina/o American nationalist group, APC, and start their own organization, Pintig Cultural Group. These activist mothers created a new model of intergenerational organizing that is as inspirational as it is sustainable. The chapter responds to Asian American Studies scholar Diane C. Fujino’s critique of Asian American Movement framings as being primarily student-initiated (2008). While some activists in this dissertation were students and professors, others were working class non-university people, drawn to the political ferment of the era.

With vantage points from the East Coast, West Coast, Chicago, and the Philippines, these chapters allow us to trace the evolution of Filipina/o American anti-imperialist organizing on a transnational scale, revealing the evolution of a movement that stretched the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and continued even after ousting a dictator. Because of Filipina/o migration history to the U.S., West Coast organizing described in Chapters 1 and 2 consists of a diverse composition of Philippine nationals, Filipina/os born in the United States, working class Filipina/os, students, and professionals, mixed with other communities

of color and white supporters.¹⁰ The East Coast's history of Filipina/o American activism, evidenced in Chapter 3 and 4 reflects a more recent history of migration of professional Philippine nationals, particularly those in the health industry, arriving post-1965.

To maintain the dynamism of the movement, I chose not to write an introduction chapter separating out a movement from “above.” Writing a separate chapter with a chronological history of key dates would reinforce the idea that there is one “main” history and “subsume” the histories lived by women and LGBT people as secondary. Instead, each chapter takes up a different organization's history, but through the eyes, interests, and concerns of the women and/or LGBT activists involved. To aid the reader, I purposely repeat overlapping events across chapters adding information as is relevant to the organization and social actors involved.

As a feminist project, I maintain the idea that there is no one or complete history of a movement. Rather, these sala stories provide insight into the anti-Marcos and Filipina/o American anti-imperialist movement from the “grassroots,” or as Antonio Gramsci would put it, “from below.” Composing different organizational histories as multiple windows into the anti-Marcos movement reveals cohesion among the groups even if they did not interact or get along with one another. While organizations may have operated as disparate and sometimes opposing entities, they each contributed to keeping the anti-Marcos movement “alive.” Thus, *Makibaka!* reclaims the ways that Filipina/o anti-imperialists were connected then and now.

¹⁰ I offer a brief history of Filipina/o migration to the United States in the Appendix.

Methodology:

Oral History and “Sala Stories” as Filipina/o Feminist Methods

A historical project that aims to recover silenced voices and the invisible labor of social movements requires a methodology that prioritizes orality while reflecting the subaltern nature of its narrators. In the introduction to their anthology, *Bodies of Evidence: The Practice of Queer Oral History*, oral historians Nan Boyd and Horacio Roque Ramírez explain the difficulty of studying marginalized groups:

Unlike researchers who choose to work with special collections of well-preserved documents, those who study women, queers, and- we might add- other subaltern groups such as communities of color and migrant workers by and large have had to start from scratch; where no documents or acid-free folders existed, researchers set out to create them (2012, 5).

While I was lucky that over a dozen formal archives with anti-Marcos movement documents exist, there were no separate folders labeled “mothers” or “lesbians.” Locating their stories thus required me to dig. But ultimately, I had to “set out to create them,” as Boyd and Roque Ramírez say must be done, to study their political work, as well as the multiple dimensions of interpersonal relationships.

One particular aspect I hoped to understand regarding invisible work were the movement’s affective qualities, or its “feelings” and emotions. I was specifically interested in the prevalence of emotional labor, which sociologist Arlie Hochschild refers to as the avoidance and cost of distressing sensations in order to help other people remain at ease, typified by her study of flight attendants (1983). In my other work, I have discussed the costs of women of color and TGNC (trans and gender non-conforming people) activists who

suppressed their emotions in order to maintain a unified presence despite the presence of sexism, homophobia, and transphobia in their organizations (Hanna 2013). How did the anti-imperialist activists of the Marcos era navigate sexism and homophobia while fighting a dictator? To answer this question, I had to create my own repository, which Gender Studies and English scholar Ann Cvetkovich aptly describes as “an archive of feelings” (2003).

A major part of building this repository involved compiling oral histories. Between 2012 and 2018, I conducted over 96 oral history interviews in the United States, the Philippines, the Netherlands, and Canada with activists who were active in the anti-Marcos movement from the 1960s to 1992. The list of interviews does not include informal gatherings, follow-up emails. I primarily used the “snowball” method to generate my list of narrators, starting with people who Ugnayan members knew. Those contacts led me to others.

I asked my interviewees to choose the location of their interviews. While they occurred in a variety of places: coffee shops, my interviewees’ offices, shopping malls, and restaurants, a great deal of them happened in their homes. The interviews ranged from 1.5 to more than six hours and sometimes led to additional follow-up interviews, phone calls, and/or extended email exchanges. While I devised a list of questions for the interviews, for the most part, my narrators and I engaged in what oral historian Alessandro Portelli calls “thick dialogue,” or “the deep conversation that occurs when the researcher asks questions that arise dialectically from the answers” (1997, 11).¹¹ I did not want my guiding questions of invisible and emotional labor to limit our interviews, especially if my interviewees did not

¹¹ A huge thank you to Theo Gonzalves for reminding me of the importance of Alessandro Portelli’s oral history work.

think they were worthy of discussion. Thick dialogue came naturally because of our shared political interest in the topics we were discussing and because I did not know much about the movement, which I think became clear to my interviewees from the start of our interviews. I started from scratch, using bits and pieces of published information, public presentations (e.g. several KDP members have an active presence at the annual Association for Asian American Studies Conference), and information my kasamas knew to guide me.

By engaging in thick dialogue with primarily women and LGBT members of the movement, my project became a feminist one, regardless of whether my narrators identify as feminists or not. Thus, I concur with Sheila Gluck, who in her essay, “What’s So Special about Women? Women’s Oral History,” claims:

Women’s oral history, then, is a feminist encounter, even if the interviewee is not herself a feminist. It is the creation of a new type of material on women; it is the validation of women’s experiences; it is the communication among women of different generations; it is the discovery of our own roots and the development of a continuity which has been denied us in traditional historical accounts (1977, 5).

Likewise, my exchange with the women and LGBT people of color I interviewed produced multiple levels of validation, learning, and documentation otherwise missing from record.

On my part, as a woman who had recently come out as queer, it was an invaluable opportunity to speak to my queer and strong women elders.¹² This period raised many strong

¹² Over time, I stopped calling them my “elders,” as some expressed that being called an “elder” made them feel “old.” I call them elders here and then out of the sincere respect I have for the knowledges and wisdom, inevitably accumulated with time and experience, of people who are older than me and who have taken the time to share stories with someone from a generation younger than them.

women and LGBT people in the U.S. and in the Philippines to courageously resist a U.S. government supported dictator. Thus, many of the activists I interviewed possessed great confidence and pride as they discussed their contributions to the movement.¹³ However other women reacted with surprise when I asked to interview them about the movement. On several occasions, they told me, “You should speak to my husband. He would know more.”

Each interview was precious. Portelli argues that “Like language, memory is social, but it only materializes through the minds and mouths of individuals....no two persons’ memories, like fingerprints- indeed, like voices- are exactly alike” (1997, 57). Indeed, I am grateful for the willingness and trust from each person who took the time to meet with me, as each meeting added greater nuance to my understanding and thinking about revolution and resistance, during the Marcos era and in our world’s current state of affairs.

Of course, oral histories and empirical evidence work together. According to oral historian Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy, “In arguing...that there is a tremendous amount to be learned by fully exploring the subjective and oral nature of oral histories, I have also suggested that the ‘empirical’ and the ‘subjective’ should not be falsely polarized. They are fully complementary to one another...” (2006, 281). Thus, I utilized a mixed methods approach that combined archival research, textual analysis of primary documents, and oral histories.

The growing number of researchers who study the Marcos period are lucky to have over a dozen public archival collections devoted to this era. These include the Cindy Domingo, Silme Domingo, and KDP Papers at the University of Washington’s Special

¹³ For documentation of eight women in the Philippines and the United States who were active in the anti-Marcos movement, see Mila De Guzman’s 2016 book, *Women Against Marcos: Stories of Filipino and Filipino American Women Who Fought a Dictator*.

Collections, the collections of the Friends of the Filipino People (donated by Tim and Linda McGloin) and Daniel Boone Schirmer at the Wisconsin Historical Society, and The Philippine Radical Papers at the University of the Philippines and University of British Columbia. In addition, I am extraordinarily grateful that Delia D. Aguilar, E. San Juan, Jr., Enrique Delacruz, Ermena Vinluan, Terry Bautista, Ted Alcuitas, Elena Dudancruz, and other activists who prefer to remain anonymous, trusted me enough to share their personal collections with me. The documents in all of these collections were crucial for identifying and citing organizational mission statements, programs, summations, analyses, dates, and locations. They were equally eye-opening for helping to understand the differences between what organizations wanted “the masses” to believe and what was actually happening “on the ground.” Whether one agreed with the activists or not, their strength as prolific propagandists was impressive and offered a plethora of primary documents to study. During especially priceless occasions, I found personal pieces of correspondence that offered windows into the interpersonal relationships between the sender and recipient (like in Chapter 3).

Still, these documents only provided part of the story. For example, when I was at the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS) archives in Seattle, I found a program from the 1972 Filipino People’s Far West Convention in Stockton. The program listed Sandy Aguila as the leader of a workshop on “Sexism.”¹⁴ Excited, I thought I finally found someone who could tell me about how Filipina American women were thinking about feminism. I imagined that Sandy was the “feminist” of the group and sought to track her down. After a bit of investigative work, I found Aguila, who agreed to meet me at a Burger

¹⁴ “Sandy Aguila” is a pseudonym, as I have not yet been able to confirm her approval of my telling this story.

King for lunch and an interview. About thirty minutes in, I told Aguila that I was interested in speaking with her because I read that she led a sexism workshop at the 1972 convention. Looking back, her nonchalant, “I don’t know why they always had me lead that,” still makes me laugh. While I was not surprised that Aguila was asked to lead a sexism workshop given her “I am who I am” vibe, she did not have much of a story to tell about the workshop or the group’s thinking about women’s issues. Maybe Aguila had volunteered to lead the workshop because she had expressed an interest in it, or perhaps she took the task because no one else wanted to do it. Thinking back to organizing conferences with Ugnayan and the shortage of capable bodies, both ideas were plausible. Even though our meeting did not elicit information about “sexism” for which I hoped, Aguila *not* remembering the details was useful. Perhaps with the women’s movement gaining traction, the organizers of the Far West Convention felt it would be important to have participants discuss sexism but were still learning about it at the time.

Nonetheless, the interview was valuable in other ways. Aguila told me what it was like for her to not be “straight” and a “rank and file” member in KDP, as I document in Chapter 2. As this story illustrates, the archives can lead us to make real-life connections and stories necessary to, as Portelli puts it, “communicate what history means to human beings” (1997, 42). Further, lived interactions allow us to identify what may exist “on paper” as illusory or even purposely written to hide and/or embellish the truth.

A Filipina/o Oral History Methodology: Sala Stories

An explicitly Filipino feminist form of oral history emerged as I conducted my research: one that I describe as being of the *sala*, or the Filipina/o living room. Many of my interviews happened at the homes of my narrators, where I was overwhelmed with the

generosity and graciousness of my hosts. If I arrived during lunchtime and/or our interview lasted through dinner, my narrators, usually women, offered me food (e.g. lasagna, scones, grilled fish, salad from their garden), often home-cooked, and obviously planned in advance of my visit. I offered to help cook and clean up, and even if my hosts offered the staple, “No, no, don’t worry about it,” I knew to do it anyway.

During my fieldwork years, I was dealing with a newly diagnosed chronic autoimmune disorder. As treatment, my doctor advised me not to eat gluten/wheat, dairy (cheese, milk), and sugar. Typically, flares of extreme inflammation occurred only after an extended amount of time eating these foods. However, numerous “cheat days” would lead to my inability to walk on my worst days. If I felt that the narrator and I had developed a congenial rapport, and/or I was in the middle of recovering from a flare, I communicated my dietary restrictions upfront or declined the food in person. Pre-emptively stating my dietary needs felt awkward and presumptuous because I did not want to give an impression that I expected the narrator to feed me. If it was obvious that the narrator went through trouble to prepare the food, I ate it. Filipina/o cultural values of *hiya* (some refer to *hiya* as shame while others claim it is an assertion of dignity), combined with the indigenous Filipina/o value of *pakikipagkapwa* (the “I am you, you are me” shared self connection with the host/narrator) led me to accept the generous offerings of my hosts, amidst my internal struggles.

Following other Filipino etiquette scripts helped build trust with my narrators. I rarely arrived to an interview empty-handed, bringing a *regalo* (gift) or *pasalubong* (a gift or souvenir from a place from where I had traveled; often I brought fruit to share, and if we were meeting outside, I bought them coffee or a snack). During my first interviews, I called

everyone *Tita, Tito, Ate, and Kuya*, which mean aunt, uncle, older sister, and older brother. Even though young people call non-distant elders *Manang and Manong* in my mother's dialect, Ilonggo, I used the Tagalog forms of these titles, given Tagalog/Filipino's dominance in the United States and as the national language of the Philippines. Some narrators, usually Filipina/o immigrants, appeared to appreciate these titles and used them to refer to themselves in emails. Others requested I not use them because of their hierarchical connotations and/or because it made them feel "old."¹⁵ Thinking back, these narrators may have preferred to Anglicize and formalize our relationship because I was a researcher unrelated to them socially and biologically.

In his oral histories with transgender performer Teresita la Campesina, Roque Ramírez reflects on the importance of shared language in the oral history process:

That both of us were bilingual but, most important, spontaneously conversant in Spanglish was one of the main reasons that she and I communicated so well, something a solely English- or Spanish-speaking oral historian would not have been able to grasp in her narrative style and the subtleties of her gender play" (2012, 185).

While I am not spontaneously conversant in Filipino by any means, I know that my immigrant Filipina/o narrators appreciated my efforts to speak and write to them in Filipino, which I learned during the course of my research. Many of my interviewees are in their 60s and 70s and have children who, like many other Filipina/os born in North America, did not

¹⁵ The titles seemed especially strange to the Filipina/o Americans I interviewed who were born in the United States. Growing up on the East Coast, I had little to no contact with American-born Filipina/os of an older generation from me, so I was less sure how to emphasize respect with narrators who were born and/or raised in the United States. In the Philippine Left, many use "Ka" as a term of endearment, short for *kasama*, to reject hierarchies imbued in terms like *Tito* and *Tita*.

learn Filipino growing up.¹⁶ My Filipino language skills (or rather, my persistence in trying to speak and write in Filipino) offered another gateway for trust. Many narrators viewed my efforts to learn Filipino as reflective of my dedication to the Filipina/o community.

In *Bodies of Evidence*, Roque Ramírez and Boyd argue, “the physical presence of sexual or gendered bodies affects the oral history collaboration” (2012, 2). In other words, racial, gendered, and sexual embodiment matters and can have powerful consequences for both processes and products of oral history collaborations. Thus, I argue that sala stories methodologically require both interviewer and interviewee be of Filipina/o descent. For two people of Filipina/o ancestry living in the United States, there is an assumption that they share historical experiences of discrimination, harassment, and violence in a society that discriminates on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, ability, class, and other factors. Oral historian Rina Benmayor affirms the methodological utility of being “from” the community that one studies, arguing that it “can lead to more trust, better rapport, and keener understanding of issues [with patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism] in their complexity” (1988, 11). Shared trust is a crucial ingredient for the emergence of sala stories, which in turn once revealed, can lead to future social justice collaborations that cross ethnic and racial lines.¹⁷

¹⁶ Our not learning the language of our immigrant parents is neither the fault of our parents nor ourselves. Instead it is the product of a racist educational system that dissuaded immigrant parents from teaching their children to speak multiple languages in the home, as educational “research” said it would “confuse” us. Furthermore, racism in broader society influenced many parents to encourage their children to speak English only to prevent them from adopting an accent that would sound less “American.”

¹⁷ Here I draw on Chela Sandoval’s concept of tactical essentialism, which Sandoval argues can be momentary but often necessary for marginalized people to utilize in the face of oppression, making space for future collaboration (2000).

It was not unusual for my interviews at someone's home to last all day long. I enjoyed them immensely. Often, they took place in the kitchen and/or the *sala*, or the living room. Our interviews would frequently begin as diligent questioning and continue as serious political discussion (sometimes it felt like an impromptu "ED"), candidly punctuated with laughter. Because I was interested in interpersonal relationships and each group's thoughts about the others, some of our conversations bordered *tsismis*, which is colloquially defined as "gossip." I agree with Babaylan Studies scholar and community mentor Leny Mendoza Strobel that *tsismis* has a much deeper meaning. Strobel contends, "In an oral, highly contextual culture, *tsismis* symbolizes many levels of interacting, social bonding, or an indirect manner of communicating- more than just gossip" (2005, 30). Filipino language and culture scholar Agnes "Bing" Magtoto adds another layer to *tsismis*, arguing that it has been a way for Filipina/os to work through their feelings in a culture that does not privilege or acknowledge the value of Western forms of therapy.¹⁸ Magtoto adds that *tsismis* "is an extension of the Filipino's sense of *kapwa*, trying or wanting to find out how the other (a third party) is doing, good or bad. [It is] a form of concern rather than character assassination."¹⁹ Both Strobel and Magtoto insightfully suggest that *tsismis* can only be understood within its Filipina/o cultural context in relation to its history of colonialism. I join them in arguing that we should reconceptualize the potential of *tsismis* and the oral tradition as anti-colonial forms of communication, information gathering, and

¹⁸ Agnes Magtoto in discussion with the author and Oscar Peñaranda, Queens NY, June 2016. She cites the work of Virgilio "Ver" Enriquez, the "Father of Filipino Psychology," for his contestations of the way that anthropologists have pathologized Filipina/o values. See Virgilio Enriquez. 1994. *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology: The Philippine Experience*. Manila: De La Salle University Press.

¹⁹ Agnes Magtoto, e-mail message to author, June 14, 2018.

pakikipagkapwa. In fact, they are a crucial component of what Scott and Kelley refer to as “hidden transcripts” of social movements (1990; 1994)

Indeed, it was in the “sala” that my narrators’ stories of anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist resistance emerged. I cite my Pinay sister colleague and Education scholar Melissa Nievera-Lozano for calling stories like the ones in this book “sala stories.” These stories often emerge in private spaces in the home where women congregate while doing domestic duties. They are stories similar to those of the “kitchen table,” where women of color have built support systems and germinated theories and practices of revolution.²⁰ Likewise, the sala stories in *Makibaka!* emerged from shared political commitments, mutual respect, and trust predicated on Filipino scripts of etiquette, which I learned from my Filipina mother, steeped in hope passed from one generation to the next.

Shared Collaboration and Intersubjectivity

Of course, the path of an “insider” can be thorny. When I began my research, there was no handbook for the type of work that I wanted to do. Most of the oral history methodological texts that addressed race and ethics mainly confronted white people researching communities of color. I was hungry for a methodological text written for us, those who come from the ethnic communities we are studying. Texts about the ethical dilemmas of research written by “insiders” like Roque Ramírez’s “Sharing Queer Authorities: Collaborating for Transgender Latina and Gay Latino Historical Meanings” were precious but rare.

²⁰ Such gratitude to Cherrié Moraga, Gloria Anzaldúa, Barbara Smith, and the foremothers of the groundbreaking anthology, *This Bridge Called My Back* (1983) and their “Kitchen Table Press,” whose intentions and fierce articulations continue to echo the heartbeats of so many women of color, including myself, today.

Many of my narrators were ideologues, former political prisoners, and/or community figures who had been interviewed many times about their political work or appeared to have a way of talking about it that was familiar to them. Thus, I threw “curveballs” when I asked about topics like marriage, healing (which I discuss in the Conclusion), and interpersonal conflict. As a feminist researcher interested in interpersonal relationships, emotional labor, and the overlap of the “personal and political,” these questions were relevant to me. However, some of my narrators viewed them as unrelated and/or prying.

As I anticipated, some people were suspicious when I said I wanted to know about “contradictions.” As one person wrote when I approached them for an interview, “Ideological shifts and splits...? Where are you going with this? Is this all you're interested in? What about the good work that was done by [name of organization]?” Thus, came the dilemma of how to request interviews ethically without scaring people away.

Additionally, I had to figure out how to help my narrators feel empowered without losing sight of my research interests. How do I write about people who have political stakes in what I am writing about? Is it possible to write without taking “a side”? How do I remain accountable to various perspectives while also maintaining my own voice in the process? Also, what happens when one person wants to tell a story and another group doesn’t want that story to be told?

Another concern played out: the question of trauma. Some of the people I interviewed were former political prisoners, who had experienced torture. Others were survivors of state-sanctioned murders, surveillance, and war. I am not trained to support survivors of trauma. Thus, I decided I would not ask about people’s direct experiences with these events and would only discuss them if they volunteered them.

Midway through my interviews, my group Ugnayan split with its sister-organization, Damayan. Observing the anger, betrayal, grief, and paranoia that arose in my loved ones and myself, I became interested in the question of how people heal from organizational splits. More questions arose: How will activists respond to questions about “healing”? How do I ask questions without re-traumatizing the people I am interviewing? If I do re-traumatize them, how will I know and what should I do? How do I listen openly without absorbing the trauma embedded in their stories?

I also struggled with navigating the ethnic studies concept that we as researchers can have people “speak for themselves” because I ultimately chose the structure and stories for this dissertation. But Roque Ramírez suggests community members and oral historians use this opportunity to collaborate to “connect the past to the present, to make of history a collective process of resignification where all of us become agents for its production” (2005, 119). Thus, in the spirit of “shared collaboration” and bound by a hyper-vigilant sense of ethics, I sent drafts of my chapters to everyone who I quoted or who was mentioned in someone else’s quote, even if they had previously signed consent forms that legally allowed me to quote them without further followup. My hyper-vigilance was rooted in my witnessing numerous instances of unethical research, as well as a deep concern of betraying the confidence and trust of people I interviewed who had invited me into their homes. It was an emotionally and physically laborious task that required continual humbling on my part. Yet it invited me to grapple again with my positionality as a “researcher with good intentions,” who might benefit from the writing more than the people I am interviewing. With full time jobs and other responsibilities, many of my narrators understandably did not have time to read what I sent them, leaving me to ponder the ethics of what to do next.

While I continue to wrestle with all of these questions, I believe that some degree of ambivalence is important for ethical work. The concept of “intersubjectivity” brings me some degree of clarity. In her ethnographic/oral history book, *Filipino Housewives Speak*, feminist theorist Delia Aguilar, who is also one of my narrators, defines intersubjectivity as “a dialectical relationships between research subject and research object from which socio-historical truths can begin to emerge in the process of interaction” (1991, 1). For Aguilar, I presume intersubjectivity meant the dynamic internal shifts that occur within and across the women she interviewed and her as the researcher through dialogue. Drawing on Aguilar’s use of intersubjectivity, my methodological choice of engaging in “thick dialogue” in the promotion of “sala stories,” allowed for us to together ask questions of one another in the pursuit of a political project of justice that is larger than *Makibaka!* Portelli reasons:

In oral history especially, because it is so directly linked with personal contact, the need to know has often gone beyond the intellectual passion of committed academics to include a sense of commitment as citizens who are not only students of history, but also active and responsible historical subjects who may be motivated by something broader than ourselves: a community, an institution, a movement, a place. (1997, 67-78)

In other words, by re-configuring the traditionally top-down hierarchical researcher-interviewee relationship to one where we both maintain our subjectivities, our relationship develops radical potential. I know that the lessons I learned from my narrators and through the never-ending negotiation of our intergenerational relationships’ varying relations of power (e.g. me as researcher and them as “subject,” their influence in the Filipina/o

community as leaders, the unquestioning age deference that sometimes Filipina/os reinforce) will shape my social justice work beyond this project and academia.

Oral historian Alessandro Portelli argues, “We never thought of memory as an archive, as a freezer that preserves data and meanings, but rather as a processor that transforms and elaborates them in osmotic fashion and yields ever new data and meanings that include the old ones- if only to deny or get rid of them” (1997, 44-45). Likewise, I hope that *Makibaka!*, the product (and beginning, I hope) of an ongoing exchange with my narrators and other trusted readers, elicits new radical imaginings for the future.

Chapter 1: “Centerwomen” and the “Fourth Shift”: Revolutionary Intimacies and a Study of Best Practices, 1972-1992

Born in the Philippines, Prosy Abarquez Delacruz moved to Los Angeles when she was eighteen years old in 1972. Abarquez Delacruz was no stranger to radical politics by the time she arrived and had watched the world with a critical eye starting at a young age. She remembers asking the nuns at her Catholic school difficult questions: such as why the family who lived in the shack next door were poor and why two female classmates were punished for kissing each other. Her concerns about injustice grew during her college years as a student at the University of the Philippines (UP) as protests against tuition hikes and the Marcos administration’s inadequacy and corruption emerged. With radical professors like nationalist historian Teodoro Agoncillo who piqued her curiosity, Abarquez Delacruz sought an explanation for the Philippines’ problems and joined several study groups that met “in a nondescript home” near UP. Looking back, she recalls:

The guys that would lead that would be – I think they were farmers, I don’t know, you know, they were wearing like flip-flops, yellowed T-shirt that’s supposed to be white, you know, so you could see. But they were so bright. They were so wise and they had answers to all of the questions we had as students.²¹

Among the books these young activists read was Amado Guerrero’s 1971 *Philippine Society and Revolution*, the central text of the National Democratic (ND) Movement.

Operating broadly under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and in support of the New People’s Army (NPA), the ND movement was a broad-based alliance

²¹ Prosy Abarquez Delacruz in discussion with the author, Los Angeles, CA, March 2, 2016.

of progressive individuals and organizations seeking comprehensive social, economic, and political justice in the Philippines and heavily involved in protesting the Marcos administration. Abarquez Delacruz continues:

I was seeking answers to my questions because no one in my family would give me the answers. So I went to the library and I read all of Claro M. Recto's speeches. I read the bibliography of *The History of the Filipino People*, Teodoro Agoncillo, I also read about parity rights. Benjamin Muego was teaching us how to debate parity rights, so I researched a lot in the library.²²

Abarquez Delacruz put her knowledge into practice. She organized a student walkout in the UP College of Home Economics and was involved in the First Quarter Storm (FQS), a series of intense demonstrations, protests, and marches in the first part of 1970 that condemned the Marcos government's role in the nation's economic crisis and longstanding ties to the United States. She was so committed to the revolutionary movement that she decided to join the New People's Army. Just as she was about to leave for the mountains, she was caught "red-handed" by her mother and father. She recounts, "'They said what are you doing with your luggage?' So I got grounded. I never got to go."²³

Many college-aged activists moved to Europe and the United States, succumbing to the pressures of parents, her parents included, who feared for their safety. Abarquez

²² As a stipulation to Philippine independence in 1945, the 1946 Bell Trade Act granted U.S. citizens and corporations "parity" rights to Philippine natural resources that were equal to those of Philippine citizenship. The Bell Trade Act angered and mobilized many Filipina/os to demand Philippine sovereignty and end to U.S. neo-colonialism. The Laurel-Langley Agreement revised the Bell Trade Act in 1955 and made parity privileges reciprocal.

²³ Prosy Abarquez Delacruz in discussion with the author, Los Angeles, CA, March 2, 2016.

Delacruz's mother petitioned her other daughters to move to Los Angeles several years earlier. Abarquez Delacruz finally agreed to move the Summer of 1972, just months before Marcos signed Proclamation 1081.

When Marcos publicly declared martial law on September 22, 1972, Abarquez Delacruz was obviously concerned about what would happen to the Philippines. Days later, she went to the Los Angeles Philippine Consulate, where she met a group called the National Committee for Restoration of Civil Liberties in the Philippines (NCRCLP), who was demonstrating. It was easy to convince Abarquez Delacruz to join NCRCLP, as she had already been deeply committed to the anti-Marcos movement while in the Philippines. It was through NCRCLP that she later became a member of the Sunday Morning Group, or SMG, a multiracial L.A.-based study group between 1975 and 1978 and later Alliance for Philippine Concerns (APC) after 1986.

In this chapter, I draw out two women leaders who played pivotal roles in NCRCLP-Los Angeles, SMG, and APC. I highlight the roles of Ester Soriano-Hewitt as a critical social network connector and democratic facilitator in the groups and Prosy Abarquez Delacruz, who galvanized other women of her Los Angeles APC chapter to take their husbands/male comrades to task for not undertaking their share of reproductive labor in her house, which was also the chapter's meeting place. I demonstrate that their interventions sparked what I call "revolutionary intimacies," or the close bonds required for deeper political thinking and commitments. I argue that their labor was integral to the evolution of diasporic Filipino anti martial law, civil rights, and internationalist political work in Los Angeles in the 1970s and 1980s.

The Birth of NCRCLP and the U.S. Anti-Martial Law Movement

NCRCLP was formed in Marin County, California in 1972 at a conference initiated by a group of radical Filipina/os and Philippine “nationals” (those born and raised in the Philippines) called the Kalayaan Collective. Based in San Francisco, the Kalayaan Collective began organizing its support for the CPP and NPA in 1971 (Cruz et al. 2017, 8). Through its newspaper, “Kalayaan,” it “articulated the antiracist and anti-imperialist perspectives of the [Filipino] identity movement and called on Filipino Americans to support the revolutionary armed struggle in the Philippines” (Cruz et al. 2017, 8). Amidst “growing political tensions in the Philippines, heightened further by Marcos’s suspension of the writ of habeas corpus,” Kalayaan organized the conference to establish a national anti-imperialist network. Unbeknownst to the group, Marcos would declare martial law just as the conference was beginning. The conference positioned Kalayaan and its allies, including those in the New York City-based Support Committee for a Democratic Philippines (SCDC, which I discuss in Chapter 3) and Chicago’s Philippine Study Group (PSG, which I discuss in Chapter 4), to efficiently launch what they named the National Committee for the Restoration of Civil Liberties in the Philippines.²⁴ NCRCLP, as they called it for short, had chapters in major cities across the country and was the first national organization in the United States to oppose Marcos’s martial law. The network’s immediate nationally coordinated responses caught the Philippine government by surprise.

Another group that emerged shortly after Marcos declared martial law was the Friends of the Filipino People, also known as FFP. Formed in Philadelphia in October of 1973 and led by American communist and professor of history Daniel Boone Schirmer, FFP

²⁴ “Edgar Leano” (who chooses not to be named publicly) in discussion with the author, Chicago, IL, July 2014.

was primarily comprised of white “East Coast anti-war and Church-affiliated Americans [who] joined with their Filipina/o allies” (Gaerlan 2003). One of FFP’s guiding principles was that it would not take a stance on the political future of the Philippines. Rather, it used its position in the United States to advocate for the U.S. government to withdraw its military bases in the Philippines, which at the time were actively supporting U.S. military actions in Vietnam, and cut U.S. military and economic aid to Marcos. With chapters primarily on the East Coast, the Midwest, and in Hawaii, FFP maintained what former FFP member Barbara Gaerlan describes as a “loose” membership protocol, in which people sent dues in an envelope and were automatically considered members.²⁵ FFP would eventually set up two centers in Washington D.C.: a volunteer-staffed national office and a Congress Education (CEP) office. The CEP became the focus of much of FFP’s work and was the channel through which the anti-martial law movement communicated with Congress.

Some anti-communists would later join the opposition movement organized by exiled former government officials and prominent politicians. Their group called itself the Movement for a Free Philippines (MFP). The MFP, led by former Philippine senator Raul Manglapus, formed in September 1973 following Marcos’s declaration of martial law.²⁶ To many in NCRCLP and KDP, the MFP represented the moderate politics of “elite democracy.” Thus, most members of NCRCLP saw the need to consolidate an anti-Marcos anti-imperialist left, which differentiated itself from its anti-communist anti-Marcos movement counterpart. According to Rene Ciria Cruz, one of the founding and national

²⁵ This process dramatically differed from the highly systematized cadre requirements instituted by the KDP (described in Chapter 2). Gaerlan was also a former member of KDP.

²⁶ See Jose Fuentecilla’s 2013 *Fighting From a Distance: How Filipino Exiles Helped Topple Dictator* for a thorough examination of the MFP’s activities.

leaders of KDP (*Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino* or Union of Democratic Pilipinos, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 2), NCRCLP's activists consulted with key leaders of the Philippine Left underground and moved to "lay the groundwork for a national revolutionary organization that would bring together, train, and guide the most progressive and militant elements of the Filipino community" (Cruz et al. 2017, 9).²⁷ This organization would later become KDP. With ties to the CPP, the KDP became the CPP's main line of direct communication with North American based Filipina/os interested in supporting the ND Movement.

Not everyone in NCRCLP agreed with the decision to streamline NCRCLP into one militant cadre-based national organization. In fact, Abarquez Delacruz's Los Angeles chapter fought for its preservation and succeeded.²⁸ Its leaders argued that a wide-ranging front across ideological lines was crucial for garnering as much opposition to the Marcos dictatorship as possible.

According to the Los Angeles chapter's September 1976 newsletter, *Ang Panayam*, NCRCLP's five points of unity were to:

- 1) Oppose the Philippine Dictatorship
- 2) Demand the restoration of civil liberties and the recognition of the right of the Pilipino people to self-determination
- 3) Demand the release of all Pilipino political prisoners;
- 4) Demand the end of U.S. Military-Economic Aid and the reversal of its [then] present position and policies toward the Philippine dictatorship;
- and 5) Demand the end of harassment of Pilipinos and

²⁷ Not all members of NCRCLP agreed. The LA chapter was the only NCRCLP chapter in the country that did not become KDP. The Chicago KDP chapter also raised concerns, leading to its temporary split from KDP around 1974, which I explain in Chapter 4.

²⁸ Another vocal opponent was Rodel Rodis, one of the founders of the Kalayaan Collective.

Americans who oppose the Marcos's Regime in the United States" ("Five Points of Unity" 1976).

Comprised of a mix of Philippine nationals and American born Filipina/os, the chapter expressed the strategic aim to maintain a broad alliance.

Meanwhile, the other national chapters of NCRCLP (San Francisco, Seattle, Honolulu, Stockton, San Diego, Chicago, Ann Arbor, Madison, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and Princeton) dissolved about one year after NCRCLP's initial launch and were replaced as KDP chapters ("NCRCLP Regional Meeting Minutes" 1973).

Radical Roommates Meet

Prior to Enrique de la Cruz's migration to the United States for graduate school, de la Cruz was a professor at the University of the Philippines-Tarlac. It was at UP-Tarlac that de la Cruz demonstrated support for the National Democratic Movement. Like Abarquez Delacruz's professors, de la Cruz worked behind the scenes, mentoring students in their political activities, and arousing their participation in mobilizations against Marcos during Marcos's first presidential term around 1967.

Around 1968, de la Cruz moved to California to become a student in UCLA's philosophy Ph.D. program. There he assumed a front-row seat in America's racial politics. That same year, protests against the Vietnam War escalated after the Tet Offensive, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Bobby Kennedy were murdered, and Black American medalists Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised their fists in defiance of racial discrimination at the Summer Olympics in Mexico City. Within the first two years of his program, California governor Ronald Reagan pressured the University of California Regents to fire Black

Panther Party affiliate Angela Davis, a faculty member in his department for being a member of the Communist Party USA. Davis herself summarizes the political climate of the late 1960s as such, “It was as if we were living in a state of war. For us, during that period, the revolution was right around the corner, and we had to do everything we could to usher it in” (Davis 2012).

Given his exposure to revolutionary politics and commitment to the National Democratic Movement in the Philippines, de la Cruz inevitably joined the Los Angeles chapter of the NCRCLP, where he met Abarquez Delacruz (then Abarquez), who he would later marry. De la Cruz was one of NCRCLP’s staunch advocates for NCRCLP Los Angeles’ preservation.

By 1974, NCRCLP Los Angeles was in full swing. De la Cruz had recently earned his doctorate degree and was in search of a roommate. He learned that his friend and comrade, the late Ester Soriano, knew somebody looking for a roommate as well. Soriano, born in Santa Paula, California to Filipina/o migrant farmworkers, was a founding member of the original NCRCLP formation in the Bay Area. By 1974, Soriano was already a political stalwart in the community, as she had already established several Los Angeles-based service organizations. They include the Asian American Drug Abuse Program (with the group Asian Sisters) and the Search to Involve Pilipino Americans (SIPA), which both still exist today (Shah 2008). At the time that de la Cruz was searching for a roommate, Soriano was dating a man who would later become her husband. His name was Ray Hewitt, and he was the other person who needed a roommate. De la Cruz gladly moved into Hewitt’s apartment, where they lived with a third roommate named Bobby Lee Bowens for almost three years.

Lessons from the Black Panther Party and Beginnings of the Sunday Morning Study Group

De la Cruz's new roommates, Ray "Masai" Hewitt and Bobby Lee Bowens, were former members of the Black Panther Party. The Black Panther Party was a political organization, founded in 1966 in Oakland, California, whose objectives included the protection of African Americans from police brutality and establishment of revolutionary socialism through community based programs and mass organizing. Hewitt and Bowens had recently left the Oakland chapter of the Black Panther Party and moved to Los Angeles.

Hewitt was not just any member of the Panthers. In fact, he had been its Minister of Education from 1969 to 1971. According to de la Cruz, it was Hewitt who proposed forming a study group. De la Cruz recalls:

When Ray Hewitt...first broached the idea of a study group to me, he explained that one of the greatest needs when he was with the Panthers, was that the membership hardly knew any theory. Although he tried to get the brothers to read some basic theoretical stuff on racism and Marxism, their day-to-day struggles often got in the way. Ray was an avid reader and he felt strongly that the struggle for social justice would be less divided if we all (activists) had some basic knowledge of the classics (Marx/Engels/Lenin, and Mao). The progressive movement was quite fractured at the time, likewise for the Anti-Marcos movement.²⁹

Here de la Cruz discusses one of the lessons Hewitt learned from his time with the Panthers: that its members lacked theory, leading to subsequent fractures. He also gestures to the splintering of the anti-Marcos movement, which was starting to experience tensions that would later lead to permanent fractures. I will discuss the splintering later in this chapter.

²⁹ Enrique de la Cruz, e-mail message to author, November 10, 2017.

In a 1988 *LA Times* article commemorating Hewitt's death, Bowens shared similar sentiments to Hewitt, also struggling to understand the lessons of the Panthers. He reflected,

I put in three years of my life in the party. We took militancy to the ultimate. Here we came with guns and black leather jackets. We didn't realize that you can't get people to understand what you are saying by waving guns in their faces. We were angry militants who heard a call for revolution so what we did was run and pick up guns (in Mitchell 1988).

Bowens also tries to sort through his own lessons from the Panthers. He also suggests the importance of study to complement organizational militancy.

Of course, lack of study was not the entire problems for the Black Panther Party. Complicating the Panthers further were internal and external forces that split them apart. While its leaders argued along ideological grounds, the U.S. government targeted them relentlessly, leading to the imprisonment, exile, and murders of many of its leaders. Hewitt, himself, was a target of COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program), a series of covert and often illegal projects conducted by the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) that sought to undermine domestic political organizations. The traumatic impacts were severe. Looking back on Hewitt and the Panthers at his funeral in 1988, Ester Soriano-Hewitt remembered that her husband:

...used to refer to the Panthers as the walking wounded...It was like the Vietnam veterans, they are still trying to come to grips with what went wrong. It took 20 years for the Vietnam veterans to begin to talk about the war and now (the Panthers) are just getting to the point of being able to talk about what happened (in Mitchell 1988).

For Hewitt, “coming to grips with what went wrong” meant evaluating the past in all lights. It meant recognizing the Panthers’ many milestones, which included its free breakfast programs for children, health clinics, and legal assistance for the poor. But Hewitt also insisted on examining its shortcomings. Hence the creation of a formation that would allow Hewitt and those in his circle to correct what he deemed one of the biggest failures of the Panthers.

Thus, Hewitt and his roommates created the Sunday Morning Group. Referred to informally by its members as SMG, the group blurred the lines between formal and informal. Together, SMG’s members decided that the group would be strictly one for study. Showing their experience as seasoned activists, they chose an innocuous name and agreed that SMG would not involve itself in planning or organizing events. The members did not want SMG to be perceived as a rival group.

De la Cruz recalls that there were “white working class folks-- a carpenter and a couple of teachers, African Americans, Latinos, and Filipinos...” all who were members of different political organizations.³⁰ Hewitt encouraged its multi-ethnic composition “in order to learn from progressive struggles everywhere around the world that were supported by many local ethnic communities in LA...such as the Philippines, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Palestine, and the U.S. struggle against racism.”³¹

Beyond study sessions, the most that we did was organize forums utilizing resource persons who would provide updates about the Philippines, Nicaragua, Palestine, etc. The desire to understand the perspective of other activists vis-à-vis our

³⁰ Enrique de la Cruz, e-mail message to author, November 10, 2017.

³¹ *Ibid.*

common struggles pretty much set the criteria of who might be recruited to participate in SMG-- one had to pretty much have had a history of involvement in grassroots organizing in your community.³²

Thus, its members used SMG to develop an ideological springboard for action in their respective networks outside of the group. They sharpened their thinking by reading Marx's *Das Kapital*, Lenin, Mao, and other revolutionary thinkers. The group met every Sunday "like church," as de la Cruz facetiously describes it, with the exception of some holidays.

Thinking about the study group, Prosy Abarquez Delacruz recalls:

It was intense, it required a lot of time, focus, discipline, active engagement and reading the materials. There was no room for slack or slackening. Each Sunday was grim and determined, stimulating and a lot of camaraderie after, sometimes not. We were [composed of] like half men, half women...It was actually a very good leadership...we were very democratic in what we would select as far as our readings and everything. And they rotated leadership skills...I became a teacher.³³

Abarquez Delacruz describes the personal and political fulfillment she received from being a member of the group. She also recalls that the Sunday Morning Group's style greatly differed from the Panthers' hierarchical one. The Panthers, like many other Marxist groups including those that inspired de la Cruz and Abarquez Delacruz in the Philippines, operated under the tenets of democratic centralism in which leadership boards collectively make decisions, by which members agreed to abide in unity. For the Panthers and groups in the Philippines, the process was sometimes more centralist, yielding quick and unified decision

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Prosy Abarquez Delacruz, e-mail message to author, March 2, 2016.

making at the sacrifice of democracy.

Ester Soriano-Hewitt's Hidden Work: "Centerwomaning," Democratic Initiatives, and SMG's Racial Cross-Fertilization

According to Abarquez Delacruz, the democratic and attentive tone of SMG originated from Ester Soriano-Hewitt. Abarquez Delacruz did not know from where she had learned it. With Soriano-Hewitt's long history of civil rights activism, it is difficult to know, but Abarquez Delacruz surmises it came from one of Soriano-Hewitt's previous groups.

I draw on the work of Delores Delgado Bernal (1990), Erica Edwards (2012), Charles Payne (1990), Barbara Ransby (2005), and Karen Brodtkin Sacks (1988), as I reconsider top-down hierarchical and "charismatic" leadership models that render invisible the labor that women, like Ester, predominantly took on. These scholars, in different ways, warn about constructing history in a way that exceptionalizes particular individuals, particularly men, as a requirement for the attainment of freedom. For example, in *Charisma and the Fictions of Black Leadership*, Edwards articulates this point through the trope of the charismatic Black male leader (2012). While Edwards recognizes the charismatic leader as African American communities' projection of hope and escape from racial terror and exclusion, she also realizes its boundaries. That is:

When the performance of charismatic leadership stands in for building movements and relationships, for grassroots political education, and for a practiced commitment to disassembling social hierarchies, the promise of social justice and political empowerment is endangered by a formation authority that limits our capacities to remake the world (2012, 188).

Likewise, it would be easy to lose sight of Ester Soriano-Hewitt's commitment to disassembling social hierarchies and implementing a democratic structure in a group that purposely distinguished itself from others by requiring its own invisibility.

I argue that Ester Soriano-Hewitt also carried out another type of invisible labor. It is the labor of being a "centerwoman." In her study of Black women workers at Duke Medical Center, Karen Sacks describes "centerwomen" as key actors who mobilize social networks and consciousness (1988, 121). As the term makes obvious, these actors are also typically women. Sacks argues that leadership resides in the interaction of spokesmen and centerwomen (1988, 121). I add that centerwomen like Ester Soriano-Hewitt pay attention to the needs of others, recognize potential interpersonal links, and forge connections.³⁴ This attention is gendered, and women are socialized to multi-task and coordinate the needs of other people from a young age. Soriano-Hewitt demonstrated this ability by linking Hewitt and de la Cruz as roommates. Without acting as their link, their version of the study group may not have existed. It was Soriano-Hewitt's act as "centerwoman" that enabled Enrique de la Cruz, Ray Hewitt, and Bobby Lee Bowens to forge a basis for what I call "revolutionary intimacies" as roommates and comrades.

Soriano-Hewitt's inclusive style built the leadership skills of everyone, particularly women. Her democratic approach and strength in mediation would later lead her to serve many important roles over the next three decades. Over the years, she built a reputation as a nationally recognized pioneer in mediation and worked for 37 years in L.A.'s Dispute Resolution Program. In addition, Soriano-Hewitt served as jury foreperson in the Rodney

³⁴ Thank you to Grace Chang for helping to illuminate this concept for me.

King civil case brought against Los Angeles, mediating the decision of the trial. According to her sister, Emily Deitrich, "She was trying to be fair and listen to both sides like she always did. But later she said she thought he should have gotten more money" and punitive damages ("Ester Soriano" 2008).³⁵ In 2008, Ester died at the age of 61 after complications after surgery for liver cancer.

Lessons from SMG

SMG was short-lived. According to Enrique de la Cruz, it met until about 1978 when "outsiders from a pre-party formation" attempted to recruit SMG members for their purposes. He says,

One of our last activities was when the group took an active interest in organizing a large demonstration against the Bakke decision.³⁶ This violated the original policy that SMG would remain a strictly a study group, and exposed the efforts of some

³⁵ Rodney King's beating by several white LA police officers in 1991 was captured on videotape. The acquittal of the officers a year later sparking a series of uprisings and civil unrest in protest of the verdict. "Soriano facilitated a discussion between jurors who were split on whether King should be awarded significant punitive damages. The jury awarded King \$3.8 million in compensatory damages but no punitive damages."

³⁶ In the 1978 *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court declared affirmative action constitutional but invalidated the use of racial quotas in college admission policy. Allan Bakke, a white man had been denied entry to U.C. Davis's medical school and sued the university, arguing that his grades and test scores surpassed those of racial minority students who had been granted entry. After contentious debate, the United States Supreme Court struck down the school's practice of reserving 16 seats for minority students. Despite the fact that Bakke had not questioned the admitted white students who had lower exam scores and the tradition of legacy admissions that favor white students, the US Supreme Court decided that UC Davis had violated the rights of white applicants and ordered Bakke admitted. See George Lipsitz. 2006. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit From Identity Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

members to turn SMG into something else...some members of SMG were complicit with this effort, and when the group found out about it...SMG disbanded.³⁷

Despite its short tenure, I argue that the group holds a multitude of significance. First, the relationships among de la Cruz, Hewitt, and Bowens and the SMG that Soriano-Hewitt fostered are important examples of what ethnic studies scholars call racial cross-fertilization. Ethnic Studies scholar Michael Schulze-Oechtering describes racial cross-fertilization as the ways that movement concerns and strategies of activists of color shape one another and become mutually reinforcing (2016, 25). For example, in his article, “The Alaska Cannery Workers Association and the Ebbs and Flows of Struggle: Manong Knowledge, Blues Epistemology and Racial Cross-Fertilization,” Schulze-Oechtering insightfully describes how in the first two years of the ACWA’s existence, labor activists found inspiration from the situated knowledges of black and Filipino working class communities. These activists applied these lessons by creating a multiracial militant ACWA.

Geographer Laura Pulido’s monograph, *Black Brown Yellow and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles*, rigorously demonstrates that formal study groups in Los Angeles helped to aid the process of racial cross-fertilization. Truthfully, it took time for a Third World consciousness to develop in the beginning of the 1970s. Contextualizing the beginning of that decade, she argues, “although the structural conditions for coalition building were in place by 1970, it was not readily apparent if and how Third World unity could be forged (2006, 58).” One former L.A. Panther reveals the importance of group study

³⁷ Enrique de la Cruz, e-mail message to author, November 10, 2017.

for actualizing a Third World consciousness:

Before I became conscious, I saw that it wasn't white folks getting knocked on the head. It became very obvious that it was basically people of color. I didn't call them people of color, I called them Mexicans, Indians, and whoever else. I began to see that, and because I didn't understand it, it stayed in there [my head]. But it was only through formal study that I began to put these various pieces together" (in Pulido 2006, 58).

Thus, SMG and groups like it were especially important at this time, for they subverted the assumption that processes of differential racialization during the civil rights and Black Power struggles resulted in divergent movement concerns.³⁸ SMG was a critical location where people of color formally drew important connections between their experiences of subjugation.

As such, Prosy Abarquez Delacruz found the SMG important in her understanding of racism in the United States as a relatively new immigrant in the United States. Looking back, she reflects, "The Sunday Morning Group contributed to my awareness building or a consciousness about race relations, surplus capital and labor."³⁹ Likewise, that Bobby Lee Bowens, a Black American, remained actively involved with the Asian American Drug Abuse Program (AADAP) and Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment (PACE) until his passing in 2012 suggests his understanding of the ways that racial capitalism negatively impacts Asian American and Black communities (Delacruz 2012).⁴⁰ SMG's actions to

³⁸ Schulze-Oechtering also argues this point on pp. 24-25 of his 2016 article.

³⁹ Prosy Abarquez Delacruz in discussion with the author, March 2, 2016.

⁴⁰ Bobby Lee Bowens passed away on August 11, 2012 from cancer.

protest the Bakke decision also reveal its multiracial membership's consciousness about racism and their belief in affirmative action as a necessary strategy for addressing educational inequity.

SMG also illustrates the transnational byproducts of racial cross-fertilization. I surmise that while Filipina/o immigrant activists learned the language of American racism and its connection to labor and capitalism, American-born SMG members' exposure to anti-imperialist and "national democratic" strategy from members like Enrique de la Cruz and Prosy Abarquez Delacruz, who had both been activists in the Philippines, enhanced their internationalist politics. Moreover, it is likely that Ray Hewitt's proximity to the Filipina/o community vis-à-vis his wife Ester Soriano-Hewitt and former roommate, comrade, and friend Enrique de la Cruz would encourage him to work directly with anti-imperialist Filipina/o organizations in L.A. after SMG until his passing in 1988. One organization was the Philippine Support Committee, a member organization of the Alliance for Philippine Concerns (APC) that worked primarily with non-Filipina/os.⁴¹ Bobby Lee Bowens too was married to a Filipina American, another comrade in the Filipina/o L.A. community named Lillian Tamoria. His relationship with Tamoria possibly encouraged his participation in the Asian American community (Delacruz 2012).

Like many Marxist study groups of that time, SMG did not last more than three years or so. Yet the fruits of racial cross-fertilization and Ester Soriano-Hewitt's democratic initiatives lived on, reignited in future Filipino solidarity groups in which Soriano-Hewitt

⁴¹ Ray Masai Hewitt died from a heart attack at the early age of 46 on March 1988. According to Ester in Mitchell's LA Times article honoring Ray after his passing, Ray had been active in research on South Africa for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, work with the International Human Rights Coalition of Los Angeles, as well as the Philippine Support Committee, which was part of APC.

and other SMG members, including Prosy Abarquez Delacruz, were also actively involved.

Splintering of the Anti-Martial Law Movement, a Dictator Falls, APC Emerges

In 1978, around the same time that the Bakke case was decided and the SMG was beginning to dissolve, fractures in the anti-martial law movement were occurring on the other side of the country. With members on FFP's national Coordinating Committee, MFP, FFP, and KDP had begun to clash over ideological and demographic differences. Gaerlan points out:

KDP members tended to be young, and it wanted to network with groups such as the labor movement and the broader American left. MFP members tended to be older in age, and its outreach was to groups of newer Filipino immigrants and professionals as well as more mainstream U.S. organizations. FFP's constituency consisted primarily of American church groups, non-Filipinos, and the U.S. Congress (2003, 18).

Thus, with different aims and target audiences, the KDP and FFP battled over "organizational autonomy and [the] political direction" of FFP's Congress Education Project. This battle would ultimately lead the FFP and KDP to split around 1978 and 1979 ("FFP History").

Simultaneous to the FFP-KDP split was trouble between the KDP and the CPP. A main reason for their tension was that KDP was transitioning some of its members into Line of March, a pre-party formation that aimed to rectify the errors of the Communist Party USA and build a party for U.S. socialism. Melanie Santos, a leader of KDP, said she did not

see any conflict of interest.⁴² The KDP thought of the move as a “division of labor,” in which one “group will be responsible for trying to clear things up with the Philippine movement and this group will figure out how to fix the U.S. movements.”⁴³ To KDP, these tasks did not undermine the other and instead were complementary under communist internationalism. The Philippine Left, on the other hand, viewed the KDP’s involvement in Line of March as a drain to KDP’s international support work. As one former official of the CPP, Jing Sanchez, stated:

[Name of KDP leader] wanted to make the KDP become entirely the source of membership. He wanted the KDP to... become the membership of that American Party, no?...And then they assigned only three people in Chicago to serve as core of the – anti-imperialist – [International] Association of [Filipino Patriots].⁴⁴

For the Philippine Left, the inequitable allocation reflected the KDP’s priorities as being primarily directed to U.S. socialism. Sanchez expands:

Up to...November 10, 1977, the CPP established the policy of adhering to principle of proletarian internationalism and to the principle of individual membership in a CP (Lenin line against Martov) and let Filipino citizens or permanent residents in the US and Fil-Americans in the mass organizations like the KDP in the US decide individually

⁴² “Melanie Santos” is a pseudonym, as she asked me to protect her identity. Melanie Santos in discussion with the author, December 2015, Emeryville, CA.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ “Jing Sanchez” is a pseudonym, as this narrator asked me to protect his identity. “Jing Sanchez” in discussion with the author and Lorena Sanchez, October 3, 2016, Utrecht, Netherlands.

whether to join the CPP or any US party. But the KDP...subordinated itself to the Line of March for a new US party and practically swung to an entirely anti-CPP line deceptively endorsing armed struggle in the Philippines but opposing Mao's teachings on people's war and other matters and supporting Soviet social imperialism.⁴⁵

Here Sanchez refers to the KDP's emerging questions of and eventual shift away from the CPP's Marxist-Leninist-Maoist orientation. KDP leader Rene Ciria Cruz explains how he remembers KDP's move away from the CPP line:

As their theoretical capacity developed, KDP activists became critical of some of Maoism's simplistic interpretations of Marxism and nationalistic anti-Soviet revisionism, which among other things tended to divorce Philippine revolutionaries from the long history and rich experiences of international Marxism, beyond various national liberation movements. The CPP's close identification with Maoism, the U.S. [KDP] activists argued, also alienated the Philippine movement from the mainstream of international socialism, unnecessarily costing the Philippine movement vital support from the then-existing socialist bloc, which refused to break with the Soviet Union based on Maoist critiques of revisionism and social imperialism. (Cruz et al. 2017, 17).

Cruz argues that Maoism impeded internationalist solidarity with other movements despite the CPP's position on proletarian internationalism, leading KDP members to begin to question its utility in the late 1970s. Cruz adds that the KDP also opposed the Philippine Left's official support for China's invasion of Vietnam in 1979, which further "sharpened"

⁴⁵ "Jing Sanchez," e-mail message to author, June 12, 2018.

their disagreement (Cruz et al. 2017, 17).

Simultaneously in 1978, a former member of the Chicago KDP chapter (see Chapter 4), alienated from KDP, contacted a member of IAFP Montreal and another kasama who was active in the anti-martial law movement on the East Coast. Together, they created a new and decentralized North American formation called *Ugnayan ng mga Pilipino Para sa Bangsan Demokrasyon* (Linking Filipinos for National Democracy or Ugnayan). Meanwhile, in Los Angeles, Enrique de la Cruz, unaware of the FFP-KDP split, sought a way for NCRCLP LA to conduct solidarity work with the Philippine Left without having to use KDP as a proxy. He contacted FFP and connected with Ugnayan, who later formed a North American committee to facilitate this communication.

After the KDP's split with the FFP in 1980, KDP established its own lobbying initiatives under the Philippine Solidarity Network (PSN) and Congress Task Force (CTF) starting in 1980 (National Coordinator 1980)⁴⁶ Some FFP members and allies, including church leaders in Washington D.C. who supported the ND movement, did not view the KDP's move to essentially create a new version of CEP under KDP positively.⁴⁷ According to an August 26, 1980 memo from FFP's "national coordinator," KDP "agreed to approach the other FFP calling for mediation and reunification" but "knew that the other FFP would never agree to this proposal and planned that our minimum goal" were negotiations "that would lead to" KDP dropping the FFP name and FFP's agreement to joint work. Thus, for a short period of time, two organizations were using FFP's letterhead, which proved confusing

⁴⁶ Walden Bello in discussion with the author, Seattle, WA, November 18, 2015.

⁴⁷ "Rene Bernejo," in discussion with the author, Quezon City, July 2016.

to allies. Particularly “disoriented” were local church leaders.⁴⁸ Many of these church leaders were American missionaries who had recently returned from the Philippines and were concerned about Marcos’s human rights violations. They were an important sector of support, and according to Barbara Gaerlan, “the result was a dramatic decrease in its church funding” (2003, 20).

In 1983, Ugnayan formed a North American committee that would communicate directly with the Philippine Left and effectively replace the KDP from its previous role as the Philippine Left’s “franchise.” Knowing that the U.S. church sector was in dire need of consolidation due to the KDP-FFP split, the Church Commission for Human Rights in the Philippines (CCHRP) and National Council of Churches of Christ USA, were established as solidarity formations.

In 1985, Marcos called a snap presidential election. Filipina/o radicals split over whether to support the election, postponed to February 1986. Critical of electoral politics, CPP leaders and those who “toed the line” in the United States recognized the election as a sham and called for a boycott. Others, including leaders of KDP, recognized the election as a win-win opportunity: If the people, led by the newly galvanized middle-class, voted in the elections and Marcos won, it would surely incite mass uprising to oust Marcos, as everyone would know that Marcos had cheated. If Marcos lost, Marcos would be out through a democratic means. This difference in opinion, publicly voiced by KDP, was the final straw that formally split the KDP and the CPP, after years of struggle. In the end, it was

⁴⁸ See a series of internal memos from the KDP perspective. Cindy Domingo 5651-003, Box 3, Folder 33 Friends of the Filipino People.

established that the election was a fraud and that Corazon “Cory” Aquino, the widow of Benigno Aquino, had won. Filipina/os marched in mass to EDSA (Epifanio Delos Santos Avenue), crowding the main thoroughfare for four days. Also known as “People Power,” Marcos’s ousting was the culmination of almost two decades of transnational organizing.

Three months after People Power, Ugnayan’s North American committee launched Alliance for Philippine Concerns (APC), an alliance of about twenty groups in twenty-five major cities in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Even without a dictatorship to rouse support, the leaders of APC recognized the continued need to raise U.S. public consciousness in the U.S.’s continued military and economic presence in the Philippines. Thus, APC’s primary purpose was “to educate and organize around the basic political and social issues that affect the Philippines and the United States” and “to cultivate a basic interest in Philippine affairs in so far as those issues directly or indirectly stem from U.S. foreign policy towards the Philippines” (Alliance 1989).

In Southern California, three member organizations comprised APC-Southern California (or APC-SC): the Ecumenical Fellowship for Peace and Justice in the Philippines, Philippine Support Committee (mentioned earlier as a group that Ray Hewitt had participated in), and Philippine Network.⁴⁹ APC-SC member organizations participated in nationally coordinated educational campaigns and hosted speaking tours and forums, such as “People Power: Two Years After” in 1988 (Alliance 1989).

⁴⁹ The Ecumenical Fellowship for Peace and Justice in the Philippines worked primarily with church groups, the Philippine Support Committee worked with non-Filipina/os, and the Philippine Network worked with the Filipina/o community of L.A.

Prosy Abarquez Delacruz and Women's Hidden "Fourth Shift"

By the time the APC-SC was formed in 1986, Abarquez Delacruz was an organizing veteran with more than fifteen years of experience. It was in their Southern California chapter of APC that Ester Soriano-Hewitt and Prosy Abarquez Delacruz worked to maintain the democratic principles planted in NCRCLP and SMG a decade prior. While men like Enrique de la Cruz were the visible mouthpieces of the group, Ester Soriano-Hewitt, Prosy Abarquez Delacruz, and other women participated in less visible forms of work.

One such kind of work was pushing back against organizational sexism from male comrades. Abarquez Delacruz described to me this process:

The women did the cooking, the women did the cleaning, the women did the minutes of the meeting, and they would be part of the discussion, and they would also be the childcare.⁵⁰ So, could you imagine the burden that we had to carry?...So we did that, until the women started to complain and say wait a minute you guys. You're going to have to help if you want us involved. Imagine this Karen, you're having this discussion here [in this house], right? Imagine three meetings in one weekend...Three organizations meeting. And guess who will clean the bathroom? There is no cleaning lady then. We couldn't afford cleaning ladies. There were no

⁵⁰ According to Abarquez Delacruz, most members of NCRCLP were single and/or dating without children in the 1970s. However, once members became parents, NCRCLP devised a system of shared childcare. According to Abarquez Delacruz, "for the core group of NCRCLP, there were six of us who alternated in taking care of our children on weekends, when there were meetings or when some of us had to work Saturdays." While this point might seem contradictory to her memory of APC, which was comprised of many of the same members from NCRCLP, I wonder if NCRCLP's childcare was gendered and shared only among the women of the group.

cleaning ladies to be had. Who's the cleaning lady?...The wives. So my activist woman friends would help me clean up. And the guys essentially got trained to help us...Because we had to. There was another struggle too. An evolution of character. An evolution of aligning what they're saying progressively with what they're doing. That was another struggle.⁵¹

This quote illustrates that Abarquez Delacruz is both conscious and vocal about her and her female comrades' invisible work. Not only had the women in APC-SC, including Abarquez-Delacruz, undertaken invisible work by cooking and cleaning for the organization, but they were also conducting a facet of what I call the women's *fourth shift* (Hanna forthcoming). Women undergo wage labor in the workplace, unpaid reproductive labor at home, and unpaid work as activists protecting their communities.⁵² I argue that they are also sometimes burdened with a fourth shift of care work for their male kasamas in their organization.⁵³ A private sphere therefore emerges *within* organizations that unequally genders care and domestic work provided by women, much like in the traditional (colonized) Filipino family private household. This unreciprocated division of labor enables men the time and energy to engage in political intellectual discussion and other more public and traditional activist work, while women undergo male leaders' necessary care labor

⁵¹ Prosy Delacruz in discussion with the author, March 2, 2016.

⁵² See Arlie Russell Hochschild and Anne Machung. 1989. *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home*. New York City: Viking Penguin.

⁵³ For more about the "third shift" or "triple day," see Celene Krauss. 2009. "Mothering at the Crossroads: African American Women and the Emergence of the Movement Against Environmental Racism," Filomina Chioma Steady, ed., *Environmental Justice in the New Millenium*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 69.

“behind the scenes.”

During the 1980s, Abarquez Delacruz’s “first shift” of wage labor involved working for the California Food and Drug Branch, regulating food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and other items.⁵⁴ She then came home to a “second shift” as wife to de la Cruz and mother to a toddler and newborn, born in 1983 and 1987. On nights and weekends, she spent her “third shift” as community worker organizing with APC against U.S. intervention and U.S. bases in the Philippines. Finally, during her “fourth shift,” Abarquez Delacruz describes being responsible for *evolving the character of her male comrades*. This is not unlike the emotional work that women of color, particularly Black women, have articulated being expected to do for cismen, including men of color. It is the work of helping cismen process their emotions to undo their “internalized patriarchy.”⁵⁵

None of this work is legible in archives in leaflets, theoretical papers, or other artifacts of movement work. In this sense, emotional work is always gendered, classed, and racialized. By rendering this invisible emotional work visible, we catalyze the awareness to restructure ourselves so that this work does not fall on the shoulders of the same people, namely women of color, as it typically does.

“Hidden Figures” of Transnational Revolutionary Building

These stories reveal Ester Soriano-Hewitt and Prosy Abarquez Delacruz as among

⁵⁴ Prosy Abarquez Delacruz, e-mail message to author, March 2, 2016.

⁵⁵ Cisgender or “cis” refers to the alignment of one’s gender identity with the sex one was assigned at birth. The Latin prefix “cis” means “on the same side of.” Black intellectual writer Laurica Brown has observed and theorized the emotional labor of women of color, particularly Black women, for cis men of color.

the “hidden figures” of transnational revolutionary building formations like SMG and APC.⁵⁶ It is true that Soriano-Hewitt and Abarquez Delacruz were organizational leaders in their own right. I also argue that it was because of their invisible work, and the invisible work of other women like them, that their movements evolved.⁵⁷ Without their stories, we might mistake their formations as failures. For example, at first glance, SMG might be understood simply as another group that suffered from factionalism, hijacked by another leftist group, and was dissolved. But if we reconsider formations like SMG and the multiple insurgencies of people like Soriano-Hewitt and Abarquez Delacruz who kept their groups struggling around theory and practice, and re-understand these groups as smaller building blocks of a larger movement that went beyond them and reached transnationally, various locations in which people shift in consciousness are revealed. In other words, democratic and egalitarian spaces do not emerge out of thin air. Their collaborations might seem accidental but rather they are the products of purposeful connections catalyzed by women who have been socialized to link and network people. By telling the stories of people like Soriano-Hewitt and Abarquez Delacruz, we honor those whose actions helped to create pathways for more liberatory politics.

Internal changes within men in APC did not happen overnight. Abarquez Delacruz

⁵⁶ The phrase “hidden figures” is a reference to the non-fiction book *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Who Helped Win the Space Race* by Margot Lee Shetterly that inspired the 2016 film *Hidden Figures*, directed by Theodore Melfi. The book and film are about the real story of three African American women mathematicians who played “hidden” but important roles during the “Space Race” while working at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the 1960s.

⁵⁷ These types of histories are tricky. I do not intend to valorize Soriano-Hewitt and Abarquez Delacruz, just as I push back on the valorization of the “charismatic leader.” There are many women who carried these organizations, and they are just two of them.

describes witnessing her husband's evolution, which she says is most obviously seen in his role as a grandfather, forty years later. His behavior today is starkly different from the days in APC when Abarquez Delacruz recalls feeling both physically tired and "emotionally triggered to sadness and more." She reflects:

I have had to always climb out of those feelings because the men could not see their roles in those situations. It took awhile, but they are now much evolved, to become good grandpas...Enrique is in fact more hands-on as a grandparent than a parent, and even delivers freshly made pressed juices to our son, Carlo, and he makes them for the entire family, twenty small milk bottles a week, including buying the produce to make them by bicycle riding with Bailey, the dog of my daughter.⁵⁸

Her observation offers hope that people and movements are always moving forward, even when they seem to not be making any moves at all.

These stories reveal the home as an important site of political germination.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Prosy Delacruz, e-mail message to author, November 12, 2017. Today, Prosy and Enrique Delacruz live retired in Los Angeles. Prosy has her J.D. and is a retired regional administrator for California Department of Public Health, a state agency, after 27 years. She served for three years as a Commissioner of Civil Service and L.A. Convention Center for L.A. City municipal government. Since 2008, she has written for *Asian Journal* and is the recent author of *Even the Rainbow Has a Body: Distinct Artist Legacies*. Enrique was a longtime professor at CSU Northridge and UCLA, where he served as Assistant Director of UCLA's Asian American Studies Center. He is also the co-author of *The Forbidden Book: The Philippine American War in Political Cartoons*, which he co-wrote with Abraham Ignacio, Jr., Helen Toribio, and Jorge Emmanuel. Enrique has served on the boards of SIPA (Search to Involve Pilipino Americans), FASGI (Filipino American Service Group), the National Council of Filipino Civil Rights Advocates (FILCRA), and APAHE (Asian Pacific Americans In Higher Education). He is currently a trustee of the Filipino American National Historical Society and a member of the Filipino Legacy Fund Committee with UCLA.

⁵⁹ Thank you to Robyn Rodriguez for reminding me to draw out this concept. Robyn encouraged the expansion of this chapter with comments during ASA 2017 conference panel

Insurgent ideas germinate in the home: in the sala, at kitchen tables, over coffee. Women of color have long described kitchen tables as the places where revolutions are born.⁶⁰

According to Mina Davis Caulfield (1974), family systems have been central to the physical survival, cultural identity, and anti-imperialist struggles of people of color. She argues, “It is the resourcefulness and creativity of women in their domestic strategies of survival that have made family forms of colonized groups a source of strength for anti-colonial resistance” (1974, 84). Likewise, it was in the apartment of Enrique de la Cruz, Ray Hewitt, and Bobby Lee Bowens- a grouping that Ester Soriano-Hewitt was a bridge for creating- that the Sunday Morning Group was imagined and developed. One can only guess the types of conversations that the three roommates had after coming home from long days at work and listening to the news in real time together. It is not easy to live with someone else, but when successful, close quarters invite a unique form of intimacy when formed in friendship. It is an intimacy of trust, as well as comfort in the mundane. In the political context, these bonds can fuel what I call revolutionary intimacies.

Moreover, it was in Prosy Abarquez Delacruz’s home that the women of APC Southern California held their informal women’s “caucuses”, with bleach and broomsticks in hand. Here too intimacies emerged; ones of trust, as well as anger in the injustice of the everyday. Revolutionary intimacies are the close bonds required to ask difficult questions

when I presented an abridged version of this chapter. Also present were Jonathan Magat, Amee Chew, Mark Sanchez, Joy Sales, and others.

⁶⁰ Much gratitude to the women of color of Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press who formally laid the groundwork for this theorizing: Audre Lorde, Barbara Smith, Cherríe Moraga, Susan Yung, and more; and to the countless women who have for centuries used the kitchen table as their meeting space for revolutionary ideas. See Barbara Smith. 1989. “A Press of Our Own: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 10.3: 11-13.

and offer solutions without judgment. They allow us to criticize one another with care. Perhaps these intimacies are the crucial ingredient for revolutionary thinking. Capitalism and its proponents wish to eradicate intimacy by keeping us in flux, survivors of gentrification moving from apartment to apartment, with less and less time, reason, and energy to build with our neighbors (who, as rents increase, may not stay next door to us for very long anyway) and each other. The story about the origins of the Sunday Morning Group is promising. It shows us that it is through the everyday relationships that we already have or are on our way to building- relationships between roommates and lovers, comrades and confidantes- that revolutionary intimacies grow, fuel collective power, and create new forms of dissent.⁶¹

While members of the NCRCLP Los Angeles and Sunday Morning Group were cultivating spaces of revolutionary intimacies, the KDP was also in its beginning stages of development. In Chapter 2, I examine the interpersonal relationships of KDP's gay, lesbian, and bisexual members. I lift up the their invisible work in making space for themselves and each other at a time when both the Right and the Left frowned on homosexuality.

⁶¹ With the exception of one reference to the SMG made by Bobby Lee Bowens' daughter Leann in a tribute article to Bowens in 2012, the history of the SMG written in this essay is based solely on the oral testimonies of Enrique and Prosy Delacruz, as Ester Soriano, Ray Hewitt, and Bobby Lee Bowens have already passed away. I requested names of organizations and people who I could interview or cite, and they chose not to share them with me. In fact, they were also hesitant for me to name the Black Panther Party because they were concerned that its naming—forty years later- could be used in negative ways. However, they gave me permission to write what I have conveyed in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Being Gay in the KDP: Making and Taking Space Together in a Filipina/o American Revolutionary Organization, 1973-1986

Around the time that the Sunday Morning Group dissolved and Enrique de la Cruz had become involved in Ugnayan, 24-year-old Jaime Geaga was leading a planning meeting in Los Angeles for his organization's annual demonstration commemorating Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos's 1972 declaration of martial law. Every year on September 22nd, the KDP (*Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino* or the Union of Democratic Filipinos) held demonstrations at Philippine consulates across the United States to educate the public and pressure officials to denounce Marcos's ongoing human rights violations. Geaga's political awareness had grown over the years. After moving to California from the Philippines when he was 11 years old, Geaga watched the Watts Rebellion on television. He observed the growing politicization of his older brother and sister who joined anti-war protests and the Black Power movement, and his mother who took on leadership roles in the Filipina/o American community center, FACLA (Filipino American Community of Los Angeles). Before Geaga joined KDP in 1974, he had already been part of numerous Filipino American initiatives, including the Filipino People's Far West Convention and SIPA (Search to Involve Pilipino Americans), which was co-founded by Geaga's mentor Ester Soriano-Hewitt. By the time of the 1978 meeting, Geaga had returned to his hometown of Los Angeles after two years on KDP's Bay Area-based National Executive Board (NEB) and was back to head KDP's Southern California Regional Executive Board.

As a young person in his early 20s, Geaga was also beginning to explore his sexuality. He recalls a poignant moment when his political responsibilities in KDP were interrupted by his emerging gay identity:

I remember being approached by one of the members – an activist who was in the Regional Executive Board with me. We were discussing planning for the September 22 anti-martial law demonstration in front of the consulate. You know, all of the details for the demonstration. The placards, the leafleting...And I was supposed to be leading that meeting. And she came up to me and said, “You did terrible leading this meeting. It’s like you were totally out of it.”... I was really close to her, and I could just say, “Yeah, what was in my mind was not the organizing. I thought I was doing okay.” But she said, “No you didn’t, it was terrible. So disorganized. I could tell that you were...thinking about something else.” “Yeah, I was thinking about which bars I was going tonight (laughs).” She kind of threw up her arms and said, “Well I guess.”...So I think after that meeting, she called the NEB and kind of told them what was going on with me. She made the recommendation – maybe Jaime would be better off in the Bay Area. So they asked me – would you like to move up to the Bay Area? I already was thinking of the PA [physician’s assistant] program, and I said, “Oh that’s perfect. I’m going to be in the Bay Area (laughs),” so I was strategizing myself.⁶²

⁶² Jaime Geaga in discussion with the author, Los Angeles, CA, March 2, 2016.

According to Bruce Occena, there were many reasons that someone with Geaga's experience and capabilities would be needed back in the Bay Area.⁶³ Thus, KDP as an organization took Geaga's sexual curiosity into consideration with these other factors and offered him the chance to transfer back to the Bay Area chapter. By the 1970s, many young LGBT people moved to San Francisco, drawn to its promise of community. Offering Geaga this opportunity would allow him to explore his gay identity while enabling him to fulfill his responsibilities as a leader in KDP.

For Geaga, the decision was triply beneficial. If sent back to the Bay Area, he would be able to return to school to pursue a physician's assistant program. It had been his wish, as well as an ongoing struggle within the organization, to return to college to finish his degree. Like many of his comrades in the Left, Geaga had dropped out of college to be a full-time member of KDP. Pursuits of higher education fell second to what felt like the urgent demands of the time. Geaga was committed to KDP, but he also set his sights on other goals, which diverged from those the KDP then valued.

That LGBT people could hold leadership positions in KDP was unique compared to other revolutionary nationalist organizations in the Third World Left, including the Black Panther Party and I Wor Kuen (IWK), which was a radical Marxist Asian American Collective (Ordon 2000, 79). While the Panthers changed their position on homosexuality in the early 1970s, Asian American radical organizations remained vehemently homophobic in the 1970s. KDP was the only Asian American organization in the 1970s that allowed gay or lesbian members (Ordon 2000, 79).⁶⁴ "

⁶³ Bruce Occena, e-mail message to author, June 13, 2018.

⁶⁴ Two of its original three NEB leaders identify today as LGBT.

Gay and lesbian KDP members were as diverse as they were numerous, disrupting binary framings of LGBT people of color being forced to choose between their racial and sexual identities in 1970s revolutionary organizations. It is true that many activists in the Third World Left felt compelled to choose between these identities, but Geaga did not. His story contradicts narratives of “martyrdom” that strip activists of agency and complex navigations in their decisions to “serve the people.”

This chapter honors lesbian, gay, and bisexual members of KDP by exploring how they thought about, negotiated, and expressed these emerging sexual identities while maintaining political commitments in the KDP. I argue that these members’ negotiations of sexual expression are forms of invisible emotional work that propelled the KDP forward in its thinking about homosexual politics. While the AIDS crisis ultimately forced the KDP/Line of March to revise its position about sexuality’s relationship to Marxism, in assertive and subtle ways, gay, lesbian, and bisexual Filipina/os in the KDP pushed its boundaries, challenging heteropatriarchy that pervaded the Third World Left and the conservative homophobia of the New Right.

I refer to these members as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, as these were the terms they referred to themselves by in our interviews. KDP activists also used the term “LGBTs” instead of “queer” in our meetings. Some bisexual members identified as “straight” in the 1970s because they were not out and/or the term “bisexual” was not in common use.

I presume that it was difficult for Filipina/os who were transgender and/or whose gender presentations transgressed traditional hetero-patriarchal norms to join the Asian American Movement because they could not “hide” their non-normative gender expressions. Also possible is that they chose other groups that more directly addressed their needs. A

former KDP member told me that they know a KDP member who identifies today as trans, but I was unable to contact them. Other KDP members were unaware of trans members, but suggested that trans members may have joined after they left the organization.

“We were not extraordinary individuals, but rather, we were individuals who lived during extraordinary times.” –Bruce Occena, KDP National Executive Board

While Marcos’s martial law politicized most of KDP’s Filipina/o “nationals,” KDP members who were born and/or grew up in the United States learned the language of revolution in other ways. Through their participation in the anti-Vietnam War movement, the Third World Liberation Front’s demand for Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State College (now San Francisco State University), the Black, Brown, Red, and Yellow Power Movement “serve the people” programs, and exposure to anti-imperialist liberation struggles in Africa, Latin America, and other parts of Asia, future KDP members developed a consciousness against social injustice.

Further influencing future KDP members were the Filipino American civil rights and labor movements that preceded and overlapped with the KDP’s formation. Many of KDP’s American-born members were children of working class agricultural and salmon cannery workers and World War II veterans, who had moved to the U.S. in the 1930s to 1950s and raised families in Hawaii, California, and Washington. While most of their parents held “cautious and conservative” political views, others’ parents were fiercely radical.⁶⁵ Both responses arose from decades of exposure to racism, labor exploitation, as well as Filipina/os’ history of successful trade union organizing in the United States. Like Geaga, many Filipina/o Americans on the West coast of the United States also attended the Filipino

⁶⁵ Bruce Occena, e-mail message to author, June 13, 2018.

People's Far West Convention, which was started by Dorothy and Fred Cordova, pioneers in the Filipina/o American community and based in Seattle. A new "Filipina/o identity" movement was gaining momentum, and for many American born Filipina/os, like Luna Jamero, the Far West Convention was the first time they were able to socially and politically connect to other Filipina/os like them (Jamero 2010).

By the time the KDP formed in 1973, a gay liberation and "sexual identity" movement had also emerged. In 1966, the Compton's Cafeteria riot, which Susan Stryker refers to as "the first collective, organized" queer resistance to police harassment in U.S. history" occurred in San Francisco (2008, 64-65). Three years later, the Stonewall Riots in New York's Greenwich Village erupted in response to a police raid that targeted trans patrons of color, leading to the formation of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) (Hobson 2016, 25-26). Meanwhile, "a small but growing number of men" had begun linking their anti-war and gay identities (Hobson 2016, 28). Using the Vietnam War draft lottery, the U.S. government had conducted mass discrimination against any man suspected of "homosexual tendencies" (Hobson 2016, 28). The FBI used this information to both discredit and divide radical individuals and groups. They utilized tactics similar to those employed by U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s. Otherwise known as the "Lavender Scare," McCarthy hunted down and fired government employees suspected of being gay under the pretense of anti-communism during the Cold War (Hobson 2016, 29; Johnson 2004).

In the early 1970s, the Gay Liberation Movement was primarily white and focused on issues of police harassment, anti-gay laws, and military inclusion.⁶⁶ Understandably, the

⁶⁶ Emily Hobson's *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left* (2016) thoroughly documents the anti-imperialist and anti-racist politics of some parts of the gay and lesbian left.

racial and class politics of the Third World Left attracted KDP's gays, lesbian, and bisexuals more than the Gay Liberation Movement. Many future gay and lesbian members of KDP were not out yet and/or they viewed the Gay Liberation Movement as a "personal liberation movement" (Ordoná 2000, xvi). Future KDP members like Trinity Ordoná also "did not recognize the closet or trying to 'pass as straight' as gay oppression" (2000, xvi).⁶⁷ Further complicating their relationship to homosexuality was a pervasive message in the Third World Left: that homosexuality was a "social pathology" that reflected "bourgeois decadence" (Ordoná 2000, 88-89).

Gays and Lesbians in the Asian American Movement and Third World Left: Homosexuality as "Bourgeois Decadence"

In her groundbreaking dissertation, "Coming Out Together: An Ethnohistory of the Asian and Pacific Islander Queer Women's and Transgendered People's Movement of San Francisco," Trinity Ordoná rigorously examines the intersections of race, gender, class and sexuality in the Bay Area from the 1950s to the 1990s (2000). Ordoná explains that most radicals of color were drawn to Maoist thought in the 1960s and 1970s. During the Cultural Revolution, the Communist Party of China viewed homosexuality as "bourgeois decadence," and according to Mao, "Like prostitution and pornography, [homosexuality] would disappear with the advance of socialism" (Ordoná 2000, 88). Many gay and straight radicals of the Third World Left adopted this thinking.

The Cuban Revolution's position on homosexuality also influenced the Third World Left. The first *Venceremos* (We Shall Overcome) Brigades, which began in 1969, politicized

⁶⁷ See Sandibel Borges's research which argues that "coming out" is a Western concept. Borges, Sandibel. 2015. "Not Coming Out, but Building Home: An Oral History in Re-conceptualizing a Queer Migrant Home," in *Dialogo* 18:2, 119-130.

many of KDP's future members. While the Brigade offered activists experience of socialism in practice, it also exposed them to a revolutionary paradigm that stigmatized homosexuality. The Cuban Revolution had earlier forced homosexuals and effeminate men into special "work camps," which it later shut down due to their brutality (Jay and Young 1972, 246-247). Even after their closure, homosexuals were not allowed to join the Communist Party and were excluded from contact with youth and positions of authority (Jay and Young 1972, 246-247). In accordance with these politics, the Brigade banned gay and lesbian participants from 1970 through the early 1980s, arguing that "gay liberation was part of 'a cultural imperialist offensive against the Cuban Revolution'" ("Brigada" 1972).

Like Mao's reading of homosexuality as "bourgeois decadence," the Cuban *maricón* (the Spanish pejorative form of homosexual), was considered weak and thus a threat to national security (Allen 2011, 68).⁶⁸ Male revolutionary identity hinged upon traditional concepts of masculinity. One could be a revolutionary only if one was cisgender male and heterosexual.⁶⁹ The Cuban Revolution labeled gays "subjective" because they deviated from the "material conditions" of maleness, and thus lacked clarity and directedness. On the other hand, they rendered female same sex desire virtually invisible. While the Cuban government later changed its policy on homosexuality in 1979, its previous position on homosexuality

⁶⁸ Allen cogently explains how Cuban revolutionaries understood homosexuality during this time:

At the triumph of the revolution, male homosexuality...was seen as an artifact of capitalist bourgeois decadence. Not only is the *maricón*, or homosexual, said to be effeminate and unmanly, but he is also a coward and untrustworthy. A *maricón*, therefore, cannot be a revolutionary. Homosexual men were not thought of as "healthy" or robust, physically or mentally (2011, 68).

⁶⁹ Cisgender male meaning that one's gender identity matched the male sex they were assigned at birth.

had profound impacts on gay people far beyond its shores (Allen 2011, 72-73).⁷⁰

One of Trinity Ordoná's interviewees in "Coming Out Together," Sylvia (Syl) Savellano, remembers living a "double life" in the late 1960s. According to Ordoná, Savellano was "a heterosexual in the Asian American Movement during the day and a 'deviant' at night in dance clubs" (2000, 92). After Savellano's trip to Cuba on the Venceremos Brigade in 1970, her fears of coming out worsened:

It was isolating. It was a quiet thing. I could not tell anybody. Any inclinations I had to can it. I had to dance with a guy and yet be attracted to a woman. 'Looky-loo, but not speak.' You could see, but not use your hands or mouth...(in Ordoná 2000, 92).

Contrary to the stereotypes of homophobic immigrant households, it was easier for Syl to come out to her Filipina/o immigrant family than it was to reveal her sexuality to her friends in the Asian American Movement.

John Silva, a future gay KDP member, admits that his appreciation for the Cuban revolution made him deny his homosexuality as a Brigadista:

When I went to Cuba in 1972, I was already out [in the Philippines and U.S.]– gay, gay, gay, and then I get to Cuba and the second day or the third day, a compañero says to me, "Tú eres homosexual, John?" I said, "No! Of course not!" Just like that. But when I get back to the States, I'm homosexual. So there was an inconsistency. Or Fidel and the Cuban revolution meant so much to me that I was

⁷⁰ In 2010, Fidel Castro apologized for the treatment of LGBT people during the Cuban Revolution, admitting that UMAP, the labor camps used to ostensibly rehabilitate homosexuals and other supposed threats to the Cuban revolution, was a "great injustice" (Allen 2011, 72-73).

willing to say, “So what about being gay?”⁷¹

Silva’s self-censoring appeared to be a small price for a larger cause. Cuba’s revolution and the idea that the Philippines was on the cusp of its own liberation was alluring to many gay and lesbian radicals of color like Silva.⁷²

By 1970, the Third World Left was beginning a shift. By the end of the summer, Huey Newton, co-founder of the Black Panther Party, made a series of statements in solidarity with gay people. Among various ideas, he stated that “even a homosexual can be a revolutionary,” that gay people were “oppressed because of the bourgeois mentality and the bourgeois treachery that exists in this country that tries to legislate sexual activity,” and that the Panthers “would like to have unity with the homosexual groups who are also political conscious” (Tompson 1970). The Panthers’ changing position foreshadowed the eventual direction of KDP, though it would take more than a decade for its leaders to publicly voice these politics.

A Brief Overview of KDP

The KDP was founded in July of 1973 in the Santa Cruz Mountains, almost one year after Marcos declared martial law by leaders of the National Committee for Restoration of Civil Liberties in the Philippines (NCRCLP, discussed in Chapter 1). In thirteen years, KDP built nine chapters in cities across the United States, from New York City to Guam to Chicago. At the helm of its centralized leadership structure was a nine-member National

⁷¹ John Silva in discussion with the author, Manila, Philippines, July 20, 2016.

⁷² It would later ban out gay and lesbian participants through the early 1980s. See Ian K. Lekus. Spring 2004. “Queer Harvests: Homosexuality, the U.S. New Left, and the Venceremos Brigades to Cuba,” *Radical History Review* 89: 57-91.

Council, whose National Executive Board (NEB) based in the Bay Area provided day-to-day leadership. Other leaders headed Regional and Chapter Executive Boards. Like other leftist groups, the KDP practiced democratic centralism, which allowed them to facilitate a sustained, productive, and organized flow of political activity.⁷³

One of the cornerstones to KDP's work was its theoretical training, led by its National Education Commission, which planned and coordinated theoretical studies and summer schools for activists. KDP's newspaper *Ang Katipunan* and cultural group *Sining Bayan*'s frequent and nationally toured theatrical productions created the illusion that KDP's membership was much higher than its actual 150-200 active members.⁷⁴ KDP created and facilitated numerous solidarity groups, including IAFP, or the International Association of Filipino Patriots, its Canadian counterpart with chapters in Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto. It also sought to align theory with practice with some of its members living in housing collectives and implementing a shared childcare system.

The KDP utilized what it called a "dual line" approach. Its objectives were to promote socialism in the United States, which guided KDP's local campaigns, and to support the movement for national democracy in the Philippines. After facilitating the creation of an anti-martial law coordinating committee at a conference in Chicago in 1974, the KDP led the formation of the Anti-Martial Law Coalition (AMLC), which launched in 1975 (Gaerlan

⁷³ KDP elected members to leadership boards and entrusted them to collectively make decisions, by which members agreed to abide in unity.

⁷⁴ KDP members distributed *Ang Katipunan* in churches, stores, and other places where Filipina/o Americans frequented. Its National Cultural Commission organized KDP's cultural group *Sining Bayan*, which produced skits, one-act plays, and full theatrical productions and toured the country. Membership number estimate provided by Walden Bello in discussion with the author, Seattle, WA, November 2015.

2003). In coordination with other groups in the AMLC, the KDP educated the American public about the ongoing situation in the Philippines and worked with Friends of the Filipino People (FFP) to pressure the U.S. government to end its aid to the Marcos government.⁷⁵ After the KDP's split with the FFP in 1980, KDP established its own lobbying initiatives under the Philippine Solidarity Network (PSN) and Congress Task Force (CTF) starting in 1980 (National Coordinator 1980)⁷⁶

Among its campaigns, KDP, alongside other groups, fought for bilingual education in schools and labor reforms for Filipina/o medical professionals who were at risk for deportation. Its Chicago chapter spearheaded a campaign for justice for Filipina Narciso and Leonora Perez, two Filipina immigrant nurses accused of murder in Michigan (Choy 2003, 139-165). The Seattle chapter sought labor reforms for Filipino, Black, and Native American cannery workers (as many of its members were part of the Alaska Cannery Workers Association Local 37). In San Francisco, it was one of many groups who led an almost decade-long fight to stop forced evictions of elderly Asian Americans living in the International Hotel in San Francisco from 1968 to 1977 (Domingo 2010; Habal 2007).

KDP's work was both dynamic and sobering. Like other organizations, KDP experienced heavy state surveillance by the U.S. and Philippine governments. On June 1, 1981, danger of these risks became most evident when two of their members were murdered. Gene Viernes and Silme Domingo, both twenty-nine years old, were shot to death

⁷⁵ Also, despite KDP's pronounced dual line, some Filipina/o American activists were angry at what they felt was an interruption of momentum and shift in focus and resources away from a growing Filipino civil rights movement and toward the Philippines and anti-Marcos movement.

⁷⁶ Walden Bello in discussion with the author, Seattle, WA, November 18, 2015.

in broad daylight in downtown Seattle.⁷⁷ The KDP quickly sprung to action and organized the Committee for Justice for Domingo and Viernes (CJDV). The CJDV argued that the men were killed in retaliation for their anti-Marcos and international labor organizing.⁷⁸ In 1989, a federal jury agreed and found Marcos guilty.⁷⁹ It was a landmark case, and the first time a foreign head of state was tried in U.S. court and found responsible for the assassination of U.S. citizens (Cruz et al 2017, 15).⁸⁰

By the time KDP formally dissolved, it had already transferred many of its members to

⁷⁷ Viernes and Domingo were both officers and reformers in a local Seattle union (Local 37 of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), elected on a platform to end the union's corruption and bribery. The murders led to the arrests of local gang members and Tony Baruso, the president of Local 37. The murders were originally thought to be isolated act of violence for Viernes and Domingo's reform work, and Baruso's friends and relatives still believe this to be true today. However, Viernes and Domingo's friends and family suspected that the Marcos government was responsible.

⁷⁸ Only two months prior, Viernes met with anti-Marcos opposition leaders, including members of the May First Movement (Kilusang Mayo Uno or KMU), a federation of anti-Marcos trade unions, in the Philippines. Directly after the trip, Viernes met Domingo in Honolulu returned from an International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) International Convention where they convinced members to pass a resolution to send an ILWU team to investigate labor conditions in the Philippines. According to Terri Mast, "This action was a direct threat to the Marcos dictatorship because the labor movement was the one area where he had little support because of his brutal attacks on labor and because of the no-strike decree that he had created that was part of his regime...The support of the ILWU for the KMU, the largest trade union federation in the Philippines, had just been sealed. And any disruptions of cargo into or out of the Philippines would have a major economic impact on the country" (Chew 2012, 32). Furthermore, according to Cruz, "Through Freedom of Information Act files, the KDP confirmed that U.S. government agencies such as the FBI and US Naval Intelligence conducted secret surveillance of KDP activists, even coordinating information gathering with Manila. The Reagan administration and the Marcos regime also attempted to push through an extradition treaty, in which Marcos named key opposition leaders among moderates, elite exiles, and the KDP as prime targets (Cruz et al. 2017, 15).

⁷⁹ The families of Viernes and Domingo won \$23.3 million in damages in the wrongful death suit against the Marcos estate and other defendants (Cruz et al 2017, 15).

⁸⁰ The case has been used as a precedent for other trials against foreign dictators who have assassinated Americans in the U.S., such as the Pinochet regime in Chile.

the Line of March, a multi-racial pre-party Marxist-Leninist formation that sought to rectify the mistakes of the Communist Party USA. As described in Chapter 1, during the mid to late 1970s, the KDP began to also reconsider the CPP's Marxist-Leninist-Maoist orientation and loyal support for China, which further strained its relationship with the CPP (Cruz et. al 2017, 17). The final straw that formally split the KDP and the CPP, after years of struggle, was the KDP's public stance on Ferdinand Marcos's "snap election" in 1986, which deviated from the CPP's decision to boycott the election.

After Marcos's ouster through the EDSA/People Power Movement in 1986, the KDP's efforts of solidarity with the Philippine Left proved difficult given what Cruz describes as "hostility" from the CPP. Still, many KDP members continued Philippines work through KDP's coalition group CAMDI (Coalition to Advance the Movement for Democracy and Independence).⁸¹ After the end of the Vietnam War came what Cruz calls Reagan's "counterrevolution" against civil rights reforms. Simultaneously, the fall of socialism in the Soviet Union approached, which ultimately led to the decline of the U.S. Left. Cruz contends, "Alienated from the main body of the Philippine Left and unmoored by the collapse for the socialist paradigm, the remaining members of the KDP finally voted to disband the organization in 1986" (Cruz et al. 2017, 19). Most KDP members have continued their social justice work individually and through informal groupings, holding reunions every few years.

The Costs of "Serving the People:" "Don't Ask Don't Tell" and "Lose Your Sexuality"

⁸¹ CAMDI was formerly CAMD or the Coalition Against the Marcos Dictatorship and the AMLC during martial law. Prior to CAMD, the group used the name AMLC, or the Anti-Martial Law Coalition, which was formed when the various anti-martial law groups were more unified.

According to Ordon, since KDP's inception, there was a general understanding that homosexuals were allowed in the group (2000, 93). Not long after she helped found it, Melanie Santos, a member of the KDP's NEB, began a same-sex relationship with another female KDP member (Ordon 2000, 94).⁸² Fellow comrades in the KDP's National Council were generally supportive of her changed personal situation. Also, the sister of another KDP NEB leader, Cynthia Maglaya, was a lesbian, so Maglaya as a leader likely set a tone of tolerance for homosexuality within the organization.

Still, the NEB did not openly discuss Santos's sexual orientation beyond the group. Its leaders feared that the right and left would use homosexuality to discredit the KDP, so they decided that Melanie should not be public outside of the group about her homosexuality (Ordon 2000, 94). Looking back, straight comrade Ermena Vinluan of the KDP's National Secretariat and National Cultural Group thinks that the KDP was then seeking to build a culture of solidarity and family and may have also been distracted by a different unrelated internal struggle.⁸³ She adds, "We were too clueless to be actively rampantly homophobic. We simply carried on with the movement."⁸⁴ Vinluan's comment helps further elucidate other possible reasons for the NEB's silence about Santos's homosexuality. She suggests that the silence may have been also a passive act of solidarity with Melanie, as the group had just formed. The members were young, inexperienced, and finding their way, probably with other pressing issues to discuss aside from Santos's homosexuality.

⁸² This activist does not want to disclose her real name. "Melanie Santos" is a pseudonym.

⁸³ Ermena Vinluan in discussion with the author, New York, NY, July 17, 2017.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

As a result, KDP's allowance of gay and lesbian members often came with silence about sexuality, particularly in its early years. Gay Filipino American Gil Mangaoang, descendant of revered Filipino labor leader and cannery worker Ernesto Mangaoang, describes this silence as "an operative sexual code of conduct akin to the old U.S. military policy of "Don't ask, don't tell" (Cruz et al. 2017, 116). It was a code sprung out of pragmatism.

I suggest that "don't ask, don't tell" might have also been a cultural reflection of the KDP members' Filipina/o backgrounds. Anthropologist Joana Palomar notes that in the Philippines, some middle class and wealthy Filipina/o families ostracize their gay and lesbian children, the result of the internalization of what Comparative Literature Scholar J. Neil Garcia states are "Western (specifically, American) [perverse] notions of gender and sexuality by means of academic instruction in English, and the Americanization of all aspects of government and the mass media [in the Philippines]," (Garcia 2008, 167).⁸⁵ In contrast, many Filipina/os in the Philippines are accepting of their children's homosexuality but do not discuss it, prioritizing the child's ability to financially support the family. Some KDP members recollect treatment that mirrors this productivist dynamic. For example, Mangaoang reflects, "Although there was not explicit support for my lifestyle, there was no opposition to it" (1994, 40). Sandy Aguila, a local leader in the Bay Area chapter of KDP who now identifies as bisexual, similarly remembers, "We didn't care who was between the

⁸⁵ Joana Palomar in discussion with the author, Queens, NY, December 11, 2016.

sheets. As long as you came to work on time so to speak. And did your duties...then you're okay."⁸⁶

Other political organizations held deep respect for KDP, which likely impacted LGBT members' choices to hide their sexualities. Ordoná interviewed people outside of the KDP to better understand KDP's reputation (2000). According to one Japanese American lesbian who was not able to come out in the other San Francisco Asian American organizations in the 1970s:

I do remember hearing bits and pieces about Katipunan [KDP], about all the people in KDP being gay. I used to laugh, because I did not believe it. I did not know who they were talking about...I couldn't tell who was gay and who wasn't. They said it was "all of KDP," which I thought was strange. So I just ignored the whole thing...[The gay people in KDP] did not dare let anyone know, because they could not do their movement work...It was a joke, but [at the same time] there was some respect for the KDP people, for the work that had been done...Nobody would ever "laugh" at the KDP because it was a very important organization... I just thought it was a big rumor (Ordoná 2000, 95-96).

This person confirms that KDP was somewhat successful at hiding members' sexualities but that rumors persisted. That members' sexuality was even a point of discussion illustrates the provocative nature of homosexuality in the Asian American Movement. The activist also comments on KDP's respected position in the community. She suggests that its role as a

⁸⁶ "Sandy Aguila" in discussion with the author, Alameda, CA, December 2015. I have not received Aguila's permission to use her real name, so Sandy Aguila is a pseudonym. Aguila was born in the United States to working class Filipina/o immigrant parents and was politicized in the era of Black Power. She joined a Chicana/o theater group after high school and was a member of one of the original Venceremos Brigades.

“very important organization” might have given it a “pass” in lieu of the rumors of homosexuality.

Thus, KDP’s respected stature, along with the rampant homophobia in the Asian American movement, led to heavy pressures for leaders to maintain their reputation of being exceptionally “grim and determined.”⁸⁷ Consequently, it was common to allow oneself to become buried in the work and as Aguila puts it, “lose your sexuality.”⁸⁸ For Bruce Occena, who did not consider himself bisexual until many years later, “Even though there was no explicit homophobia, there was still a pressure.” He goes on, “Well, coming out is never easy. When you’re in a very intense, demanding situation and you hold a position of leadership, this was always the joke- ‘Okay, you can “come out,” but you’re not going to have time to find a boyfriend or girlfriend’ (laughs).”⁸⁹ In short, the Maoist motto of “serving the people” was the guiding force behind KDP’s drive as exceptional activists. Gay or straight, personal relationships took a backburner to political work. Yet, this hardworking and selfless ethic created a double-edged sword for Filipina/o activists exploring their sexual identities.

For some members, internalized homophobia and social-political fragmentation was unbearable. Cecilia Gonzalez, a Filipina lesbian immigrant and member of IAFP, a Canadian solidarity formation that KDP created and oversaw in the mid to late 1970s, recalls

⁸⁷ Bruce Occena in discussion with the author, April 13, 2017, Telephone.

⁸⁸ “Sandy Aguila” in discussion with the author, Alameda, CA, December 2015.

⁸⁹ Bruce Occena in discussion with the author, Oakland, CA, December 19, 2015.

using political work as a distraction from her sexuality:⁹⁰

I was a force all by myself. I did a lot of things. And you never think about what you needed...I think that's also part of that homophobia. The internalized part. You cannot really talk about yourself, you're just constantly doing something. You know? And I was. I was constantly busy. Until it hit me in the face. (laughs) When your relationship falls apart, because that relationship was secondary to the political work. And when you think about it, how could it survive, when you're never there?

In this passage, Gonzalez refers to the struggles of political work while maintaining a secret relationship with her lesbian lover. When faced with the choice between political work and romantic relationships, the political work would usually win, leaving her same-sex relationships to disintegrate. When one found time to pursue a romantic relationship, societal expectations of heterosexuality were strong. Both Cecilia Gonzalez and Gil Mangaoang married kasamas of the opposite sex in their organizations before separating from them later on.⁹¹

Despite organizational ambivalence toward its own LGBT members, KDP worked with gay comrades from other groups. The Solidarity Committee of the Bay Area Gay Liberation (BAGL) joined KDP's International Hotel (I-Hotel) Support Committee and "volunteered in its security detail and attended protests with banners bearing the BAGL name" (Hobson 2016, 81-82). According to KDP member and Asian American Studies

⁹⁰ This activist chose "Cecilia Gonzalez" as her pseudonym. "Cecilia Gonzalez" in discussion with the author, Berkeley, CA, March 2016.

⁹¹ "Cecilia Gonzalez" in discussion with the author, Berkeley, CA, March 2016; See Mangaoang 1994.

scholar Estella Habal, “The KDP was sympathetic to gay rights, and gays and lesbians were members and leaders of the organization, so working with the BAGL and other such groups posed no conflict” (2007, 113). While straight radicals sometimes resisted BAGL, its collaboration with the KDP and the I-Hotel Support Committee displays an important moment of solidarity between the Gay Liberation and Filipina/o American Movements.

Class as Primary Contradiction

For John Silva, “losing his sexuality” was not an option. Silva had long been out to his family since he was only 11-years-old. Silva had also been a member of LaSalle University’s *Samahan ng mga Demokratiko ng Kabataan* (SDK or Democratic Youth Association), a national democratic student organization in the Philippines. After a difficult breakup with his boyfriend, Silva moved to the United States around 1971 to finish college at UC Berkeley and learn about the revolution in Cuba. Upon arrival to the Bay Area, he joined the Kalayaan Collective. After graduation, Silva remained at Berkeley and worked as a lecturer in Filipino Studies while organizing in KDP. Though he assumed that some of KDP’s members were gay when the group formed, its “Don’t ask, don’t tell” nature meant that no one else, including KDP NEB leader Melanie Santos, claimed a gay or lesbian identity. Thus, Silva identifies himself as one of KDP’s first “out” members.⁹²

Silva remembers being “out” in KDP as a challenging experience. He recalls KDP leaders who echoed the leftist rhetoric of the 1970s by encouraging him to “subsume” his sexuality under the “primary contradiction” of “proletariat vs. the ruling class.” Gonzalez concurs. “It was a hush-hush [situation]. You just don’t talk about it. You just don’t talk

⁹² John Silva in discussion with the author, Manila, Philippines, July 20, 2016.

about being a gay or lesbian because it's not the focus- nor important- to the movement.”⁹³

Silva did not want to live his “gay life” separately from KDP. He said he thought, “If you can’t respect me, then how could I respect this revolution?”⁹⁴ After internally “struggling” with the leadership, Silva decided to leave KDP around 1975 for these reasons.

Just three years prior, Silva had chosen to hide his sexuality during his experience on the Venceremos Brigade. Why was he unable to make a similar “sacrifice” in the United States? I wonder if it was because he was willing to abide by the “rules” in someone else’s revolution, while he considered KDP his “turf.” I also wonder if Silva had changed his thinking and developed an analysis that considered gay liberation as inseparable from class war. When I asked Silva how he formed this perspective, he said that feminist and gay and lesbian journals at UC Berkeley had exposed him to this emergent perspective. Though it did not arise in our interview, Silva’s thinking may have also been sparked by gay radicals of color forming their own groups in the Bay Area and New York City. By 1975, a Third World Gay Caucus (TWGC) had formed in San Francisco. Like the Gay Latino Alliance (GALA) and Gente, a lesbian of color group, TWGC “explicitly challenged the divide

⁹³ “Cecilia Gonzalez” in discussion with the author, Berkeley, CA, March 2016.

⁹⁴ John Silva in discussion with the author, Manila, Philippines, July 20, 2016. Like the Black Feminists of the Combahee River Collective (1974), James applied an “intersectional” politic that recognizes multiple oppressions as interlocking and connected before Kimberlé Crenshaw formally coined the term in 1989. See Combahee River Collective. 1981. “A Black Feminist Statement,” in C. Moraga and G. Anzaldúa eds., *This Bridge Called My Back*. Watertown, MA: Persephone, pp. 210-18; Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1989. “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: a Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 139:139-67.

between gay and people of color identities,” (“3rd World Gay Caucus 1975; “Gays Speak Out Against Racism” n.d.; “BAGL Bulletin” 1975; Roque Ramírez 2003).⁹⁵

I surmise that Silva might have felt he could be assertive about his sexuality because of his class position. Working class gays and lesbians in the United States could not afford to risk losing their jobs by merging their political and personal views. If fired, Silva could rely on the emotional and financial support of his parents in the Philippines, and especially his mother, who came from a land-owning family. Silva’s class status, combined with his position on gay liberation, may have furthered criticism of Silva for so-called “bourgeois perversion.”

Before I left my interview with Silva, I thanked him for helping to pave the way for his Filipina/o American working class kasamas to express their sexuality. Gil Mangaoang remembers:

Before I came out, I was influenced to a certain extent by Filipino gay and lesbian activists from the Philippines who were very open about their sexual orientation...in retrospect, they were role models of how it was possible to be uninhibited and positive about being gay and yet be politically active in the Filipino community (1994, 40).

Mangaoang’s reflection illustrates that gay Filipina/os helped to positively impact him and shift the sexual politics of the organization even if their efforts did not personally benefit them.

⁹⁵ This type of formation was not new. Emily Hobson’s *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left* outlines some of the groups including New York City’s Third World Gay Revolution (1970) and the Bay Area’s Third World Gay People (1971) (2016, 31, 39).

Homophobia, Gender, and Bourgeois Individualism

Homophobia impacted gay men and lesbian women in KDP differently. Gil Mangaoang recalls:

In the 1970s there were few gay organizations to join and those that existed were dominated by white males. Minorities who were members of these gay organizations were generally seen as subordinates reflecting the dominant racist attitudes in society. The experience was very isolating, and the companionship and support from other gay political activists, either minority or white, was rare. This created a degree of schizophrenia between my political and social identities. While my primary political identity and organizing efforts were directed toward issues confronting non-white minorities, specifically the Filipino community, my gay identity took on a different character in other situations (1994, 41).

Mangaoang describes the “schizophrenia” he experienced as a man of color having to navigate expectations of revolutionary heterosexual machismo in the broader U.S. Left, plus racism in predominantly white Gay Liberation Movement groups. Being a social outsider in both groups led to feelings of isolation and a disjuncture of identity.

For Asian lesbians, it was especially difficult to come out in radical political organizations. Ordon notes that the Radical Women/Freedom Socialist Party was the only political group that allowed Asian lesbians to come out in the late 1970s (2000, 79). However, because Radical Women did not maintain continuous work in the Asian American community, most Asian American lesbians who wished to organize within their ethnic communities felt they had to hide their sexual identities in political organizations. Cecilia

Gonzalez, in Vancouver, describes being “totally closeted” in her IAFP collective and international solidarity organization. Meanwhile, it was the white lesbians, in a progressive women’s health collective that collected medical supplies for the Philippine movement, who offered her space to express her lesbian identity.

KDP was thus an important organization because it was the only Asian American radical organization in which lesbians could come out within the organization and organize around ethnic and nationalist politics.

Still, even within KDP, lesbian women sometimes faced judgments from male kasamas for not following patriarchal heterosexist scripts of femininity and womanhood. Cecilia Gonzalez describes a time around 1978 when KDP/IAFP male leaders chastised her for planning a vacation with her girlfriend:

I think what happened...[was] my ex-girlfriend [who was not in KDP] decided she wants us to go traveling... She wanted to go to Europe for three and a half months. So that means I was seeking time [off from]...my political work for three and a half months. Okay? I did not ask permission. It never occurred to me that I should be asking permission? You know? And this commitment to [IAFP] is really a volunteer work. Yes, I am part of movement, yes. But the reason I decided to go on this trip as well, first of all- when ever was I going to do that? My girlfriend wanted to do it and it was an opportunity to spend time together since the tension between us was reaching critical levels because I never ever have time for the relationship. Right? And so even if I could not really afford it, I finagled one way or the other, and managed to do this backpacking trip for three and a half months in Europe. I remember very well when I was having discussion with another guy, the leadership

from [San Francisco] that went [to Vancouver where I was]...And of one of the male leaders in my group was aghast. His reaction was like “I don’t even want to think about that” when he realized that I was going to go traveling with my “friend.” Of course, [he calls her] my “friend” [and not my girlfriend]. So without saying it, it’s like “What (laughs)!? Traveling!” So that totally implied being a lesbian “thing.” That was the main reaction, was that whole thing implied – “how could you be...” you know, because I’m traveling, I’m going away with this woman? What does that mean? What does that imply? So I became a – I call it a persona non grata because I went and did something on my own, so the individualist [criticism]... You can’t be an individualistic person in the movement.⁹⁶

Gonzalez observed these male leaders’ shock that she, a female comrade, would be so brazen to take a vacation with her female lover, not ask permission, *and* discuss it openly. This story is an entry point for understanding how homophobia and sexism intersected with political culture. When Gonzalez mentioned going on vacation with her girlfriend, she likely provoked notions of gay bourgeois decadence combined with internalized heteropatriarchy.

Gays and Lesbians Taking and Making Space Together

With few public spaces for lesbians to comfortably congregate during that time, I understand why Gonzalez would wish to take a trip with her girlfriend. Years of “closeting” and burrowing herself in political work and organizing in a culture that encouraged being “married to the movement” heightened the trip’s significance.⁹⁷ Sandy Aguila describes the

⁹⁶ “Cecilia Gonzalez” in discussion with the author, Berkeley, CA, March 2016.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

importance of the social sphere for helping LGBT members explore and maintain their identities:

Part of our own identity had to come out. Julie, Melanie, myself, and a few others had to come out.⁹⁸ Gil. A few of us had to just – wait a minute, there’s something that we need that you don’t have that can comfort us and that’s a body. That’s personal touch. Another human being to be with. Or to relate to...I go to meetings, but at night I crawl into the women’s bar. Okay after a meeting. In the IH [International Hotel], I’d sneak out and go to San Francisco – because that was thriving!⁹⁹

Like Jaime Geaga from the opening passage, Aguila remembers the importance of going to bars after KDP meetings for helping isolation. For John Silva, Aguila and another lesbian member, Julie, were vital to his organizational livelihood before he left KDP, “They were the two lesbians closest to me when I was first coming out, and [when] I was declaring that I was coming out, that didn’t bother them. We smoked dope a lot. We danced a lot. Went to disco a lot. We were very, very close.”

Gay and lesbian kasamas were necessary supporters of one another. Gonzalez shares another example. When Gonzalez struggled with her lesbian identity in her marriage with a heterosexual man in Vancouver, her lesbian kasama Trinity Ordonas suggested she travel to San Francisco for a three-month Marxist-Leninist Education Project (MLEP) course taught by Line of March. Gonzalez remembers:

⁹⁸ “Julie” is also a pseudonym to protect this person’s identity, as I did not interview her.

⁹⁹ “Sandy Aguila” in discussion with the author, Alameda, CA, December 2015.

My husband says, “Oh, go do it.” Because he’s always supportive of whatever I was doing. But then by that time it was already two years into the marriage and I was starting to feel very restless and not quite sure what I really wanted. As usual- the political demands kept me very busy with no time to really think about how much I was missing the company of the women I used to hang out with. There really was nobody to talk to. Trinity really understood what I was going through, she knew, she understood our [Filipino] culture. She knew, she understood being a lesbian and not being out. So I came here for that three-month course. And for the first time ever- I felt what it was like to be free. That freeing feeling of being around people who more or less were supportive of who you really are – even if you don’t talk about it. And then the three months became six months because there was another six-month course. And I never really went back to Vancouver.¹⁰⁰

Going to the Bay Area was critical for Gonzalez’s survival as a lesbian Filipina. Ordoná played a pivotal role in helping her move there. In these ways, LGBT radicals like Geaga, Gonzalez, and Ordoná formed and utilized their own informal networks to survive and thrive.

Jaime Geaga’s experience from the opening of this essay illustrates that straight leaders were sometimes important allies to their LGBT kasamas. John Silva expressed gratitude to Vinluan, his roommate, for offering him support. “She was more I felt [a] cultural type. And she couldn’t be bound too much by the ideology.”¹⁰¹ Cecilia Gonzalez

¹⁰⁰ “Cecilia Gonzalez” in discussion with the author, Berkeley, CA, March 2016.

¹⁰¹ John Silva in discussion with the author, Manila, Philippines, July 20, 2016.

also named straight allies like Cynthia Maglaya and Sorcy Apostol. She recalls, “They were more open to me talking about it. You have somebody that you can relate to even if I was not out. And also- more important- it felt good to feel like you belong to an organization that actually accepted you for who you are even if you do not talk openly about it.”¹⁰²

Still, straight comrade allies did not always know how to support gay kasamas in times of need. For example, when Gil Managaoang’s lover died, he remembers most of his kasamas not knowing what to do because it was not his girlfriend or spouse. According to Ermena Vinluan, “It was so new to all of us. The...thing that bothered me was I was so ignorant and not more helpful in a tangible way. But no one knew anything about gay history, gay biology, gay anything.”¹⁰³ Indeed sexual discourse was changing, and those who did not belong to gay and lesbian communities lacked the language to think about and discuss homosexuality. Coming out was also challenging for those bisexual, as bisexuality was still gaining mainstream understanding and legitimacy.

Gil Mangaoang names other ways for “making and taking space” for his gay self in KDP:

I enjoyed the game of flirting with the straight political guys. In fact, there was a period of time when I just came out, that I went out of my way to be outrageous in how I expressed my declaration about being “gay and proud.” Most of the time it just meant wearing an earring and lots of body jewelry....These youthful actions were a passive-aggressive way of seeking recognition without the responsibility of having to

¹⁰² “Cecilia Gonzalez” in discussion with the author, Berkeley, CA, March 2016.

¹⁰³ Ermena Vinluan in discussion with the author, New York, NY, July 17, 2017.

justify my actions. One [other] situation...comes to mind. In 1975, I had been out no more than a couple of months and was just developing my network of gay friends. I had seen Ben at numerous community events...He had been out many years before me and was very flamboyant and open about his gayness. We were at the house of some KDP members for a meeting. Since some of the members weren't there yet, Ben and I decided to make the best use of our time in one of the vacant bedrooms for an intimate get-acquainted session...the other members were somewhat outraged by our behavior but didn't know how to "politely intervene" (1994, 41).

Mangaoang's recollection demonstrates that while some chose to leave the organization like John Silva, others like Mangaoang sought recognition using "passive-aggressive" methods.

The Influence of the Communist Party of the Philippines on KDP

The KDP did not take direct commands from the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), but its culture influenced KDP members in its early years. The CPP trained some of KDP's key leaders and maintained communication with them until their split in 1986.

In 2016, I interviewed several CPP leaders and former members about how they remembered the Party's views on homosexuality in the 1970s. Unlike the Third World and Cuban Lefts, LGBT radicals were allowed in the CPP. Sydney Renato, a gay man no longer active in the Party, recounted "active involvement" of gays in the Party in the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁰⁴ National Democratic Front leader and MAKIBAKA International representative Coni Ledesma praised LGBT comrades for their contributions and recalled, "[Gay artists

¹⁰⁴ "Sydney Renato" is a pseudonym, as he asked that I protect his identity. "Sydney Renato" in discussion with the author, Manila, Philippines, July 2016.

like filmmaker] Lino Brocka, who was sympathetic to the ideas of the Communist Party [of the Philippines] and Party member [and actor/director] Behn Cervantes excelled so much in their field, so it was hard to discriminate against them.”¹⁰⁵

Still, Luneta admits, “Gays (*bakla*) were laughed at. More male homos than lesbians. As a matter of fact there was the opinion that lesbians were good NPAs because they were physically stronger than other women.”¹⁰⁶ Senior CPP leader Bonifacio Toledo expands, recalling how some Party members interpreted homosexuality:¹⁰⁷

There were some who thought if you go to the countryside, you will not find gays because the people involved are deeply involved in production. It’s only when the petty bourgeoisie became isolated from production that these ideas involved a fear...but there were also some who said these are the most subjective people in the world. God created men and women...materially they are men. So why would they think that they are women when they men?¹⁰⁸

Toledo outlines a common Party view that homosexuality is a product of bourgeois leisure. That is, the “true proletariat” does not have time or interest in homosexuality. Another common perspective queries, “Why would men think that they are women when they are men?” It is assumed that because a person presents as male, fornication is only “natural”

¹⁰⁵ Coni Ledesma in discussion with the author and Luis Jalandoni, Utrecht, Netherlands, October 3, 2016. See Chapter 3 for more discussion about the origins of MAKIBAKA.

¹⁰⁶ Coni Ledesma, e-mail message to author, June 13, 2018.

¹⁰⁷ “Bonifacio Toledo” is a pseudonym.

¹⁰⁸ “Bonifacio Toledo” in discussion with the author and “Gabriela Toledo,” Utrecht, Netherlands, October 3, 2016.

between a man and a woman. Such perspectives are the product of colonial Spanish Catholic values and modern European and U.S. sexology, which U.S. colonial education introduced to the Philippines during the first half of the 20th century (Garcia 2008, 165).¹⁰⁹ Further, just like in the Cuban Left, some CPP members read gays as “subjective” and untrustworthy because of their sexual desires.

Such qualities compromised the character of a “good” comrade, which trickled down into rules for gays organizing in rural areas. According to Toledo:

There was time when the policy was- it’s not right to humiliate gays because of their sexual preference. But they were not allowed to enter into a [romantic] relationship. On the basis of it would cause problems in the relationship of the movement with the masses ...[the] reasoning then was [we] wanted to recruit the young people into the movement. We need many young people. And the peasants need to trust us with their young sons and daughters... Of course it [our thinking] was still backward. It was only later that [their gay] relationship were recognized... the policy of the movement (laughs) relationships [was] very strict. And somebody said, “*Mag-sistrict sa pagkasimbahan*”- they are stricter than [the Catholic Church.].¹¹⁰

Toledo explains that the Party knew that it was wrong to humiliate gays and lesbians.

Nonetheless, it restricted gay comrades from entering same sex relationships based on the

¹⁰⁹ According to J. Neil Garcia, modern Western studies of sexology deepened the elite classes’ understanding of homosexuality as perversion, blurred the boundaries of gender and sexuality, and imposed a “homo/hetero” distinction onto sexuality (2008).

¹¹⁰ “Bonifacio Toledo” in discussion with the author, Utrecht, Netherlands, October 3, 2016.

assumption that peasant families would not entrust the Party with their children otherwise.

Toledo and his wife Gabriela Toledo directed me to an internal paper written by the CPP in 1974 entitled, “On the Relation of the Sexes.”¹¹¹ The paper outlines the rules and regulations of sexual relations among kasamas. While all comrades were expected to follow it, it explicitly referred only to male-female relations. The omission of same sex relationships in the document reflects both heterosexism in the Party at the time and the unofficially practiced policy of which Toledo speaks. Cecilia Gonzalez, who was an activist in the Philippines before moving to Canada, remembers this climate well.¹¹² “Because you’re not out...they don’t know if you’re gay. I was not out but I had a relationship and I was very conflicted about it. It was so closeted it felt very suffocating. When I was leaving the Philippines, I promised myself I was never ever, ever, ever going to get involved with a woman again.”¹¹³ Thus, even while the Party challenged religious dogma, it refashioned internalized Catholic codes of morality as rigid expectations of conduct. The outcome was a similar “don’t ask, don’t tell” and “lose your sexuality” climate as the one KDP maintained. To Gonzalez, this climate “conveniently fed into the internalized homophobia of the kasamas who could comfortably fit in without coming out.”

According to the CPP’s official newspaper *Ang Bayan*, the CPP added a provision to

¹¹¹ “Gabriela Toledo” is a pseudonym. “Gabriela Toledo” in discussion with the author and “Bonifacio Toledo,” in discussion with the author, Utrecht, Netherlands, October 2016. See “On the Relation of Sexes,” February 22, 1974, Internal Paper from the Women’s Bureau. Also interesting is that Cindy Domingo remembers reading the paper in KDP. I found it in her papers at the University of Washington Special Collections.

¹¹² Cecilia Gonzalez is a pseudonym, as she asked me to protect her identity.

¹¹³ “Cecilia Gonzalez” in discussion with the author, Berkeley, CA, March 2016.

its “Rules and Guidelines on Marriage within the Party” in March 1998 “in accordance with a decision by the Central Committee’s 10th Plenum in 1992” (Communist 2014, 5). The amendment, featured in a 2014 issue of the CPP’s official newspaper *Ang Bayan*, called “On same-sex relationships” states:

The Party recognizes and respects the right of individual Party members to choose their gender. The basic principles and rules on marriage within the Party are applicable in their case. The party does not close its doors on gays, lesbians, bisexuals or transgenders who wish to join it. Whatever his or her gender preference (sic), anyone who is ready to embrace and advance Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and the constitution of the Communist Party of the Philippines can become a member.

The New People’s Army has a similar rule recognizing the right of Red fighters to choose their gender (Communist Party of the Philippines 2014, 5).

In other words, the CPP officially recognized and assured its LGBT comrades that “their rights and welfare will be protected” by the Party (Communist 2014, 6). A short article, “Gays and Lesbians: Two Interviews,” following an explanation of the amendment outlines the experiences of two gay comrades in the Party, who echo the Party’s assurance.

These policy articulations are the result of decades of “struggle” initiated by LGBT comrades in the CPP, which the author of “Gays and Lesbians in the Revolutionary Movement” recognizes.¹¹⁴ Anna Sanchez, one of the first lesbians to come out openly as a lesbian member of the CPP in the late 1980s or early 1990s, offers insight into this

¹¹⁴ The author states, “In the Philippines, progressive groups have long been waging struggles against discrimination targeting gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders. This struggle is not only fully supported by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) but is likewise being actively waged within its ranks” (2014, 5).

“struggle.”¹¹⁵

I was the first political person, meaning “Nat Dem” (member of the National Democratic Movement) who came out in the Philippine Daily Inquirer... I used to have discussion with gay groups. Out groups, out individuals, and we did these informal discussions even before about- even the gay pride parade was so male, they decide their theme, what made me come out? I don’t know. I just wanted to come out because I just wanted to break the silence that no one wants to talk about it...when we started organizing, found out that peasant women, labor women, organized, politicized- there were lesbians inside. So what were they talking about? Except that they had no voice. There’s so much stigma within the party and outside of the party... why did I come out? I just wanted out! Me, I couldn’t hold it anymore- like what the heck are you talking about? There are no lesbians in the world? In the Philippines? And there are no lesbians in the movement? That’s...not true!¹¹⁶

Sanchez’s recollection illustrates that necessary for the CPP’s policy changes were the efforts of lesbians in the Party who refused to be rendered invisible. Embedded in her words and tone are emotions and likely years of emotional work. Suggested also is that the official aims of the CPP may not always meet reality for LGBT comrades, who still “experience discrimination from time to time,” as Ka Leslie and Ka Kurt, featured in the CPP’s 2014 article, admit (Communist 2014, 6).

¹¹⁵ “Anna Sanchez” is a pseudonym, as this activist has requested that I protect her identity.

¹¹⁶ “Anna Sanchez” in discussion with the author. Manila, Philippines, July 2016.

Through the 1988 amendment, the CPP formally allowed marriage among gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender comrades” (Communist 2014, 6). It should be noted that their allowance of LGBT marriage occurred twenty-five years before the United States repealed the Defense of Marriage Act in 2013 and while gay marriage remains illegal in the Philippines.¹¹⁷ Even though it is not evident that there have been changes in the Party’s political framework beyond a politics of inclusion, these changes nonetheless show progress.

The AIDS Crisis: New Sexual Theorization in KDP/Line of March

By the late 1970s, KDP members remember feeling more publicly expressive about their sexuality. Bolstering their coming out processes was exposure to other gays in allied organizations, the growing prominence of the LGBT movement in response to the New Right, the influence of the Third World Women’s Alliance, and the popularity of gay and lesbian cultural workers in the Left, like Holly Near.¹¹⁸ But the most impactful event shaping KDP/LOM’s changes was the 1980s AIDS crisis.¹¹⁹ It hit the KDP personally, as several members had been diagnosed HIV positive. Thus, in the early 1980s, KDP members took its first steps to theorize gay and lesbian struggles through the Line of March (LOM). After many conversations, LOM formed an official Lesbian/Gay Commission in the mid-1980s.

In the late 1970s, the New Right launched a series of offensives on the LGBT community, which pushed gay and lesbian concerns to the center of national debate. The

¹¹⁷ See Communist Party of the Philippines’ June 21, 2014 *Ang Bayan* issue for its article, “Gays and Lesbians: Two Interviews.”

¹¹⁸ Ermena Vinluan in discussion with author, New York, NY, July 17, 2017.

¹¹⁹ Ethnic Studies scholar Gustavo Licón’s research has also established the AIDS crisis as a turning point in the Chicana/o Movement’s attention to LGBT concerns.

first began in 1977 with Christian singer Anita Bryant’s “Save Our Children” campaign. The campaign aimed to repeal a recently passed ordinance that protected against housing, employment, and public accommodation discrimination of LGBT people in Dade County, Florida. Despite mobilizations across the country, Bryant’s campaign succeeded and led to similar repeals in St. Paul, Wichita, and Eugene. Shortly after in 1978, California state senator John Briggs sponsored Proposition 6, an initiative that would require local school boards to fire or refuse to hire any teacher, teacher’s aide, counselor, or administrator known to have “engaged in public homosexual activity or homosexual conduct” that “renders the person unfit for service” (Hobson 2016, 88).¹²⁰ Teachers and staff could also be fired merely for voicing support for LGBT people. The Left’s multi-issue organizing helped to defeat Proposition 6. According to historian Emily Hobson, “Straight leftists who had previously dismissed gay and lesbian claims as “bourgeois” or insignificant were compelled to take another look. Straight liberals began to take more seriously the radical gay and lesbian arguments that sexual politics were interconnected with other structures of power” (2016, 88).

Amidst the New Right’s attack on gay rights, Melanie Santos recalls the AIDS crisis being the turning point for KDP/LOM’s thinking about homosexuality:

There was a time where in the movement, it was kind of like – well, your sexual orientation was your personal situation, but it’s fine, whatever it is, but we’re not discussing it. And then when the AIDS epidemic came up, the whole phenomena of

¹²⁰ “Activity” and “conduct” was defined as “advocating, soliciting, imposing, encouraging or promoting of private or public homosexual activity directed at, or likely to come to the attention of, schoolchildren and/or other employees.

we're not discussing it – was you had to discuss it. Because there's no way to comprehend the AIDS epidemic without an open discussion of homosexuality. So if you're in the Left and you're articulating an analysis of that and you fail to state that you're gay, then you're a coward.¹²¹

Indeed, the AIDS epidemic was transformative for reshaping the ways that activists were thinking about sexuality and positioning their sexual identities.

One of the first published writings that demonstrates Line of March's analytical shift was featured in the "Fan the Flames" section of the August 8, 1983 issue of Line of March's publication *Frontline* (Kaiser 1983, 15).¹²² Author Ellen Kaiser addressed "the 'ethics' of homosexuality" by responding to a reader who suggested that *Frontline* should defend gays and lesbians "on humane grounds without necessarily endorsing their practices." Kaiser responded:

This letter invites comment because its basic assumption- the rights of gay people should be defended on humanitarian grounds even though homosexuality is immoral and unethical- is widespread in U.S. left and liberal circles. *Frontline's* coverage of the lesbian/gay struggle, however, directly challenges this view. In our opinion, its fundamental logic is unscientific and erroneous, and the political consciousness to which it leads are qualitatively flawed. For this reason, we are taking up the ideological struggle posed by this letter, both to develop a perspective better able to guide the concrete fight for lesbian/gay rights and to bring the science of Marxism to

¹²¹ "Melanie Santos" in discussion with the author, Emeryville, CA, December 2015.

¹²² Sincere gratitude to Max Elbaum for leading me to this "needle in a haystack."

bear on one more area of human existence where prejudice and superstition presently hold sway (1983, 15).

Kaiser then attempted to debunk moralistic assumptions against homosexuality using Marxist history and science. She outlined homosexual oppression's intersection with the creation of private property and the monogamous family, and then historicized it via the economic systems of slave society, feudalism, and capitalism. Ultimately, Kaiser (and thus LOM) argued, "There is no rationale in either science or social reality to justify the suppression or condemnation of homosexual activity (Kaiser 1983, 15)." It was bold a step away from the representational politics that KDP previously held to one that seriously sought to understand homosexual oppression through the lenses of Marxism and anti-capitalism.

Given this context, it was relatively easy for Filipina immigrant Ia Rodriguez to come out as a lesbian around 1979 to KDP in Seattle. She recalls:

Well, it's not hard to come out within the organization because there were a lot of lesbians that were already out. Not many but maybe a couple. Plus there is a big groupings of Caucasian lesbians that are involved in CAMD (Coalition Against the Marcos Dictatorship) at that time.... we were really trying to form a broader coalition, not only of Filipinos but also Americans, and so that's how the movement came about here in Seattle...that's how I met my partner. She got involved with Philippine work, and her friends joined the support for the movement for Philippine

issues...¹²³

Rodriguez comments on the importance of the existence of other lesbians in her coming out. Since “a lot of lesbians...were already out,” it helped. Highlighted is the role of white lesbians in the survival of Filipina lesbians like Rodriguez and Cecilia Gonzalez. Unlike John Silva, it was a more difficult experience for Rodriguez to come out to her family in the Philippines than it was for her to reveal her sexuality in the KDP.

Nevertheless, people’s behaviors do not simply change overnight. Up until he left KDP in 1988, Gil Mangaoang chose to “sequester” his gay identity throughout his entire KDP career. Despite a more “open” organizational and societal atmosphere for gays and lesbians, he feared “rejection and didn’t want to be the cause of damaging the progress of the KDP’s political work in the Filipino community” (Cruz et al. 2017, 270-271). I surmise that it was easier for some immigrant members to come out in the United States compared to American born Filipina/os like Mangaoang. Immigrant members who migrated to the United States alone did not have to immediately contend with judgmental families on the other side of the world.

New Directions for Gay and Lesbian KDP Members

Some LGBT members left to seek emotional support they were unable to find within KDP. When I asked Sandy Aguila why she left KDP in the late 1970s, she responded:

I couldn’t make a living on the movement stuff, I had to work. So those were all important BASIC things, I had to go back to basics...You get burned out, you need a job, you need to make money, you need to – well, try this [her new same sex]

¹²³ Ia Rodriguez in discussion with the author, Seattle, WA, November 14, 2015.

relationship, see if that works out. So those are the basics.¹²⁴

LGBT members were not alone. Straight kasamas also made choices that momentarily centered their personal lives, which leaders also “criticized” as bourgeois individualism. In hindsight, Bruce Occena admits that the movement’s inattention to people’s psychological well-being was a mistake of the broader left.¹²⁵

Other LGBT people departed KDP and Line of March as Asian Pacific Islander American AIDS work became more central to their lives. When the CPP and KDP formally split in 1986, Ia’s re-evaluations about the Philippine Left led her to focus on helping people with AIDS, especially the Asian/Pacific Islander and Filipina/o community in Seattle. John Silva, Gil Mangaoang, and Jaime Geaga began their AIDS activism around the same time in 1985. For Mangaoang, the fall of the Soviet Union combined with the loss of his political mentor, led to disillusionment and his eventual departure from KDP in 1988 (Cruz et al. 2017, 268, 110).¹²⁶

In 1982, Jaime Geaga left the KDP. Only two years later, he learned he was HIV-positive. After graduating from his physician’s assistant program, he became the physician’s assistant clinical coordinator for the UC Berkeley Epidemiology Study of HIV and AIDS and the clinic coordinator for the San Francisco Men’s Health Study around 1985. Both jobs fortuitously positioned him to be at the forefront of AIDS research and treatment. According

¹²⁴ “Sandy Aguila” in discussion with the author, Alameda, CA, December 2015.

¹²⁵ Bruce Occena in discussion with the author, Oakland, CA, December 19, 2015.

¹²⁶ Gil Mangaoang is currently writing a book on his family and life. After he left KDP in 1988, he moved to LA to be with his life partner, Juan Lombard. He graduated from Loyola Marymount University and continued his AIDS activism. In 2009, he retired, following complications with Kaposi’s sarcoma resulting from his exposure to HIV in 1989.

to Geaga, “At that time being HIV-positive was such a – like a death sentence...Doing this work really led me to be in the midst of the cutting edge research that was being done around HIV and AIDS.”¹²⁷ Geaga not only survived the AIDS crisis, but he became a stalwart in the gay community and AIDS movement.¹²⁸ Ultimately, Geaga’s career path, being gay, and the AIDS crisis all took him in a direction away from KDP. He recalls, “I think I felt living in San Francisco, being a part of the gay community, seeing these statistics, and having ties with the Filipino gay groups in San Francisco...I was the only one kind of...if I didn’t do anything, nothing would happen.”¹²⁹ AIDS activists like Geaga, Mangaoang, and Rodriguez used tools they learned in KDP to strategize in their future political work.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Jaime Geaga in discussion with the author, Los Angeles, CA, March 2, 2016.

¹²⁸ Geaga was frequently asked to do education work and be a guest speaker at events, as Filipina/os held the highest incidence HIV rates among Asian and Pacific Islander subgroups at the time. He and his friends formed the Gay Asian Pacific Alliance (GAPA) and its HIV Committee in 1986, the Filipino Task Force on AIDS in San Francisco in 1987 where he was executive director, and Tambayan, a prevention program targeted to Filipino gays to discuss safe sex and HIV. He also became a board member of the National Minority AIDS Council, which still exists today and earned his Masters in Public Health at UC Berkeley.

¹²⁹ Jaime Geaga in discussion with the author, Los Angeles, CA, March 2, 2016. Geaga left KDP on friendly terms and remained in contact with some KDP and LOM members. He moved back to LA in 1996 to mainly be with family, thinking he had only a few months to live. Due to the efficacy of combination HIV therapy (or HAART, highly active antiretroviral therapy), he survived. By 2001, he felt strong enough to attend culinary school and a 3-month internship in Paris. He and his partner Gary own and manage Sanborn House, a guesthouse in Silverlake, Los Angeles. Geaga continues to be politically active in different social justice issues as well as electoral politics (email correspondence with the author, April 2018).

¹³⁰ Ia Rodriguez worked for POCAN, People of Color Against AIDS Network, a Seattle-based non-profit, in the early 1990s.

Pathways for Future Movements

KDP was unique for its tolerance for gay, lesbian, and bisexual KDP members. While its starting point was imperfect, a reflection of the homophobic era that shaped it, this chapter demonstrates that it evolved. Its evolution was the product of the intersection between historical forces and the personal and political pursuits of everyday people. KDP's LGBT members pushed the boundaries of KDP and laid groundwork for the AIDS Movement. Their stories demonstrate the interconnectedness and flow of movements into new ones.

Decades before a unified undocumented movement would emerge in the 2000s, KDP was cognizant of the precarious position of its undocumented kasamas and actively supported them, gay and straight, knowing that their return to the Philippines could lead to their kasamas' persecution or murder in retaliation for their anti-Marcos organizing.¹³¹

An undocumented lesbian member in Seattle fondly remembered, "Makibaka! Huwag matakot!" (Struggle! Don't fear!) was the slogan then. Even without the green card, there's no fear! You become less fearful because you support a particular issue strongly. We

¹³¹ Two KDP members, Lillian Galedo and Cathi Tactaquin, became trailblazers in the immigrant rights movement, still active today. In 1986, Tactaquin became the Executive Director and co-founded the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR). Galedo, was executive director of Filipino Advocates for Justice (or FAJ, formerly Filipinos for Affirmative Action or FAA) from 1983 to 2017. According to Bill Tamayo, FAA board president from 1980 to 1987 and a civil rights lawyer, Galedo was the "consummate advocate for immigrant workers...I worked with her on the National Filipino Immigrant Rights Organization, the Bay Area Committee Against Simpson Mazzoli and the Committee to Defend Immigrant and Refugee Rights. We wanted to stop the discriminatory employer sanctions proposals and ensure that the amnesty program was fair. This was a period of immigration raids launched by the INS to get support for more interior enforcement and strike fear in immigrant communities. Lillian was part of the effort to stop the raids. The federal court later issued an injunction stopping the raids" (De Guzman 2017).

have a base of support here in Seattle.”¹³² Revealed in her words is evidence that today’s “undocuqueer” activists are not the first undocumented LGBT people in history to risk deportation by participating in actions against the state. In 1981, U.S. Congress introduced the Immigration Reform and Control Act, otherwise known as the Simpson-Mazzoli Act, which was eventually signed into law in 1986. The Act criminalized the hiring of immigrants without papers, increased visas for agricultural workers, and offered a pathway to citizenship to immigrants who entered the United States before January 1, 1982, depending on various stipulations.¹³³ Immigrant rights advocates, including those in KDP, said no to the bill, calling for an end to workplace and community raids against immigrant groups (Cicero 2004). Meanwhile, a series of FBI raids of the homes of anti-Marcos activists (including MFP members former Philippine Senator and MFP leader Raul Manglapus and Steve Psinakis) and discussions of a U.S.-Philippine extradition treaty in 1982 added to the tense climate for anti-Marcos activists without papers and raised questions about U.S. involvement in the Marcos regime. Still, LGBT anti-Marcos activists participated in demonstrations against the proposed treaty, raids, and Simpson-Mazzoli Act. Although undocumented LGBT anti-Marcos activists did not publicly express their undocumented statuses or make explicit connections between “coming out” and “coming out of the shadows” like their contemporary counterparts, the undocumented activist’s quote illustrates that they were similarly “undocumented and unafraid.”

¹³² Activist in discussion with the author, Seattle, WA, November 2015.

¹³³ Stipulations included a penalty of a fine, back taxes, admission of “guilt,” proof of innocence of crimes, and minimal knowledge about U.S. history, the government, and the English language. Some of my narrators, who were previously undocumented, benefited from this new policy.

These sala stories continue to reveal the importance of interpersonal relationships in the lives of the Filipina/o American anti-imperialist activists. LGBT KDP members' relationships with LGBT and straight ally kasamas were critical for their safety and survival in the face of homophobia, and for those undocumented, threats of deportation. Their navigations of these relationships required emotional work, mounting additional stress atop the pressures of political work. Some members faced the possibility of death after being diagnosed HIV positive, while all members experienced the fears and/or realities of losing someone to AIDS. These activists' sala stories reveal complex awareness, agency, and courage in a politically tumultuous and emotionally demanding time.

Chapter 3: “Hindi Ka Na Nag-iisa:” The Role of Relationships in the Transnational Development of Filipina Feminist Thought, 1968-1986

Several years before Prosy Delacruz ignited her housework “movement” in the Los Angeles chapter of APC in Chapter 1 and while Jaime Geaga was about to transfer to the KDP’s Bay Area chapter to explore his sexuality, Delia Aguilar was in the middle of engaging her own feminist undertaking on the other side of the country. It was in the early 1980s that Aguilar remembers her husband Epifanio “Sonny” San Juan, Jr. having just attended a national meeting for the anti-Marcos movement in Chicago. Aguilar was a pioneer in Women’s Studies and had taught some of the first Women’s Studies courses in the country at Eastern Connecticut State College using her own materials from the “underground” U.S. women’s movement in the 1970s. For the decade that followed, Aguilar enhanced her thinking about feminism’s intersection with the Marxism she practiced. San Juan, Jr. promised Aguilar that he would raise the topic of women’s oppression at the Chicago meeting, which she was unable to attend. In our interview, she lamented:

He came back, and he told me that the women said that “*Hindi naman problema e.*”

In other words, the issue of women is not really that important. Oh my god, I was so frustrated...And that’s when I decided I would do something. Do some work on it...That’s when I pursued it. Because I was working full time during the day, so I could not really- not...that I could stand to sit in classes, so I went for a non-traditional Ph.D. But mainly I...really wanted to write about women in the Philippines and then I learned that...you could do your work and get a Ph.D. So that’s what I did. But the purpose was not to get a Ph.D. as such, it was to really just do an intervention [in the Filipino movement] because there was no- you know, I

was called individualist...it was not easy.¹³⁴

Aguilar already knew that her male comrades were uninterested in engaging in women's oppression. What especially frustrated her in this instance was that other women in her collective agreed there was "not really a problem" for them as women. A common argument among those in her collective was that Western feminism was a "bourgeois diversion." They said it was "individualistic" and had "no legitimacy."

According to Aguilar, research by mainstream Filipina/o sociologists in the Philippines purported that Filipina women were powerful because "women had the 'purse strings'" in the family.¹³⁵ In other words, they argued, the Filipino family was not patriarchal because women controlled household finances. Suspicious of these findings, Aguilar decided to pursue a non-traditional Ph.D. while working full-time. Her aim was to research the validity of these sociologists' arguments and produce theory that would provide feminism a material basis.¹³⁶ For her dissertation, she conducted a series of interviews with women in the Philippines, ranging across class from poor to rich. She "wanted to find out how they thought and felt about their roles as women, about equality, their relationships with their husbands and children, and how they viewed themselves in the context of larger society" (1991, 1).

It was in the summer of 1984 that *Filipino Housewives Speak* (later published in 1991) was born. With ethnographic accounts and oral histories to substantiate her argument,

¹³⁴ Delia Aguilar in discussion with the author and E. San Juan, Jr., Storrs, CT, July 6, 2015.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* See Aguilar, Delia D. 1989. "The Social Construction of the Filipino Woman," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 13, 527-551.

¹³⁶ By this time, Aguilar had already earned Masters degrees in English and Child Development and Family Relations.

Aguilar was able to confidently contend, “Rich or poor, the man’s overt authority dictates the relational patterns and social functions incumbent upon both sexes” (1991, 170).

Drawing attention to the reproductive labor that women perform in the home, Aguilar proved that traditional gender ideologies informed the lives of Filipina women across class categories. Still, the family was complicated, as Filipina women also found validation and protection in their families, which Aguilar argues, operate “as units rather than as conglomerates of individual interests” in the West. That the private space of the family served “as a major mechanism for the reproduction of social relations” and site for women’s validation and oppression reflected women’s pivotal role in “attaining the collective goals of gender, class, and national liberation” (1991, 176). Thus, Aguilar’s research both complemented and distinguished itself from the theoretical work of white Marxist feminists, as she offered “the unique and distinct character of women’s position” in the Philippines within different class contexts (1991, 10).

This chapter reveals the invisible intellectual and emotional work of Filipina women creating feminist theory, resisting sexism from men in their collectives, and navigating racism and cultural chauvinism from U.S. feminists in the 1970s and early 1980s while fighting against the Marcos dictatorship. While the U.S. women’s movement of the 1960s and 1970s undoubtedly shaped Filipinas’ consciousness, the emergence of Marxist feminist study groups, third world feminism, and developing theory by revolutionary women in the Philippines undergirded U.S.-based Filipina feminists’ theorizing. U.S.-based Filipinas like Delia Aguilar conducted research to prove their theories and obtained advanced degrees, published their ideas, and corresponded with female *kasamas* in the Philippines to develop a distinctly Filipino nationalist feminist thought. Others like Charito Planas pushed back on

sexism at Ugnayan meetings and initiated an informal women's caucus. Consistent among these interventions were trusted relationships with other Filipina and Third World women who supported these women's interventions, showing each of them: "hindi ka na nag-iisa," or "you are no longer alone." Thus, I show how anti-imperialist women made space for one another, navigating sexist society and male-dominated political organizations. These relationships were crucial for the sustenance and political development of women's organizational and theoretical work.

Delia D. Aguilar's Politicization

Delia Aguilar and her husband Epifanio San Juan, Jr. moved to the United States in 1960 so that San Juan, Jr. could pursue his English Doctorate degree at Harvard University. During those early years, Aguilar finished her Masters degree at Boston College in English and also gave birth to their first child. San Juan, Jr. admits that he was "not political" at the time, studying the literature of Irish poet and playwright Oscar Wilde, among others. After his graduation, the couple moved to California where San Juan, Jr. took a brief teaching position at UC Davis.

In 1966, the couple returned to the Philippines, where they intended to stay. In Manila, they witnessed the rising nationalist and anti-imperialist tide and early stages of a militant anti-Marcos movement. Aguilar gave birth to their second child in 1967, and a year later, the couple decided to move back to the United States to find work.

In their new home of Connecticut, protests against the Vietnam War and for civil rights were frequent in 1968. In their small town, they boycotted Gallo Wine, in support of the recently formed United Farm Workers (UFW) grape strike and boycott. Aguilar joked,

“Everybody and their cat was organizing at that time.”¹³⁷ It was only a matter of time before Aguilar and San Juan, Jr. would become involved too.

It was around Christmas 1968 when the couple attended a get-together in nearby New York City with other Filipina/o nationals who were concerned about Marcos’s impacts on the Philippines. The group’s “common bond” was that most of the attendees were graduates of or had attended the University of the Philippines (UP), including San Juan, Jr. and Aguilar who had met in UP’s Comparative Literature graduate program. Many were also “KM people.” Also known as Kabataang Makabayan, KM was a militant Marxist-Leninist-Maoist youth organization founded in the Philippines in 1964 and had been instrumental in the founding of the Communist Party of the Philippines. While some of the attendees, like Rodel Rodis, later moved to San Francisco to start the Kalayaan Collective, others, including San Juan, Jr. and Aguilar, remained in the New York area and organized the Support Committee for a Democratic Philippines (SCDP).

San Juan, Jr. and Aguilar displayed “autonomous” support for numerous anti-martial law groups, most frequently Friends of the Filipino People, over the years. They helped to arrange talks for guest speakers from the Philippines who shared their firsthand accounts of martial law. They leafleted information to passersby at New York City’s Port Authority, the United Nations, and other places frequented by Filipina/os and others who might take interest in the ongoing political situation in the Philippines. They joined KDP’s Christmas “caroling,” collecting donations for Filipina/o political prisoners from local homes while singing holiday songs. As time progressed, San Juan, Jr. and Aguilar, as professors at the University of Connecticut, Brooklyn College, and Rutgers University, assigned writing by

¹³⁷ Delia Aguilar in discussion with the author and E. San Juan, Jr., Storrs, CT, July 6, 2015.

revolutionary writers in Vietnam, Cuba, and other liberation struggles. They were also prolific and eloquent writers and speakers who frequently spoke at events against Marcos's human rights violations.

A Brief Overview of the Anti-Martial Law Movement's East Coast Contingent

Like the Kalayaan Collective on the West Coast, SCDP on the East Coast raised a nationalist critique of Marcos and U.S. economic and military domination of the Philippines pre-martial law (Gaerlan 2003). After Marcos declared martial law in 1972, leaders transformed New York's SCDP into a chapter of the National Coalition for the Restoration of Civil Liberties in the Philippines (NCRCLP, described in Chapter 1). When NCRCLP chapters dissolved and transitioned into KDP chapters in 1973, SCDP/NCRCLP NY followed suit and as KDP- New York, worked together with FFP and other allies.

In 1978, when the KDP began having problems with FFP and the CPP (explained in Chapters 1 and 2), a Chicago comrade (Edgar Leano from Chapter 4) contacted a kasama on the East Coast and a Montreal-based IAFP kasama to begin discussions for a new North American formation.¹³⁸ The leaders eventually named this group *Ugnayan Para sa Pambansang Demokrasya sa Pilipinas* (Alliance for Philippine National Democracy, Ugnayan for short).¹³⁹

Comprised of a combination of ex-members from KDP, FFP, and other allies, Ugnayan held three to four meetings per year. Ugnayan's participants hailed from places including Canada, Connecticut, California (including Enrique de la Cruz, discussed in

¹³⁸ "Edgar Leano" is a pseudonym, as he asked me to protect his identity. Edgar Leano, in discussion with author, July 20, 2014, Chicago, IL.

¹³⁹ "Dear Ugnayan delegate," July 20, 1981. From the files of Enrique de la Cruz.

Chapter 1), Washington D.C., and Illinois and were mainly Philippine nationals. The group loosely networked local groups and initiated conferences, educational discussions, and campaigns focused on human rights violations, U.S. intervention in the Philippines, and other initiatives. Ugnayan's contact with the ND movement in the Philippines stimulated that group to send representatives to the United States in 1983 (National Democratic Front-Philippines (US), 1991, 28-29). Ugnayan formed a North American committee that would communicate directly with the ND Movement and effectively replace the KDP from its previous role as the Philippine Left's "franchise." In 1986, the new North American committee would launch Alliance for Philippine Concerns (APC), an alliance of about twenty groups in support of the ND movement in twenty-five major cities in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

"The Woman Question," the Philippine Left, and the Anti-Martial Law Movement

From the North American side of the movement, Delia Aguilar played a crucial role in the development of intellectual thought that brought together class, gender, and Filipino national liberation. Needless to say, her comrades did not always value her intellectual labor. Aguilar recalls FFP being the only space in the anti-martial law movement that gave her a forum to speak on "women's issues" (1, 1993). That such spaces were few is not surprising. In the 1970s and 1980s, Marxists across races considered feminism a bourgeois enterprise. Much like the orthodox Marxist interpretation of homosexuality discussed in Chapter 2, many male comrades considered the "Woman Question," as this debate has been named, a "diversion" and even a "threat" to the movement.

In her introduction to *Filipino Housewives Speak*, Aguilar sums up the "theoretical

contention” between traditional Marxists and Marxist feminists:

The subject of debate is the economic base/superstructure metaphor in orthodox interpretations of Marxism which uphold the absolute priority of class struggle and in which a change in the former, being determinant, is believed to lead to change in the latter, being its mere reflex...In the Third World where, indeed, class antagonisms are indisputably acute, revolutionary movements of necessity pose strategies for action where economic issues assume ascendancy and are given the corresponding label “primary” while other struggles, the “superstructural” ones under which rubric women’s oppression, the family, ideology, and social relations are subsumed, acquire a “secondary” character.

She continues:

It is this economic reductionism and the resulting secondary status assigned to gender relations that Marxist feminists have directly confronted...the dissatisfaction with heretofore sacrosanct, canonized Marxist precepts led to the opening up of an ardent search for alternative theories that might more adequately reveal the systematic character of gender relations.” (1991, 5).

Like other Marxist women across races, Aguilar contended with the implausibility of a Marxism that ignores male supremacy, reproductive labor, and the sexual division of labor in the home. In other words, she questioned the orthodox view of many members of the Philippine Left that concluded that women’s equality was “secondary” in the anti-imperialist movement for national liberation. She includes a brief mention of Third World revolutionary

movements- not to differentiate them as more prone to orthodox interpretations of Marxism- but to contextualize their responses relevant to her specific project of legitimizing Filipina women's oppression.

The struggle to develop a specifically Filipina Marxist feminism was not easy. Filipina Marxists like Aguilar endured years of "bitter frustration" over Filipino comrades' refusal to consider gender relations as a legitimate site of struggle. In her 1989 essay, "Third World Revolution and First World Feminism: Toward a Dialogue," Aguilar recalls transnational exchanges with male comrades in the Philippines in the mid-1970s:

Dispatching letters documenting women's active involvement in the New People's Army (NPA, the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines) as proof of their deliverance from sexual oppression, [male] revolutionaries took a view of women's liberation that was class reductionist, mechanical, and instrumentalist. More personally annoying than their denial of sexism as a problem among Filipinos were innuendos about how prolonged stay in the United States, exacerbated by affliction with the individualist character of bourgeois feminism, results in estrangement from one's native culture, an ad hominem fallacy difficult to take kindly to" (340).

Aguilar recalls male comrades in the Philippines refusing to take seriously the Woman Question, citing women's involvement in the movement as proof that Aguilar's analysis was incorrect. It was true that the women in the Philippines had long participated in the revolution. Revolutionary women icons included Gabriela Silang, the Ilocana rebel general who led an uprising against Spain in the 18th century and more contemporary women like

Lorena Barros who founded MAKIBAKA (*Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan* or the Free Movement of New Women) in 1970 (Roces 2012, 24; Santos 2010, 114).¹⁴⁰

However, citing women's participation in the national liberation movement did not address Aguilar's concerns. She explains, "Feminism in revolutionary third world struggles was then anathema. It was considered bourgeois, individualist, and divisive. I understood well that MAKIBAKA...stood for the liberation of women, not feminism..." (Aguilar and Aguilar-San Juan 2005, 171). In *Revolutionizing Feminism*, Women's and Gender Studies scholar Anne Lacsamana likewise argues that "although radical in orientation, [MAKIBAKA's] members treated 'women's oppression' as merely a symptom of a class-based society" (2012, 41). To prove the point that MAKIBAKA's analysis was "symptomatic of the larger national democratic movement as a whole," Lacsamana cites Barros, MAKIBAKA's primary spokeswoman, who asserted:

The broad masses of the Filipino people must first be liberated before any sector, such as women, can be liberated...It is only by her full commitment in the struggle to liberate the broad masses of the Filipinos from foreign and feudal oppression, the struggle for national democracy that the Filipina can prove herself truly the equal of men (Angeles 1989, 153).

In other words, Barros believed that women should be equal participants in the revolutionary movement. She argued, "If an armed conflict does arise, we will fight alongside the men.

¹⁴⁰ One of MAKIBAKA's first activities was an all-women picket of the *Binibining Pilipinas* coronation night on April 18, 1970 (Santos 2010, 115). According to Aida Santos, the group "pointed out the four authorities from which women suffer- political clan, religious, and male- which were all seen as expressions of feudal-patriarchal ideology and related systems" (Santos 1984).

We should take up arms if necessary. We are working for a better society for men and women alike, so why should men always bear the brunt of struggle?” (in San Juan 1998, 161). Barros and many other women did exactly that. However, Barros was unable to exercise her revolutionary potential for much longer. Four years after MAKIBAKA was driven underground when the Marcos dictatorship declared martial law, government agents gunned down Barros during an encounter in 1976 (Santos 2010, 115).

Through her intellectual labor and theoretical interventions, Aguilar challenged the limitations of this traditional Marxist framework. In a 1981 essay, she reflected, “Just as some Marxist feminists err in giving primacy to ideology in order to call attention to the oppression of women, we have in the main paid little heed to the ideological constructs that both reflect and intensify the concrete conditions of women’s subjugation” (173). Aguilar’s research and essays were breakthroughs in the Woman Question debate, as they illustrated the impact of traditional gender ideologies on both public and private spheres. Aguilar fervently argued that “conventional gender relations” would not change with women’s participation in the movement alone.

Adding insult to injury, Aguilar’s male comrades blamed Aguilar’s critiques on her exposure to U.S. feminism, which they presumed was unavoidable given her “prolonged” residence in the United States. Their discrediting suggests that Philippines-based male revolutionaries were “universalizing” the concerns of U.S.-based women, much like the white U.S. feminists who equally irritated Aguilar. In response, Aguilar armed herself with theory to counter male chauvinist arrogance.

At an FFP annual conference in the United States in the 1980s, Aguilar publicly

addressed the Woman Question by emphasizing “the deficiency of the productivist orientation that underpins orthodox Marxism,” utilizing Western Marxist feminist critiques (1995, 1). “I used Marxist feminism [like Sheila Rowbotham and Michele Barrett] and they weren’t reading it,” she remembered. In Aguilar’s words, the Filipino men, “known to toe the ‘ND’ mark,” “sat in a corner” and were “conspicuously silent” (1995, 1; 2018). Meanwhile she recalls Filipina women, Black and white women, and white men applauding enthusiastically.

Reflecting on her experiences with orthodox Marxist men in the Philippines in the 1970s and 1980s, longtime Philippines activist Aida F. Santos relates to Aguilar’s recollections.¹⁴¹ Santos notes that in the revolutionary movement in the Philippines, “there was ubiquitous silence on the more “private” and “intimate” concerns regarding sexual relations between women and men” (Santos 2010, 116). Both Aguilar’s and Santos’ recollections point to the vast refusal of Filipino male comrades on both sides of the Pacific to seriously engage in the Woman Question.

I share Aguilar’s recollections here with the purpose of revealing both Aguilar’s theoretical contributions and intellectual labor to the national liberation struggle and the interpersonal relationships that led Aguilar and other Filipina intellectuals to engage in intellectual and emotional work that pushed the boundaries of Filipino nationalist thought. Through her research and unapologetic essays, Aguilar fought back:

I was determined to engage the ‘woman question among my revolutionary comrades

¹⁴¹ Aguilar repeats the argument in her 2006 article, “Current Challenges to Feminism: Theory and Practice,” which Santos cites, revealing their ideological exchange.

because, by this point, the limitations of the national democratic platform's stance on women had become apparent to me. The fights I had were angry, fierce, and heated...I questioned what I saw then as the productivist orientation of the movement and its instrumental reckoning of women's participation in it. I wanted conventional gender relations addressed and changed. (Aguilar and Aguilar-San Juan 2005, 171-172).

Aguilar fiercely presented her theoretical ideas, then provocative, risking belittlement from her own comrades. As I described in the beginning of this chapter, she also enlisted her husband to push discussions about the Woman Question.

Finally, I recognize the vast emotional work that Aguilar took on to validate her ideas. In our interviews, she describes being "very frustrated, "at my wits end," but "happy fighting."¹⁴² She channeled her emotions into her research and study to prove her points, ultimately pushing Filipino feminist nationalist thought in new directions.

Because I interviewed Aguilar and San Juan, Jr. together, I took the opportunity to ask San Juan, Jr. what he did when his male comrades quietly sat in the corner of the room. He responded that he, by that time, possessed the background to understand what his wife was saying. Aguilar feistily retorted, "Of course he had to, what meals would he have?" All of us laughed. Through this quick jab, Aguilar reminded us both of the ubiquity of the sexual division of labor. Nonetheless, San Juan, Jr. responded, "She's the boss of the household," to which Aguilar did not reply.

¹⁴² Delia Aguilar in discussion with the author and E. San Juan, Jr., Storrs, CT, July 2015 and Washington D.C., January 3, 2018.

More Motivations for Third World Feminist Theorizations: U.S. Feminist Racism and Cultural Chauvinism

It was the resistance of U.S. white feminists that also partially motivated Aguilar to articulate a “Third World women’s perspective” and “nationalist feminism.”¹⁴³ In at least three published essays, Aguilar cites the racism implicit in theories and practices of “Western feminism” (1982, 1989, 1995). In “Third World Revolution and First World Feminism: Toward a Dialogue,” she reflects on her participation in a New England Marxist feminist study group in the early 1980s. She recalled:

Within the study group itself, the attempt to construct a theoretical position- or, as it were, to presuppose a unity among women- meant, in practice, the glossing over of neo-colonialism and the assertion of the lived experience of white professional women as universal (1989, 339).

According to Aguilar, the white activists in the group “universalized” their own experiences, ignoring the very real concerns of the handful of women of color present whose “identities and commitment” were “bound to the goal of national liberation,” specifically in Puerto Rico, Bangladesh, Iran, and the Philippines (Aguilar 1989, 339). The white women failed to see the racist neo-colonialism implicit in questions they raised in the group, such as, “Should U.S. Marxist-feminists [in other words, this group] support national liberation struggles that are patriarchal?” (Aguilar 1989, 339). The question presumed that one could easily reject a

¹⁴³ This is what Aguilar calls the type of feminism for which she advocates in her 1995 article, “Toward a Reinscription of Nationalist Feminism.”

patriarchal movement even while the movement was happening on “the land of her birth and home of her people” (Aguilar 1989, 339). That these white women were born and raised in the very country that had committed mass genocide and economically devastated these women’s homelands, leading to their migration, makes the query as ignorant as it is convenient for the United States’ continued imperial presence abroad for capital and military gain.

In the same essay, Aguilar offers anecdote after anecdote of U.S. feminist racism and “cultural chauvinism” under the guise of “international solidarity” that she witnessed firsthand: an exchange with a U.S.-based “Marxist-Humanist” newspaper columnist who critiqued the [Nicaraguan] Sandanista government’s sanction of “butcher abortions” as “a rollback of gains the women’s movement in the West had made in the past fifteen years;” a suggestion from a non-Asian panelist at a conference in Cambridge (about the concerns of Asian women in the United States and Southeast Asia) that Vietnamese women should read U.S. feminist Ann Oakley’s book on housework as a way for first world women to “return the favor” to Vietnamese women for inspiring the first world’s women’s movement; (1989, 342); and a conversation at a “Dilemmas of Development” conference at Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School in which “predominantly white, middle- to upper-middle class” women were invited to discuss uninterrupted “how those in the United States can empower ...third world women by convincing them of the value of their housework and by increasing their self-esteem” (1989, 342-343). Aguilar makes sure to state that in all of these exchanges of so-called solidarity, nobody mentioned the role of U.S. government policy or international lending agencies in disrupting the economic and political stability of these third world countries.

It is no wonder that Aguilar found a home in “third world feminism.” In fact, it was her participation in that early Marxist feminist study group that drove her to engage with other women of color members to think through the intersection of Marxism, feminism, and national liberation struggles:

...as heterogeneous as our experiences were, our discomfiture with a vocabulary thick with allusions to patriarchy and gender antagonisms but utterly deficient in the language we were more attuned to (capitalism, imperialism, national democracy, revolution, etc.) ineluctably drew us together to puzzle out among ourselves and question what, indeed, was Marxist about this particular group...we decided to get together for the purpose of exploring the implications of feminism for third world social movements in general and for women in particular (Aguilar 1989, 338-339).

The women of color contributed to the development of a new form of feminism: that of the Third World woman. They found that in order to pursue this “third world women’s perspective,” they needed the temporary “safety of a smaller group” (1989, 339).

I surmise that Aguilar’s political goals of broadening ally support pushed her to often find ways to explain to well-meaning white Americans- in her study groups, in the universities where she taught, at conferences she attended, and beyond- why their efforts of “international solidarity” were actually acts of cultural imperialism. Surely Aguilar’s frequent exposure to racism and cultural chauvinism as an immigrant woman of color required a great deal of emotional work to decide how to react, likely in some form or combination of “fight,” “flight” (in the case of the third world women’s study group for example), or “freeze.” The cultivation of these techniques is indeed a gendered form of

intellectual work requiring immense patience and endurance that is not inherent to women by any means but is socialized and expected of them.

“Hindi ka na nag-iisa:” Feminism, Women’s Movements, and the National Democratic Movement in the Philippines in the 1980s

I imagine that significant to Aguilar’s pursuit of a nationalist feminism was her continued contact with the Philippine Left via her autonomous participation with various anti-Marcos groups in the U.S. Bolstering her commitment to national democracy was the campaign to release her younger sister Mila, who the Philippine military arrested for her participation in the Communist underground from 1984 to 1986 (“Mila D. Aguilar”). Only one month earlier, Aguilar had traveled to Manila to conduct interviews for *Filipino Housewives Speak*. I surmise these events increased the frequency of Aguilar’s contact with comrades whose chauvinism and denial about the existence of women’s oppression further encouraged her to develop a Filipina nationalist feminism. Perhaps even more impactful was Aguilar’s contact with Filipina activists who were undergoing their own feminist consciousness development in the Philippines.

In 1981, Marcos ended martial law. Yet the continued suspension of habeas corpus for “crimes against security,” banning of strikes, authorization of military arrests of suspected rebels in Mindanao, and Marcos’s rewriting of the Constitution, granting him immunity from suits during his tenure, meant that its ending was only nominal (Tan 1981). It was the assassination of opposition leader Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino at the Manila Airport in 1983 that ultimately galvanized the middle class to join the radical left in both the United

States and in the Philippines, leading to a surge in protest.¹⁴⁴ Because martial law had previously declared Philippines-based progressive organizations illegal and forced them underground, “legal” women’s and feminist organizations had to be built (Enrile and Levid 2009, 95). By the time Aguilar arrived in the Philippines to conduct her interviews in the summer of 1984, several women’s organizations with feminist orientations had formed.

Among the first was KALAYAAN (*Katipunan ng Kababaihan Para sa Kalayaan* or Organization of Women For Freedom, a different organization than the Kalayaan Collective in California’s Bay Area). Founded in December of 1983 by women cadres in the Communist Party of the Philippines, it tackled traditionally taboo topics like abortion, rape, and domestic violence (Roces 2012, 7). Leonora Angeles’ masters thesis on the history of the woman question in the Philippines identified KALAYAAN and another group PILIPINA, formed in 1981 by “left-leaning activists, including a feminist Benedictine nun,” as pioneers of a revitalization of women’s activism in the 1980s (Roces 2012, 7). Angeles argues that KALAYAAN and PILIPINA were among the first groups in the nation to apply an explicitly feminist analytic to their activism at a time when the word “feminist” was stigmatized for its association with Western feminism (1989, 183-185). Indeed it was Aida Santos, one of the founders of KALAYAAN, who Aguilar said urged her to start using the word “feminist” when she was too afraid to do so in her U.S.-based groups. Meanwhile, three months later in March of 1984, GABRIELA (General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action) was founded. Formed as an umbrella group, GABRIELA served to coordinate the newly formed women’s organizations

¹⁴⁴ Groups like the Ninoy Aquino Movement (NAM), Justice for Aquino, Justice for All (JAJA), and August Twenty One Movement (ATOM) formed, which consequently drew participants away from the MFP.

(GABRIELA 1985). I wondered, how did these Philippines-based groups grapple with the concept of feminism, and how did they navigate criticisms from the men in their collectives while maintaining unity against the Marcos regime and general public?

Answers laid tucked in one of the boxes of precious personal archival material entrusted to me by Aguilar and San Juan, Jr. It was there that I found a manila envelope labeled “Debate Exchange on Woman Question” with a packet of papers inside. Among the papers was a letter typed neatly on thin newsprint that I recognized as common in books published in the Philippines. The letter, dated June 18, 1984, was addressed to Aguilar and signed by someone named “Fe.”¹⁴⁵

Fe offered Aguilar a brief overview of the history of the Woman Question in the Philippines, citing work by Dee FERIA and Marra Pl. Lanot, whose work she said she would look up and send to Aguilar. Fe also cited ideas on “gender asymmetry,” which she notes were “taken from the Latin American women’s experience” during the previous decade. She referred to groups Kalayaan (not in capital letters), which launched six months prior, and PILIPINA, which she described as “a leading feminist group, [formed] years before Kalayaan.” She notes in a P.S. that PILIPINA is a member of GABRIELA, despite the fact that “some people have identified Pilipina as the Soc Dem’s women’s national org.” The “Soc Dems” or “Social Democrats” were another faction within the anti-Marcos movement, but to Fe, “this [was] not the issue at the moment.”

The primary focus of the letter was the Woman Question and Kalayaan:

¹⁴⁵ Fe. June 18, 1984. “Dear Delia.” From the files of Delia D. Aguilar and E. San Juan, Jr.

Kalayaan is only six months old and is still in the midst of a debate whether or not the Woman Question is a major or minor contradiction within the national struggle. Along with our male allies within and without the Movement, we have been trying to come out with a formulation that will not sound divisive, petty bourgeois and (female) chauvinistic. So far, no luck. The word, feminist, is still a drity [sic] word both to the left and the right. Yet, we won't settle for anything less. We are determined to liberate the term and situate it within the context of the present national struggle.¹⁴⁶

Several points emerge. One is that the women cadres in Kalayaan, like those in GABRIELA, were “struggling” with their male comrades around the Woman Question. Bearing the emotional and intellectual work inherent in “trying to come out with a formulation that will not sound divisive, petty bourgeois, and (female) chauvinistic” the women of Kalayaan insistently aimed to “liberate” the term “feminist” and integrate it within the Philippine liberation struggle. In stating, “So far, no luck,” she indicates that they are having just as hard a time with the male comrades in question as Delia. Is it even possible to not appear haughty when one is a woman challenging male positions of authority? The fact that they were trying to do so sounds exhausting but strategic. The women knew that the movement was in an advantageous position with newly galvanized support from the middle classes and did not want to jeopardize its gains by their “coming out” as feminists and/or appearing fractured. It might be perceived as undermining. Fe goes on:

Because it is such a controversial concept, we've asked permission from the people

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

in the Movement to let us work out the idea by ourselves first before identifying ourselves as M/F [Marxist Feminist] within the Movement. Wala naman silang objection [They don't really have an objection]. In a way, we're not that intolerant anymore with the subject and the man-woman relations within the struggle have been very much improved since the FQS [First Quarter Storm]. It's not fair to say that we have allowed the issue to lag behind our political consciousness. Many women kasamas have been consciously taking the initiative to have the Woman Question line up as a vital item in the agenda of NL [National Liberation], along with the other political, social and economic issues.

Here Fe reiterates the “dirtiness” of the word “feminism,” even when paired with Marxism. By asking permission from “the Movement” (who I assume are the male leaders of the party), the women of Kalayaan again show respect and foresight in their diplomacy. It is democratic courtesy within disagreement. That Fe also takes a moment to lift up the contributions of the women *and* men with whom they are struggling, is a gendered act of noble and patient qualities. All of these actions by the women to support the “evolution of character of male comrades,” as Prosy Abarquez Delacruz in Chapter 1 calls it, are intellectual and emotional work.

While the entire letter is overall fascinating, I wish to highlight Fe's last words: “When you come this July, you'll see, hindi ka na nag-iisa [You are no longer alone]. Our only child, Tagumpay, is only six and is in Prep. He wants to thank you and Sonny for the books. Warmest regards, Fe.” In 2018 it is difficult to imagine a movement without the Internet, particularly Facebook. That in 1984, Aguilar, living in Connecticut, has been able

to commiserate with a woman comrade living in Luzon, on the other side of the world, is impressive. While the politically sensitive information Fe shares reveals their bond, her succinct and powerful, “Hindi ka na nag-iisa,” validates Aguilar’s struggles in her insistence that Delia is no longer alone. That she says “Hindi ka na nag-iisa” rather than “Hindi ka nag-issa” (you are not alone) also suggests that Delia had been engaging in conflict with her male comrades without support from her Filipina comrades. Fe thanks Aguilar and San Juan, Jr. for books they presumably have given to Fe’s six-year-old child Tagumpay, whose name means “success” in Filipino, indicative of the political time. This warm and personal closure leads me to presume that their relationship can best be summed up as being based on being “kasamas,” the term itself infusing sentiments of family, friendship, and love and commonly used by anti-Marcos activists.

I assume that the sender of the letter is Fe Mangahas. Aguilar once included Mangahas as among the “best people” for me to talk to about feminism in the Philippines, where I conducted interviews in 2016. Mangahas’ name is also listed with Aida Santos and Ana Maria “Precious” Nemenzo as members of KALAYAAN who discussed the rationale behind the group’s formation in Roces’ book, *Women’s Movements and the Filipina* (2012, 7). Regardless of whether Mangahas was the sender of the letter, it is still unknown to me how Aguilar and “Fe” met or how much influence Aguilar had on her thoughts about feminism and vice versa. What is more evident is that their exchanges provided support encouraging them to continue their political work in solidarity.

I highlight Aguilar’s relationship with “Fe” and the emotional and intellectual bonding, support, and work reflected in their trans-Pacific correspondence as crucial for the

development of Filipina feminist ideologies. I surmise that Philippines-based Filipinas like Fe played an important role in affirming Aguilar, given how few Filipina women there were for Delia to share her thoughts in the United States. How many of us could benefit from someone saying, “Hindi ka na nag-iisa,” when everyone else keeps telling us we are wrong? The relationship between Aguilar and Fe is inspiring and instructive for all invested and interested in transnational movement building.

Back on the Other Side of the Pacific: Ugnayan’s Women Unite

While Aguilar was conducting research to prove her theories about the impact of traditional gender ideology on the private and public spheres, other women pushed back on intra-organizational sexism too. It was in the early 1980s, and Ugnayan was holding a meeting in Chicago. People had driven from Connecticut, Montreal, and elsewhere to attend it. A male leader recalls:

I was chairing the meeting. And then there were a series of speakers who were men. Because they prepared for it, they had something to say. [He laughs, remembering what happened next] I think Charito Planas said, “Wait a minute, the men already had their chance. *Babae naman*. What about the women?” Well I said, “Yeah. We’re inviting anyone to be able to contribute in the discussion. But the trouble is nobody was volunteering among the women.” But Charito said, “Whether they prepared or not, it’s their turn.” (laughs) I said, “I don’t think that’s right. I mean, we did not drive hundreds of miles just to listen to somebody who is not prepared...And then they said, “Well that is- that is...” What did they call it? (laughs) As if I am against women. “No!” I said. From the very beginning I opened the discussion by saying,

“Anyone who wants to discuss,” so it’s an open thing. But it so happened these women are the ones who said I said something. Anyway that was the time when there was still this problem, you know? I said, “You know what? My idea is that in the movement, we do not look at the sex of kasama, no? Whether it’s a man, woman, if he or she has something to contribute you have...” Because I chaired the meeting, I said, “There’s no conscious attempt to separate or to give preference to men. From the beginning I already said anybody who wants to say something.” But unfortunately (laughs) the people who volunteered are all male (laughs).¹⁴⁷

The male leader refers to Rosario “Charito” Planas, who was a longtime activist against the Marcos dictatorship, one of the members of Friends of the Filipino People, and attended Ugnayan meetings. A lawyer trained at the University of the Philippines, Planas questioned the legality of Marcos’ ratification of the 1973 Constitution after Marcos’s declaration of martial law via the Supreme Court case, *Planas vs. Comelec* (Bueza 2017).¹⁴⁸ She was arrested as a political prisoner from 1973 to 1978, and released for a medical procedure. Not long after, she fled the country for her safety and joined the anti-Marcos movement in the United States.

According to this male leader, Planas critiqued the men for dominating the organizational discussion space. In his recollection, the male leader is ambivalent about any wrongdoing on his part, stating that “anyone who wants to discuss” could do so and implying the women chose not to speak. Here he invokes a “lean in” type of feminism, in which women are held responsible for holding themselves back, shifting attention away

¹⁴⁷ “Sal David” in discussion with the author, January 2018, Washington D.C.

¹⁴⁸ Planas would later return to the Philippines after EDSA and be elected as Quezon City’s vice mayor from 1992 to 1995. She passed away in 2017.

from a larger patriarchal system and sexist culture that pre-empts them from reaching their own success.¹⁴⁹ In a way, it is similar to the rhetoric of citing participation of women revolutionaries in the movement as evidence of a restructuring of power. To the men, the fact that women were at the meeting was proof enough that men were not sexist, as there was no outright discrimination launched against them.

I asked the male leader what happened next, wondering if a fight precipitated between the men and women. He said, “Charito Planas said, ‘All right,’ or it was [someone else who said,] ‘Let’s go upstairs and have a caucus.’ They had [left] the men behind [and said], ‘Let’s go and discuss the problem.’” The fact that the women of Ugnayan initiated a women’s caucus demonstrates agreement among its women leaders that a problem indeed existed. This act in itself reflects a change in women’s consciousness from one in which women in FFP said “Hindi naman problema e” (There is not really a problem) just a couple of years prior. Moreover, the fact that they mobilized themselves collectively to address the problem is impressive and similar to the way that Kalayaan approached gender issues in their collective.

I asked other Ugnayan members, including women, if they remembered these events, and none could attest to them. Perhaps the people I asked were not present at the meeting. It is also possible that these events are just one example of a plethora of sexist interactions that women endure, and so this particular instance was not worth remembering for the women I asked.

That this male leader recalled these events from more than thirty years ago and volunteered them when he knew I was a Feminist Studies scholar is interesting nonetheless.

¹⁴⁹ My reference is to the bourgeois feminism that Sheryl Sandberg, CEO of Facebook, promotes in her 2013 book, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*.

That the events held importance in the male leader's mind and not in the memories of other women show that Planas's and the women's interventions were just as important for men's political development as they were for the women at that meeting.

I asked whether the male leader thought in hindsight that he was wrong and if so, what he would do differently if it happened today. He replied:

Well, I don't think at that time I consider myself wrong because...I made the introduction that anyone who wants to say something, please do. Well maybe I should have said (laughs)...okay the men had their say, let's hear from the women. But nobody volunteered (laughs). What can you do? I cannot force them to say something if they have nothing to...yeah at that time they were still not willing.¹⁵⁰

The male leader does not know what he would do differently. He is also uncertain that he could have changed the outcome. Indeed, it is a difficult question: how to restructure an organization to prevent de facto gender segregation and the domination of male voices. My point is that women should not be the only ones noticing this inequity and thinking about how to address it.

Several narrators who I asked to read drafts of this chapter questioned the inclusion of Charito Planas in this discussion, as she was not an anti-imperialist. Whether or not she was an anti-imperialist, the story is important, as it reveals one example of how women in Ugnayan, an organization with an anti-imperialist orientation, asserted their voices and made space for other women to be politically active.

The EDSA Revolution and New Directions for a Nationalist Feminism

As discussed in Chapter 1, Marcos called a snap presidential election in 1985 against

¹⁵⁰ "Sal David" in discussion with the author, January 2018, Washington D.C.

his opponent, Corazon “Cory” Aquino, the widow of Benigno Aquino. The election, postponed to February 1986, divided Filipina/o radicals on both sides of the Pacific. Once the election was suspected of fraudulence, the Filipina/o people marched in mass to EDSA (Epifanio Delos Santos Avenue), crowding the main thoroughfare for four days. Activists Annalisa Enrile and Jollene Levid remind us of the pivotal role of women in this moment, “Women ran the clandestine airwaves that kept confusion to a minimum and guided the people. It was women who negotiated with the soldiers not to roll out the tanks and women who stood in front of them when they eventually did” (2009, 96).¹⁵¹ The Reagan administration, in its quest to avoid an all-out confrontation between the CPP and the Marcos regime and maintain control of the Philippines, urged Marcos to step down from power. On February 25, 1986, it sent a helicopter to Malacañang Palace, flying the Marcos family into exile in Hawaii and formalizing its support for Aquino.

Scholars argue that Marcos’s ejection further pushed the development of feminism in the Philippines.¹⁵² In “Towards a Re-Inscription of Nationalist Feminism,” Aguilar refers to the post-Marcos period as a “flourishing of feminism” influenced by:

...the “democratic space” opened by Corazon Aquino’s restoration of civil liberties and re-establishment of Congress; the weakening of the left due to both tactical and strategic errors; changes in the global arena, particularly the collapse of the Soviet Union (1992, 4).

¹⁵¹ Enrile and Levid cite Mary John Mananzan. 1997. *Woman in Philippine History: The Woman Question in the Philippines*. Philippines: Institute of Women’s Studies; O. Mataro. 2000. Personal communication to Annalisa Enrile, Manila; Liza Masa. 2000. Personal communication to Annalisa Enrile, Manila.

¹⁵² See Roces 2012, 8; Aguilar 1992, 4.

Thus, the end of the Marcos era and the decline of the Philippine Left led to a paradox in terms of the women's movement. While it generated interest in women's studies, feminism, and women's roles in nation building, the integration of women in formal politics (e.g. KAIBA, the first women's party, was established in 1987) and the "NGOization" of the women's movement widened a gap between grassroots organizing, grant writing, and research, inviting new challenges. Meanwhile, KALAYAAAN continued to grow, an "experiment at broad coalition building," with three main criteria for membership: one had to be "anti-bases," "pro-choice," and "nonhomophobic" (Santos 2010, 122). The two latter criteria were ground-breaking at this time in the Philippines. In fact, Aida Santos, one of the founders of KALAYAAAN, was also one of the first lesbians to come out publicly in the movement. Aguilar returned to the Philippines from 1987 to 1988 and took direct part in growing conversations about feminism and national liberation under the Aquino administration.

One thing becomes clear after learning the stories of Aguilar, the women of KALAYAAAN, and Planas: the importance of relationships with other women in sustaining political work and pushing new ideas forward.¹⁵³ I imagine that the correspondence between Aguilar and Fe in 1984, a reflection of previous trusted interactions, led to future supportive and synergistic discussions while the landscape of feminism changed in the Philippines post-EDSA. I suspect that one reason Aguilar was able to keep "fighting" was because of her relationship with other Third World women in her Marxist study group and their validation

¹⁵³ I do not intend to valorize Aguilar or Planas, as there were other feminisms emerging at the same time, including the "seeds" planted for GabNet, the first women-led U.S. ND-solidarity formation explained briefly in Chapter 4. See Enrile and Levid 2009. These stories are just some of the histories that comprise the movement.

of one another. Further, the image of women walking out of the Chicago Ugnayan meeting together is powerful. If Planas had left the room alone, surely it would have left a different impression on the group. Perhaps it would have evoked similar feelings of isolation for Planas as it did for Aguilar when the women at the Chicago FFP meeting invalidated her concerns in the mid-1970s. Indeed, collective action bolsters individual strength.

For anti-Marcos activists in the United States, the end of Marcos's reign created new terrain for activists invested in the project of national democracy. Most of the American public, including many Filipina/o Americans, viewed President Corazon Aquino as a victory for the people and for women everywhere. But to anti-imperialist activists:

Aquino personified the elite class, coming from an affluent landowning family and educated in the United States...[who] portrayed herself as a proper, traditional housewife who had never worked for a living. This was not the symbol that would bring genuine liberation and reform to the country" (Enrile and Levid 2009, 96).

Filipina/o American anti-imperialists wondered how to continue to stir American support against U.S. intervention in the Philippines. In Chapter 4, I will discuss the work of Angela "Ging" Agustin-Mascarenas and the mothers of Pintig, who addressed this problem in creative ways.

Chapter 4: The Foremothers of CIRCA Pintig: The Emergence of an Intergenerational Diasporic Organizing Model, 1983-1992

About a decade after Delia Aguilar and E. San Juan, Jr. moved to Boston for the first time, Angela “Ging” Agustin (now Agustin-Mascarenas) was born in Quezon City in 1962. Three years later, Marcos was voted President of the Philippines. Agustin-Mascarenas’s father worked as a comptroller for one of the companies owned by Fernando Lopez, the Vice President of the Philippines, during Marcos’s first two terms until 1972. Upon declaring martial law, Marcos dismantled the government. In doing so, Marcos abolished the Vice Presidency and seized the Lopez family’s substantial holdings without compensation. These holdings included the Lopez’s newspaper *The Manila Chronicle* and several radio stations. The Lopez family’s resistance to the Marcoses illustrates the range of participants in the anti-Marcos movement, as even elite government officials like Lopez and professionals like Agustin-Mascarenas’s father joined the anti-Marcos opposition in the Philippines.

Agustin-Mascarenas was only 10-years old when Marcos declared martial law. She remembers those early years:

We couldn’t stay out late. There were always protest on the streets, and we were so scared because there were military checkpoints everywhere. We lived in Quezon City, and Malacanang, the [Presidential] palace was in Manila. And my parents worked in Manila...there were always protests, actions, and what fascinated me was

that there were performances on the streets as a form of protest.¹⁵⁴

Agustin-Mascarenas recalls being intrigued by the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA)'s political street theater performances at a young age. At that time, she was a student at Stella Maris, an "exclusive" Catholic school that was run by what Agustin-Mascarenas described as "very progressive" Franciscan nuns.¹⁵⁵

Agustin-Mascarenas explained to me the distribution of wealth in the Philippines and what it was like to grow up middle class:

My parents were professionals so we were – you know, in the Philippines you have the upper class and the middle class, and the poor, right? So you have a very, very big poor lower-class, and you have a tiny middle-class, and then you have the elite, which is your 1%. But this middle-class is not like in here [in the United States], which is big. This middle-class is about maybe 10 percent. If this is 1 percent, and your middle-class is like 10 to 20 percent, so that's, what 21 percent, so then 80 percent were poor. So we were in the 10 to 20 percent. So this is how we lived, and of course we lived a very sheltered life. Even though you're middle-class in the Philippines, you're very sheltered especially if you went to the exclusive schools. But the biggest eye-opener for me was my participation in PETA's summer workshop in 2014 and my life has changed since.

It was through PETA'S Teen Theater League's summer workshops that Agustin-Mascarenas began to interrogate her class privilege and relationship to capitalism as a middle-class teenager, learning about poverty and the history of the Philippines. PETA's integration in slum communities led her to learn about the conditions facing the poorest people and hear

¹⁵⁴ Angela Agustin-Mascarenas in discussion with the author, July 9, 2014, Chicago, IL.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

directly from them about their situation.

I started with PETA when I was 14 years old. And it had a very long-lasting impact on me the way I was introduced to my country and my history. And what we would do before we would make a performance is go to the slum areas in Tondo. You know, in the squatters' area, we would talk to the families and ask them how is life here. That was my first exposure to poverty. And my heart would be bleeding and my mind was just like so confused because my reality was so totally different from that reality.¹⁵⁶

Agustin-Mascarenas's involvement in PETA led her to want to leave school and work in the community full time. She went on:

At some point I didn't attend my classes anymore, so my parents were so scared that I wasn't going to finish. I was so idealistic then...when my eyes were open, how can I pretend to be blind? And not see these things when you see it all the time. So I committed to myself that I was going to do cultural organizing for full time – that was my full-time perspective. Back then I thought that I was only in school and was doing it for my parents. Because when I was in high school my parents already threatened that they would pull me out of PETA if I don't stay in school...and if my grades suffered. So I tried to study and keep my grades up at that time so that I could do this work.¹⁵⁷

Three years later, as a student at the University of the Philippines from 1979 to 1983, an older and braver Agustin-Mascarenas left school without telling her parents. She recalls

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

thinking, “What’s the point of going to school if you’re serving the establishment?”¹⁵⁸

Agustin-Mascarenas joined an alliance called Concerned Artists of the Philippines, which opposed the Marcos regime through cultural organizing and mass actions.

According to Masacarenas, her father was privy to knowledge about the country’s increasing political instability because of his relationship with former Vice President Fernando Lopez. Around 1976, Agustin-Mascarenas’s father left the Philippines and moved to Chicago, having been warned by Lopez about the country’s bleak future. At some point, Lopez suggested to Agustin-Mascarenas’s father to also move his children abroad, as the Hart-Cellars Immigration Act of 1965 had opened up Filipino immigration quotas to the United States. On August 21, 1983, with news cameras rolling, former Philippine Senator Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino was murdered at the Manila airport upon his return to the Philippines after galvanizing support for the opposition abroad. His death prompted a new wave of mass protest from the middle classes.

Aquino’s assassination sent an arrogant and deadly message to Marcos’s opponents. Thus it was unsurprising that when Agustin-Mascarenas’s parents learned about her involvement in the resistance, her father delivered her an ultimatum stating, “You either come to this country...or you could disown the family.”¹⁵⁹ It was an ultimatum much like the one that Prosy Abarquez Delacruz’s parents issued in Chapter 1. While parents worked to persuade their sons to leave the movement too, daughters of middle class families were especially subject to gendered ultimatums that required they choose between their families

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

and country.

Agustin-Mascarenas, while conflicted, made the difficult decision to move to the United States with her mother and two brothers, who her father had also petitioned. She reasoned, “But why would I disown my own family? They were also part of the movement [against Marcos]. I should not alienate my parents because I believe in something that was supposed to be just. How could I be unjust to my family- if anything I should make them be sympathetic to what I was doing.”¹⁶⁰ Agustin-Mascarenas’s words suggest that she was interested in a type of organizing in which alienation of one’s own family members would be antithetical to the movement.

This chapter considers how collectivizing biological families can forge new political paths in the U.S. Mid-West by focusing on the development of a grassroots organization called CIRCA Pintig, formed by Agustin-Mascarenas and others. CIRCA Pintig evolved out of anti-imperialist Filipina/o nationalist organizing in Chicago in the mid to late 1980s. The establishment of CIRCA Pintig’s “mother” organization, Pintig Cultural Group, offers a window for understanding how some Filipina/o activists engaged in the invisible work of navigating intersections between ideological and gender contradictions in their Filipino nationalist organization. Having been on the periphery of Filipino organizing for years, CIRCA Pintig foremothers Agustin-Mascarenas and others argued that cultural work should be central to organizing. As their changing social conditions, particularly motherhood, required them to make “practical” organizing choices, women leaders split from their nationalist affiliations and developed a transnational organization that served the needs of their new families and Chicago’s growing multiethnic immigrant community, while

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

expressing support for the Philippines. The chapter thus recognizes strong relationships, between kasamas and between children and their activist parents, as being pivotal for sustainable social movements.

CIRCA Pintig: A Transnational Organization

Pintig Cultural Group was informally founded in 1986 to educate, organize, and mobilize the Filipino immigrant community of Chicago through integrated theater arts workshops on college campuses and high school afterschool programs. Over the following three decades, Pintig evolved into an intergenerational community theater company and community education and outreach organization called CIRCA Pintig. Comprised of Pintig's former members, their children, and other newcomers, CIRCA Pintig still exists today.

Rather than perpetuate the mythology that movements materialize out of thin air, I emphasize that revolutionary practices in the Philippines and elsewhere informed Pintig and Filipina/o American anti-imperialism in the 1980s. Pintig, which means “pulse” in Tagalog, utilized the methods of PETA, the Philippine Educational Theater Association, located in the Philippines and was the cornerstone to Pintig's work.¹⁶¹

Informed by Brazilian director and writer Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed, the work of American Viola Spolin and German Brechtian theater, PETA's mission continues to be the “pursuit of excellent theater aesthetics and pedagogy towards the empowerment of people and society” (“PETA Mission” 2015). The mission statement of CIRCA Pintig, the current day form of Pintig comprised of Pintig's members and their children, mirrors that of PETA. According to CIRCA Pintig's website, it is dedicated to “the

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

development and popularization of community arts aesthetic and pedagogy that speak of the immigrant experience within the changing multicultural landscape of America and celebrate the histories and artistic legacies of America's diverse cultural terrain through participatory art creation" ("About CIRCA Pintig" 2014).

These similar mission statements offer insight into CIRCA Pintig as a transnational organization. While both organizations utilize theater of the oppressed pedagogy, their applications of it are unique based on shifting relations of power in each organization's locale. Aihwa Ong's description of transnationality is useful here. To Ong, transnationality "denot[es] both moving through space or across lines, as well as changing the nature of something" (2006, 4). Applying Ong's definition, we recognize that the overlapping yet distinct mission statements of PETA and CIRCA Pintig signify the transnational nature of diasporic anti-imperialism and cultural arts.

CIRCA Pintig's method of "collective historicizing" reflects its transnationality as well. In her dissertation, "Theater of Transgression: Staging Collective Identity and Action Among Immigrant Communities," Agustin-Mascarenas, who earned her Sociology doctorate degree from University of Illinois-Chicago in 2010, argues that the organization defines collective historicizing as "organizing principles and grassroots processes for collecting individual and community stories that focus on shared histories and struggles and emphasize creative collective engagement in confronting structures of oppression and working for social change" (2010). The practice of collective historicizing allows its members to draw connections among their personal memories and struggles as immigrants and Filipina/os' collective historical memories in relation to U.S. colonization and imperialism over time. This back-and-forth pivot across time, space, and memory has

offered novel opportunities for specifically local approaches that differ from but are inspired by those practiced in PETA.

An Overview of Chicago's Filipino American Anti-Imperialist Left, 1971-1986

According to Edgar Leano, who arrived in Chicago from the Philippines in 1971, a group of teachers and Ph.D. students from the University of Chicago formed the Philippine Study Group or PSG in the early 1970s. The PSG met regularly to read and discuss Philippine history.¹⁶² Its members were a mix of community members and academics, white Americans, and Philippine nationals. Eventually a small core of anti-imperialists emerged from the group and linked with San Francisco's radical Kalayaan Collective at the 1972 national conference discussed in Chapter 1. It was at this conference that participants established the National Committee for Restoration of Civil Liberties in the Philippines (NCRCLP) upon Marcos's declaration of martial law in 1972. When NCRCLP leaders voted to consolidate NCRCLP into KDP, "a national revolutionary organization that would bring together, train, and guide the most progressive and militant elements of the Filipino community," NCRCLP Chicago transitioned into KDP Chicago like most other cities in the country (Cruz et al. 2017, 9).

The KDP's dual line of supporting the Philippine National Democratic Movement and building U.S. socialism was nominal for the Chicago chapter. Most of its members were Philippine nationals who planned to return to the Philippines and thus expressed interest in organizing for the Philippines. According to Chicago KDP member Esther Simpson, only one KDP member expressed explicit support for KDP's dual line. This member was a Cook

¹⁶² "Edgar Leano" is a pseudonym, as he asked me to protect his identity. Edgar Leano, in discussion with author, July 2014, Chicago, IL.

County nurse who understood the relevance of organizing for local Filipina/o nurses.

Simpson, who was new to organizing, told me that at her political level at the time, she did not have the same deep ideological loyalties as some of the other Philippine nationals in the organization.¹⁶³ Thus, Simpson was agreeable to a dual line but was not yet ready to move against the grain.

It would not take long for the Chicago chapter to become frustrated with the KDP national leadership's desires for it to fulfill its U.S. socialist line. According to Leano, the Chicago chapter wrote a letter to the national KDP leadership saying that there should be two Filipino organizations: one socialist and one National Democratic.¹⁶⁴ The national leadership replied no. With the exception of one member, KDP Chicago "quit" the organization and did not attend the next KDP Congress (Espiritu 2009, 46).

The now ex-KDP members founded Chicago-based *Pilipinos Para sa Pambansang Demokrasya* (PPD) or Filipinos for National Democracy (FND) in 1975, prioritizing "homeland" solidarity. Its founding attracted the support of Filipina/o communists in Canada and on the East Coast, but its existence was short-lived. In 1976, KDP's national sent three people to Chicago to address the separation. For Leano, it was the beginning of strife in which the three people used isolation tactics of *tsismis* (in this case, gossip) to divide the KDP Chicago, now PPD/FND. Esther Simpson, on the other hand, remembers it differently, recalling several "DGs" or political discussion groups that helped her and others understand the relationship between the United States and the Philippines and what she

¹⁶³ Esther Simpson in discussion with the author, November 16, 2015, IL. Esther Simpson passed away in 2018.

¹⁶⁴ Edgar Leano, in discussion with author, July 2014, Chicago, IL.

called, “the character of the Filipino American community.”¹⁶⁵ As a result, on the core level, three people moved toward KDP’s orientation, while the other two Chicago leaders remained steadfast FND. Consequently, KDP was re-instated and FND “liquidated.”¹⁶⁶ Meanwhile, KDP’s members Walden Bello and Joel Rocamora in the Bay Area, observing tensions around KDP’s “orientation,” initiated the formation of the International Association of Filipino Patriots (IAFP). IAFP addressed the need for an explicitly ND oriented organization that worked under KDP’s Bay Area national leadership. IAFP had chapters in Vancouver (which Cecilia Gonzalez joined upon her arrival in Canada), Toronto, and Montreal.

Leano, feeling isolated and alienated from KDP, created a new national democratic solidarity group in 1978 called SAMAPI (*Samahang Makabayan Pilipino*). The organization held national meetings, conferences, educational sessions, and campaigns opposing Marcos’s human rights violations and U.S. intervention in the Philippines. Leano then contacted a kasama on the East coast and a kasama in Montreal, and they together formed *Ugnayan Para sa Pambansang Demokrasya sa Pilipinas* (Alliance for Philippine National Democracy). Otherwise known as Ugnayan, it was an alliance of Filipina/os from Canada, Connecticut, New York, California, Washington D.C., and Illinois and included ex-KDP members.

Around 1981 to 1982, SAMAPI changed names and became a new group called Philippine Forum. Leano states that the activists made a tactical decision to broaden support by building this new organization that was more “anti-interventionist and anti-fascist”

¹⁶⁵ Esther Simpson in discussion with the author, November 16, 2015, IL.

¹⁶⁶ “Edgar Leano,” in discussion with author, July 2014, Chicago, IL.

instead of being explicitly anti-imperialist. During her first years in Chicago, while Agustin-Mascarenas faced difficulties finding work and supporting her family in the U.S. and the Philippines, she joined Philippine Forum. She was then 24 years old. Youth members, including Agustin-Mascarenas, comprised the “cultural arm” of Philippine Forum.

After People Power, many organizations, including Philippine Forum, continued their activities. Former KDP, FFP, and APC member Barbara Gaerlan sums up the work of anti-martial law groups post-EDSA:

[They shifted] their focus to supporting the government in the Philippines either by raising money for development projects or by trying to extricate Marcos’s ill-gotten wealth from hiding places abroad to return it to the Philippines. Groups with an anti-imperialist orientation attempted to keep the pressure on Aquino to follow through on her campaign promises to implement agrarian land reform, to cancel the lease on the U.S. military bases in the Philippines, and to accommodate the demands of the National Democratic Front in shaping the post-Marcos society especially by reducing the size of the Philippine military. With the exception of the removal of the bases, none of these latter hopes came to pass, as the Aquino government increasingly took on the form of the old traditional democracy but with the unwillingness or inability to dismantle Marcos’s huge military apparatus. (2003, 23).

Philippine Forum joined APC after its launch in 1986 and continued its work. Yet, tensions within the group were high. That same year, Agustin-Mascarenas and her cultural worker kasamas left Philippine Forum/APC and informally formed Pintig Cultural Group, which would become a 501c3 five years later in 1991.

Motherhood and a Paradigm Split/Shift to the “Local”

During her early years of organizing with Philippine Forum, tensions between youth cultural workers and Philippine Forum’s leaders rose. These tensions led to Pintig’s break from Philippine Forum/APC’s (hereafter referred to as APC) in 1986. I noticed that Agustin-Mascarenas referred to the break as a “split,” while other Pintig members called it a “shift” or transition given the supportive and amicable relationship Pintig maintained with APC following its formation.¹⁶⁷ I surmise that Agustin-Mascaraenas’s word “split” connotes a more dramatic break, but was still amicable, unlike the “RA/RJ split” of 1992, which I will discuss in the Conclusion.¹⁶⁸ Thus, I refer to their separation from APC as a “split/shift.”

One central factor for the split/shift had to do with wanting organizational autonomy to develop an organization that matched its members’ social conditions. Agustin-Mascarenas differentiates Pintig’s vision from APC’s paradigm:

Pintig is homegrown because we were focusing on organizing here. In contrast, APC’s campaigns were dictated by the campaigns in the Philippines. Part of the distinction between Pintig and the other groups is that we were having children already and this is why we were saying, “This is our new home. Why aren't we focusing in here?”

Thus, Agustin-Mascarenas describes a turning point for Pintig’s splits/shift from APC as the moment when Pintig members began to have children.

¹⁶⁷ Angela Agustin-Mascarenas in discussion with the author, July 9, 2014, Chicago, IL; “Gus Alito” in discussion with the author, April 2015, Telephone. Gus Alito is a pseudonym.

¹⁶⁸ The “RA/RJ split” refers to the “re-affirm” and “rejection” positions of members of the Communist Party of the Philippines’ 1992 “rectification movement.” According to the CPP, this movement sought to “rectify...errors and shortcomings” particularly from 1984 to 1989 “in order to unite the Party and the people along the correct revolutionary line” (Sison, “The Critical and Creative Tasks” 1993).

In her early years living in the United States, Agustin-Mascarenas prioritized campaigns that supported the ND struggle in the Philippines because she thought she was returning to the Philippines. However, when Agustin-Mascarenas became pregnant with her first child, she realized her need to broaden her focus on her native homeland to one that also encompassed the struggles of being an immigrant in Chicago. In her perspective, it was a necessary shift given that Chicago would be home for her future children.

Like Agustin-Mascarenas, other anti-imperialist Filipina/o immigrant organizers, such as Ia Rodriguez in KDP in Chapter 2, altered their focus to a primarily U.S.-based one too. They faced the truth that they would no longer reside in the Philippines and wished to create an organization that addressed the local conditions that directly affected them and their growing families. Some activists married non-Filipina/os, which also heightened the appeal of a local and broad framework. In short, these activists believed that an organization that could connect them to Philippine history and culture while also addressing local community needs was more relevant to them than a framing that primarily centered the Philippine struggle.

Other anti-imperialist immigrant Filipina/os I interviewed agreed with Agustin-Mascarenas for its tactical benefits. Julio Ramos, a longtime organizer in the Philippine Left and in APC's Bay Area chapter, reflects:

I think it's a mistake to concentrate solely on Philippine support work while living in the U.S. or any other countries outside of the Philippines. As part of the change movement, we have to advocate and advance the interests of the sector we are working with. Whether it be service workers, students, women, etc., we can't simply transplant the style of organizing in the NatDem (National Democratic) Movement in

the Philippines. For example, [in the Philippines] if we organize the peasantry, we fully integrate with them. So we know their needs, their hopes, their aspirations and along the way, we do concrete interventions to advance their interests. That's the same way when we do organizing work in the U.S., Canada, Hong Kong, etc., we advance their sectoral interest and protect it. That's how we rally support for the NatDem movement in the Philippines.¹⁶⁹

When Ramos moved to the United States in 1980, he believed that organizations should orient themselves primarily toward the Philippines. However, the more years Ramos spent organizing in the United States, the more he understood the need to be “two-pronged” and “take care of” the sectors with whom one is working. In other words, a good organizer needs to work with the base to gain its support. Ramos added that this approach is also important for organizing non-Filipina/os, who provide a vital base of support in cities with modest Filipina/o populations. Was he affirming the principles of the “dual-line” approach, which the KDP had spearheaded in the 1970s (see Chapter 2)? In tactical approach, yes, but Ramos was quick to differentiate himself from KDP by maintaining his Marxist Leninist-Mao Tse Tung (ML-MTT) ideological commitment. In the late 1970s, the KDP grew “critical of some of Maoism’s simplistic interpretations of Marxism and nationalistic anti-Soviet revisionism,” which further strained its relationship with the CPP (Cruz et al., 2017, 17) (see Chapter 1). Thus, for activists like Ramos, KDP may have applied the correct tactic, but its ideological foundations were incorrect.

Resisting “Logics of Emergency” in Pursuit of a “Diasporic Anti-imperialist Feminism”

Interested in the fact that underlying Pintig’s split/shift from Philippine Forum and

¹⁶⁹ “Julio Ramos” is a pseudonym, as this activist asked me to protect his identity. “Julio Ramos” in discussion with the author, December 2015, Bay Area, CA.

APC was that some of its members were having children, I asked Agustin-Mascarenas, “Do you think your decision was gendered?” She answered:

It wasn't intentional in the gendered sense. We weren't doing it because we wanted to make a gendered statement. [Instead it was] that as mothers, this is what we're gonna do. We were making a statement as mothers for our children, but not because we were women trying to make a political statement...which was different with GABRIELA.¹⁷⁰ GABRIELA needed to make a separate organization so they could make a gendered statement. In APC, the gender issues were always being put on the backburner. There were pressing political issues, such as “imperialism,” you know, “bureaucrat capitalism,” you know, those were the buzzwords at that time.¹⁷¹

Agustin-Mascarenas explains that she and others helped form the GABRIELA Support Network, (which would later become GABnet and eventually its current formation, Af3irm) in 1989 to prioritize issues of gender that were not addressed in Filipino National Democratic support groups or other Filipina/o anti-imperialist organizations in the United States. Her observation that APC members considered imperialism and bureaucrat capitalism as more pressing than “gender” reveals what Gender Studies scholar Nadine Naber (2012) calls a “logic of emergency” that dominates masculinist nationalist organizing. Logics of emergency prioritize bodily harm, death, and killing over other forms of human dignity that do not appear in a “temporality of crisis” (2012, 201). Pintig, on the other hand, emerged from the “practical” struggles that its new mother members were having with its

¹⁷⁰ Described in Chapter 3, GABRIELA is a Philippines-based women's umbrella group of women's groups created in 1984 at the height of unrest against the Marcos dictatorship. See Enrile and Levid (2009) for more detail about the relationship between GABRIELA and GABnet.

¹⁷¹ Angela Agustin-Mascarenas in discussion with the author, July 9, 2014, Chicago, IL.

orientation. While Agustin-Mascarenas differentiates the reasons that she and other women created the GABRIELA Support Network from the reasons that she created and others formed CIRCA Pintig, the situation nonetheless illustrates the subtle ways that patriarchy shaped women activists' choices and ideologies as mothers living in the Filipino diaspora.

Chicana feminist theorist Gloria Anzaldúa's (1999) work on borderlands might help explicate the mothers' navigation of "borders" in making their choice to break from APC. Anzaldúa discusses how straddling two or more cultures can allow one to break paradigms. In *Borderlands*, she argues:

At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes... By creating a new mythos- that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the ways we behave- *la mestiza* creates a new consciousness...(1999, 100, 102).

Anzaldúa writes here about her developing consciousness as a lesbian Chicana woman living in the United States and navigating multiple identities, her indigenous past, colonized present, and desired future. Applying her framework, one recognizes that when the women of Pintig became mothers, they simultaneously "birthed" a new vision for organizing. Standing on the "shores" of their Filipina, American, women, Midwest, cultural worker, activist, nationalist, anti-imperialist, and new mother identities, their multiple vantage points offered them a revised perspective that their male and non-parent kasamas did not have at that time.

By breaking from APC, the mothers "ruptured the nationalist bubble" by fighting not

only for the homeland, but also here in this home” (in Naber 2012, 229). Borrowing from Naber, one might call this approach a “diasporic anti-imperialist feminism.” Naber defines this approach as one that:

...accounts for organizing beyond rigid nationalist boundaries and enhances the possibilities for coalition building...it differs from the conventional long-distance nationalist narratives of diaspora communities that focus on the decolonization of the homeland over the colonization here in the United States, and it also differs from progressive politics that fails to interrogate the interconnectedness between U.S.-state violence within and beyond the geographic boundaries of the United States (2012, 229-230).

While Naber’s description refers to the research she conducted in the diasporic Leftist Arab Movement in the Bay Area in the 1990s, it is surprisingly applicable for understanding the ways that Filipina activists were articulating themselves one decade earlier in Chicago.

That President Marcos was found liable for the 1981 murders of Gene Viernes and Silme Domingo two Filipino American labor activists and KDP members in Seattle (discussed in Chapter 2) in 1989 illustrates the interconnectedness between state violence in the United States and the Philippines for anti-imperialist Filipina/o American activists (Chew 2012). In other words, even though Filipina/o American activists are located in the United States, they are neither protected from U.S.-backed regimes in other countries like the Philippines, nor are they excluded from a long history of state violence against activists in the United States.¹⁷² Such is the experience of the transnational activist who must be

¹⁷² Many scholars and activists have written about the history of government surveillance in the United States and its dire impacts on the lives of political activists. For example, see Ransby (2003), Shakur (1987), Churchill and Vander Wall (1990), and Withey’s newly

cognizant of the risks of critiquing and publicly opposing the actions of multiple governments.

Naber's articulations of diasporic anti-imperialist feminism offer other important and new ways for conceptualizing transnational activism. For example, Naber defines diaspora "as a state of consciousness that comes with living 'here' and 'there' simultaneously" (2012, 172). This theorization resists assimilationist binaries that assume that migrants must choose between their native country and the country to which they migrated, or else they will live in a state of confusion. Building on Naber's work in diaspora studies, I argue that a bifurcation overly simplifies the fragmentation of identities that inevitably results from migration. These include familial responsibilities that tie many Filipina/o immigrants to the Philippines, the adoption of identities that accompany age and experience, and *changing* manifestations of U.S. expansion and militarism that shape the Philippines and Filipinos across the diaspora. The complexity of diasporic subjectivity allows us to better understand Pintig's mothers and the differential consciousness they likely deployed as they shaped their new organization (Sandoval 2000). Chicana/o Studies scholar Chela Sandoval defines differential consciousness as a continuous subversive and shifting concept of presence according to context. In other words, rather than assuming that migrants live in a state of confusion, I suggest that their use of differential consciousness offers enhanced clarity.

I add too that Pintig's mothers' navigations of multiple subjectivities and ultimate decision to split/shift from APC did not come without invisible emotional work. For years, the women pushed back on dominant forms of nationalism to argue for the centrality of

released book, *Summary Execution: The Seattle Assassinations of Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes* (2018). Activists state that the successful campaign of the Committee for Justice for Domingo and Viernes in indicting Marcos served as a precedent for future cases by U.S. citizens against dictators in other countries, such as Augusto Pinochet in Chile.

cultural work as political organizing method. I surmise that there was emotional work in releasing themselves from years of sacrifice to the National Democratic Movement. As women, they also risked being judged by a majority male organization as being divisive or lacking commitment.

Sometimes the costs of invisible work add up, leading to the point of departure. However, the story of Pintig reframes the idea that breaking from an organization is damaging. Rather this story shows that a split/shift can lead to a new formation, strengthening the larger movement body as a whole.

Ageism and the Devaluation of Cultural Work

Still curious about overt instances of patriarchy within APC, I pressed Agustin-Mascarenas about whether sexism existed for her in the movement at the time. She recalled:

At the time, it wasn't more sexism. It was more ageism then because we were the young members. And we felt that the youth were just being used as entertainment...[At events,] we thought that we were always just...intermission numbers...that cultural work wasn't considered a legitimate form of organizing. That's why we said, "No, we're not just comedy, and we're not just here to do intermission numbers. Because we have our own distinct work. And our own distinct form of organizing." That was the statement that we made. And that's why we formed Pintig. And of course I was a cultural organizer, and that's the only kind of organizing that I knew and it wasn't being utilized as such. You could talk and talk and talk and talk and have all the forums you like, but it's not reaching people-- it's not as effective. And so that was one of the struggles at the time: the cultural vs. the traditional political work. Because [the cultural work] was just as political. At that time we were young. So it wasn't because it was a

gendered statement, right? But come to think of it, we were the only organization that had gender issues as one of the primary issues we were tackling, so that was a gender statement.¹⁷³

Agustin-Mascarenas's statement serves as a reminder that "dominant movement logics consider art and culture secondary to 'real politics' that value 'politicized speech and direct confrontations with power structures'" (Naber 2012, 223). Pintig's placement during political events as merely "intermission numbers" signifies the devaluation of cultural work by APC's leaders. Compounding this devaluation was the devaluation of input from youth members by elder organizers. The youth members of Pintig felt doubly delegitimized as cultural workers and as young people. Yet, instead of internalizing this devaluation, Pintig members asserted their belief that cultural work was political work of the most important kind by breaking from APC. By prioritizing theater and the arts, Pintig members argued that political forums and other dominant movement methodologies centering politicized speech have their political limitations.

Pintig is not alone in recognizing the importance of cultural work for social change. American Studies scholar Lisa Lowe asserts that cultural work is significant for "multi-axial analyses of power, offering an alternative kind of political discourse for linking multiple oppressions" (1996, 157-158). One might consider Pintig's work and split from APC as its members' confrontation of multiple axes of power. For instance, it was not until she thought aloud about Pintig's process that Agustin-Mascarenas realized that Pintig did indeed undertake gender issues in its writing. Perhaps by allowing the lived experiences of its own members to drive its political work, Pintig inevitably tackled issues of gender. Years later as

¹⁷³ Angela Agustin-Mascarenas in discussion with the author, July 9, 2014, Chicago, IL.

an intergenerational organization, CIRCA Pintig makes it a priority to address ageism by ensuring that young people are equal members of the organization.

“Alamat”: The Creative Expression of an Evolving Intergenerational Organization

I cannot overstate Pintig’s uniqueness and possibilities as an intergenerational organization. Learning from their experiences of tokenization as youth in the early 1980s, Pintig intentionally integrated multiple generations into their productions with equal importance, as illustrated in Agustin-Mascarenas’s recollection of Pintig’s premiere production *Alamat* in 1993:

It’s a story of three generations of Filipinos. The grandfather was...from the Kalingas [an indigenous group in the Philippines]...included in the 1901 St. Louis exposition...they were taken by the U.S. and displayed as examples of barbaric culture...[The play] starts from the US. The grandchild was going back to bury his father who was a veteran of the...Fil-Am War. And they were going back to the Kalingas for the first time, right? I think to bury the grandfather. So that’s how he rediscovers his roots. And he finds out that...his father not only fought the war with the Americans and then you know how they were discriminated and did not get benefits until 60 years later, right? But the grandfather was used as an example of barbaric culture, was taken here, you know, and...so all of these things. I mean, tell me about a theater group that would present a story like that, and trace its roots, and how we’ve been oppressed throughout generations and that finding strength and knowing what our history and our roots are, and therefore, now what are you going to do as a Filipino American born and raised in this country having known the

struggles of your parents and your grandparents?¹⁷⁴

Agustin-Mascarenas's explanation of *Alamat* evokes the vibrancy of Pintig's work. With the youngest character in *Alamat* representing Pintig's founders, the story allows for the weaving in of their parents' and grandparents' experiences relative to U.S colonialism and imperialism. When Pintig members founded CIRCA (the Center for Immigrant Resources & Community Arts), the youth organization that many of Pintig's children comprised, they extended *Alamat* to include the new generation's experiences as well. Thus, multiple generations are expressed and valued in the production while also interacting with one another. Agustin-Mascarenas eloquently illustrates how Pintig's productions serve as catalysts for community involvement by encouraging those within it to ask questions and seek answers.

Pintig's evolution is an example of how the interstices of exile, motherhood, and activism can be a nexus for innovative possibility. American Studies scholar Alex Lubin's scholarship on the relationships between African American political thought and the Middle East articulates that "decolonial imaginaries" emerge from the "communities of shared fate" of colonized subjects (2014). Lubin draws on postcolonial theorist Edward Said's use of the "contrapuntal" to further explain. He argues, "Contrapuntal identities are produced in the collision of the exile's competing national attachments, between home and homelessness, thereby producing a "second sight" of consciousness (2014, 4). For Pintig, the result of these collisions was the creation and building of an autonomous organization that was neither bound by national identity, nor fixed by dominant political strategizing that sidelined creative articulations of resistance.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

To Pintig's mothers, creative articulations have been instrumental for reaching broad audiences. Agustin-Mascarenas explains:

What we did was expanded the audience base, right? Because when you're doing political work, it's kind of like limited because either people support you or people are totally against you, right? Because it's very political. What we did was, even though our topics were very, very political, we were able to reach broader audiences only because they were very creative methods. And of course the artistic was not only creative in methodology but it also speaks to the heart, not only to the mind. It's really a very multi-faceted way of talking about an issue or discussing an issue. So that's how we've seen our work- as primarily for consciousness-raising, for education, and really for mobilizing them in really creative ways...and now for the first time we're combining other Asian stories and Latino stories. So those are some of the ways by which we've made it our own in a sense.

In this quote, Agustin-Mascarenas articulates Pintig's awareness of political strategy in their break from APC. She acknowledges that political groups like APC can generate polarized responses from community members and that Pintig could "cast a wider net" without the stigma of being considered too militant. Over time, Pintig's work has expanded to encompass other immigrant communities beyond Filipina/os, furthering its transnational analysis and integrating inter-ethnic solidarities. By highlighting the intergenerational evolution of CIRCA Pintig, I recognize the mothers' invisible work in identifying collectivity of families as a site for political possibility.

Furthermore, I must note that CIRCA Pintig has drawn numerous gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans members since the 1990s. Yet many of their members' participation in

the political arts scene of the Philippines precedes their arrival. For example, Luis Pascasio, a gay Filipino man, migrated to the United States in 1994 and became an active member of Pintig Cultural Group.¹⁷⁵ In the Philippines, like Agustin-Mascarenas, he was a longtime member of PETA since the 1970s. It was in PETA where he met many gay people and accepted himself as a gay man. To Pascasio, arts groups like PETA and CIRCA Pintig encourage discussion of history and politics while also “embracing a diversity of voices” and the merging of personal identity in dramatic expression.¹⁷⁶ The arts’ “embrace” of diversity has likely led to the longtime participation of LGBT people as cultural workers in the Philippines and in the diaspora. The historical involvement of LGBT members in PETA and CIRCA Pintig reveals ways that nationalist movements have encouraged LGBT people to participate in politics. Their unique and innovative model is inspiring to anyone interested in long-term sustainable forms of activism.

An Amicable Break

Unlike many movement splits, the break between Pintig and APC was friendly according to Agustin-Mascarenas and APC member Gus Alito.¹⁷⁷ Agustin-Mascarenas explains:

Of course there’s a little tension in there because they’re saying, ‘Oh, you know, we should be united, and we should be doing things together,’ and of course, it wasn’t bad, you know. But of course, we were an important component of what work was being done here, and now we have to create our own programs. So in terms of

¹⁷⁵ Luis Pascasio in discussion with the author, May 6, 2018, Telephone.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ “Gus Alito” is a pseudonym, as Alito requested I protect his identity.

programming, we couldn't help out anymore in the same intensity as we were able to do before. But it worked very well because every time there was a protest action we would be doing the street performances. And not only us, but we would engage them to do [perform] with us.¹⁷⁸

Thus, even though there was obvious tension in the beginning, Pintig made a point to participate in APC's demonstrations when they were able and invite them to perform with them too. Furthermore, Pintig's ongoing involvement with APC and support for the National Democratic Movement of the Philippines was purposeful. Agustin-Mascarenas explains:

We remained supportive of each other...that was intentional on our part because we were the one that split...it was also intentional on our part to continue to support the Philippines and to continue to support the work of other groups doing support work because we can't focus on that anymore...so that was how we kind of minimized the struggle in a sense and make it amicable. We were saying, you know, we are limited, there's only a few of us, why would we be fighting with each other? It's just that we decided that we just have a different focus. And we have very distinct ways of organizing.¹⁷⁹

In short, with different goals, Pintig and APC were able to not only co-exist but also complement each other's work. I believe they were able to do so because they continued to share the same ideological principles. Just as important, they did not undermine each other's work in order to move forward.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

The Potentials of Intergenerational Organizing: Fifteen Years Later

I asked Agustin-Mascarenas about the significance of CIRCA Pintig and its influence on the children of its members. She chose to reflect on the events of September 11, 2001 and the community support that she received in raising her daughters, Kai-Kai and Gigi (both original members of CIRCA), as a single mother:

I remember when 9/11 happened. So I was at work, right? So one of my best friend's kids went to the same school as my kids...so we picked up the kids so we could explain what was going on instead of panic, right? So when I explained what was happening- and the kids were seeing all of these things- [my daughter] was very young then- And she found out that one of the kindergarten schools in the Southside was thrown a bomb because it was in a Muslim neighborhood...and she was so disturbed and was like, "Why would they hurt the children, mommy? Why would these people hate the U.S.? Why would they hate us?" I said, "It's because we've done terrible things, right?" And [my daughter] knew what these terrible things were. And I said, "But, please do not discuss this with your other classmates because they may not understand." So [she] said, "Why can't we talk to them about it? Don't you think that they should know?" and I said "No, because they may not understand because their parents might not know how to explain it to them." So that's the kind of experience our kids grew up in, and it's the community support that allowed us to do that. I mean, can you imagine if I didn't have a community that would allow me to explain this to our children growing up! So, I could imagine all the questions....like I said, I cannot do it by myself- I can do it because I have community support. Of course I get so emotional about these things because I always think of my parents and what my

parents had to go through not knowing what I was doing, you know, and so they're gone now...I think my kids didn't understand in the beginning. Oh my god. When my kids were very young- they would say, "Why are you always in meetings, mommy?" you know, they resented the fact I was absent. And it was so hard to explain, you know, "Because we need to do this work," And they would say, "Mom you just missed my parent teacher meeting" because I was in another meeting. So I would ask my best friend to come for the both of us because she understood what I was doing. She would take the report cards for both my kids and her kids. And so that was a community support that you get, and that was possible. So my kids didn't understand that in the beginning. It was only when they became part of [our organization that they understood]. It's like I said, our kids are growing up. I think it's about time that we kind of introduce them to this process otherwise they will resent us as absentee parents.

Agustin-Mascarenas's story illustrates the power of collectivizing families. By juxtaposing the example of Agustin-Mascarenas's best friend picking up her child's report card with their experience on the morning of September 11, 2001, Agustin-Mascarenas emphasizes the necessity of support among comrades in times *between* crises.

Through the years, CIRCA Pintig mothers and families have supported one another in a multitude of ways. For example, Agustin-Mascarenas adds that "members babysit other members' kids so that the other parents can work, attend meetings, perform, or even have 'time off' to see other plays." Additionally, when CIRCA Pintig mothers, "like Riza, Ressie, or Christy" gave birth to their first babies and came home from the hospital, the other mothers, Divine and Ginger, called other CIRCA Pintig members to take turns cooking or

preparing meals. The experienced mothers knew that it would be one less thing about which the new mothers would need to worry. Similarly, when some members deal with personal issues, “whether that's with their partners, or coming out or have health concerns” and “cannot discuss them with their own families, they run to other CIRCA Pintig Tita, Tito, Ate or Kuya to seek advise or concrete support.”¹⁸⁰

Here Agustin-Mascarenas cogently captures the value of relationships- between kasamas- like between her and her best friend- and between children and their activist parents. These experiences suggest that movements can benefit from strengthening personal-familial relationships that activists once thought were unnecessary. Agustin-Mascarenas also offers tangible examples of how community organizations might support single mother members. Such examples are invaluable.¹⁸¹

Equally important, Agustin-Mascarenas’s reflection shows how CIRCA Pintig resists the culture of separation between activist parents and their children that she experienced as a teenager fighting Marcos in the Philippines under a dictatorship in the late 1970s and early 1980s. I like this example because it illustrates a progression within the Filipina/o anti-imperialist left. It shows that people, organizations, and movements can change. Telling the story of CIRCA Pintig’s evolution reveals the invisible and emotional work of Agustin-Mascarenas and CIRA Pintig’s foremothers in creating these changes.

Moving Forward

Since APC’s folding in the 1990s, various incarnations of Filipino support groups for the National Democratic Movement have emerged in its place. Fourteen years after merging

¹⁸⁰ Angela Agustin-Mascarenas, e-mail message to author, June 10, 2018.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

with its youth organization CIRCA in 2006 and over twenty years since Pintig's split/shift from APC, CIRCA Pintig continues to write and produce its own theater productions, train teaching-artists, and empower the Chicago immigrant community. Unlike mainstream theater groups in which one playwright develops the script, calls for actors, and holds auditions, the playwrights of CIRCA Pintig are community members who act and produce the plays they write. Agustin-Mascarenas explains:

We don't follow the normal theater process...The same people who collect the stories are involved in various ways of organizing and are also the ones acting and putting the plays together. But it doesn't stop there- we have conversation and talkback after each performance. And then we use that really to talk to the community about issues and also to get them to reflect on their own issues. And so it's really deepening your sense of history, your sense of community involvement, your sense of identification with your community and getting them organized to do something about it.¹⁸²

In this way, CIRCA Pintig's productions are an avenue for community empowerment and engagement and spark future community involvement in social change.

Human rights activist Yuri Kochiyama once said, "Political philosophy is not something you obtain. It is something that grows over time throughout your life." The evolution of CIRCA Pintig is an example of the type of collective political philosophy that Yuri speaks about. Its ideological history reflects the changing identities of its members and their political imaginings over time as immigrants, youth, women, mothers, anti-imperialists, nationalists, cultural workers, and activists. While splits and merges can provoke immense heartache and disorientation, recovering the story of the evolution of CIRCA Pintig and the

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

self-determination of the mothers who shaped its beginnings teach that sometimes they can be necessary for a movement to grow.

Conclusion

By the time Pintig Cultural Group officially formalized as a 501c3 in 1991, groups like MFP and KDP had already dissolved. According to Barbara Gaerlan, APC and FFP were the largest anti-martial law movement organizations to experience the gratification of victory in their anti-bases campaign (2003). On September 16, 1991, the Philippine Senate rejected the ratification of a proposed treaty that would have extended the lease on U.S. military bases in the Philippines. This landmark decision led to their total removal one year later. Gaerlan reflects, “The removal of the bases marked a watershed in U.S.-Philippine relations, ending an important legacy of colonialism” (2003, 24). She suggests that the presence of several former exiled politicians who had participated in the U.S. anti-martial law movement, including Jovito Salonga, Heherson Alvar, Raul Manglapus, and possibly Corazon Aquino, in decision-making positions in the Philippine Senate, impacted the decision. It is possible that the Filipina/o anti-imperialist left, who pushed the importance of base removal on both sides of the Pacific, influenced them when they were in the United States.

In spite of this victory, the Filipina/o American anti-imperialist left experienced a series of disappointments from 1986 to 1992, linked to international events, which led to some organizations’ disillusionment and dissolution. Beginning in 1989, communist governments in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China and Vietnam either totally collapsed or re-oriented themselves away from socialism (Gaerlan 2003, 24). Groups like Line of March were deeply impacted by their collapse as well as their own internal fractures, raising questions about the revolutionary model they had practiced for almost two decades.

Meanwhile 1992 marked a severe division, commonly referred to as the “RA/RJ split,” within the Communist Party of the Philippines, which forced its broader National

Democratic Movement in the Philippines into different groups. In 1991, the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the CPP released a document entitled, “Re-Affirm the Basic Principles and Rectify Errors,” which outlined the “basic revolutionary principles” of the Party.¹⁸³ This document intended to address what some parts of the CPP considered a serious “state of disrepair” (Weekley 2001, 228).¹⁸⁴ Former CPP Central Committee Chairman Jose Maria Sison’s 1993 speech, “Critical and Creative Tasks” described the majority of errors occurring between 1984 and 1989. According to the “Re-Affirm” document, one “error” requiring reparations was:

...the erroneous line of thought in certain parts of our Party that victory can be achieved sooner without so much the necessity of painstaking mass work and solid organizing by rapidly forming companies and battalions in absolute concentration and combining their offensive actions with urban uprisings of the spontaneous masses, the urban mass organizations and the armed city partisans.

The CPP argued that such a move “against the necessity of developing the people’s army in stages by encircling the cities from the countryside” drew cadres and resources away from mass work and the countryside, concentrating them into “urban-based staff and staff of military units. Other mistakes included the “Boycott error of 1986,” and “proposals and attempts to erase the working class leadership and the leading role of the Party in the united front.”

Other factors led to the release of the “Re-Affirm” document, documented in Kathleen

¹⁸³ Folder 64, Antoinette Raquiza Collection on the Philippine Left, International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

¹⁸⁴ See Kathleen Weekley. 2001. “From Vanguard to Rearguard: The ‘Rectification’ Campaign.”

Weekley's *The Communist Party of the Philippines, 1968-1993* (2001). For example, a series of arrests of Central Committee members from late 1986 to 1990 and over a decade of Philippine state authorized infiltration in the form of "deep penetration agents" (DPAs) sowed suspicion and paranoia within the Party (Weekley 2001, 224, 102-103). One outcome, according to NDFP Chief Negotiator Luis Jalandoni, was "Kampanyang Ahos," a period in which "about 1,500 Party cadres and members, mass activists and allies were arbitrarily arrested, humiliated and tortured. Hundreds of them were murdered." (Escandor 2002). In an interview with journalist Juan Escandor in 2002, Jalandoni argues that some have:

...erroneously ascribed the setbacks being suffered then by the revolutionary movement in Mindanao to enemy infiltration rather than to the militarist line [that some Party members] were pursuing. Because of their purely militarist line, they did not pay attention to mass work, land reform, and other programs that benefit the masses such as literacy and numeracy, health and sanitation, promoting sideline occupations, etc. Because of this, they had alienated the masses and lost their support. Their putschist line in the cities led them to carry out indiscriminate killings in Davao City and other urban centers which gave the reactionaries the justification to form right-wing paramilitary groups such as the Alsa Masa. Because of the loss of mass support, the New People's Army was suffering many casualties in battles. The Alsa Masa was also able to wreak havoc on the mass organizations in the cities and in the countryside.

According to one CPP member:

We learned about [Kampanyang Ahos] much later. And I think that the movement the

organization did correctly in rectifying what happened. And the rectification was really a straightforward, sincere, honest actions. And decisions. That's why the people accepted the explanation. There were also some indemnification (money given to the family). All those who were victims were declared martyrs of the revolution. They were given tribute and honored. And the proof that the masses really have forgiven what happened...is the current success and the strength and growth of the revolutionary movement in Mindanao. *Kasi* (because) a movement like the revolutionary movement led by the party in the Philippines is a movement that really knows how to self-criticize and rectify because that's the only way you can really carry out the tasks that really coincides with the interests of the people in the revolution...you cannot simply let things pass, nothing will happen. It will just disintegrate... there were those who were given disciplinary action, there were those who received punishment other than disciplinary action (sentenced to death). There were those who have not yet been – you have not yet accounted what happened because they left the organization. And there were those who helped in the rectification. And really unite again the people and the New People's Army and the party and the organization. And that helped a lot and the movement was able to bounce back and grow stronger...but we made a very conscious decision to stop the killings as much as possible. Only in the worst case...because it will be just a vicious cycle of killing...But they believed they were saving the organization and the movement. So you have to put those in context. And there were some who were given demotion and suspension...

¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ “Gabriela Toledo” in discussion with the author and “Bonifacio Toledo,” Utrecht,

Thus, many Party members admit that these actions were serious strategic errors that they believe the CPP has since rectified. Still, many former members left the Party, as they could not fathom being a part of an organization in which one could authorize the killing of one's own in the form of justice.

Overall, these events and the CPP's rectification movement led members to decide whether they "reaffirmed" the tenets of the Party by agreeing with the "Reaffirm" document. Lengthy debates ensued. Those who chose to "reaffirm" were referred to as "RAs," while those who did not were labeled "RJs." Others refused to take a side (and thus were sometimes also subsequently labeled as RJs). Consequently, national democratic support groups in the U.S. dissolved and/or split in 1992. The split devastatingly broke apart families and friends, and over the past 25 years have led to further splits.

Thus, what became clear to me early on during my fieldwork was that wounds still exist from this time period. The wounds lay deeply on various levels: wounds from being a political prisoner who endured physical torture and psychological abuse from the military and police; wounds from state surveillance and the paranoia that accompanies it; wounds from interpersonal intra-organizational conflict, betrayal heightened when violence comes from your own kasamas; wounds re-opened forty years later when the son of the dictator is nearly voted the country's Vice President, and the dictator himself is buried in the *Libingan ng mga Bayani*, or the Heroes' Cemetery in Manila. While the threat of a new era of martial law looms heavy and killings of drug suspects have surpassed 12,000 since the end of 2017, the axiom "Time heals all wounds" is far from reality.¹⁸⁶

Netherlands, October 3, 2016.

¹⁸⁶ Human Rights Watch. 2018. World Report 2018.

These wounds have had impacts on the community level. In her 2003 overview of the anti-martial law movement, Gaerlan observes:

Most problematic for Filipino American empowerment have been the political and ideological rifts that the martial law period created in the Filipino American community. It would be many years before AMLM [anti-martial law movement] activists and former Marcos supporters would be able to work together on community issues (27).

As a member of the younger generation, I can attest that these political and ideological rifts have trickled down to impact new generations of organizers.

On Healing

In order to address the need for healing within the left, I worked with Ugnayan Youth For Justice and Social Change to organize and facilitate a two-part intergenerational healing and history workshop for the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS) Conference held in New York City in 2016. The first part of the workshop was called, “Reflect, Recover, Rise Up: Confronting Trauma in Our Movements as a Process Toward Community Healing in the Filipino American Left from the 1970’s to the Present.” The workshop description read:

In this workshop, community members from the past and present are invited to share their experiences of movement trauma. Recognizing community divisions, we highly encourage and welcome activists and organizers from across generations, political spectrums, and organizational affiliations to engage in this process. Workshop organizers envision this space as one that centers the power of storytelling to deeply listen and hear one another. We aim to create and hold space that honors people’s

vulnerability and honesty in sharing painful memories as part of breaking down oppressions and divisions; and recognizing it as crucial for the liberation of our movements, our people. *Tuloy po kayo... at ipagpatuloy po natin* (come on...and let's continue)!¹⁸⁷

The workshop involved writing, speaking in pairs and whole group discussion, somatic exercise, and music making. Thinking about how colonization has informed intergenerational trauma, we drew from a combination of Filipino indigenous and spiritual practices and peer counseling techniques. I asked Teresita Bautista (former KDP member) for suggestions, as I had learned about her knowledge of Filipina/o indigenous practices from our interview in 2016. She referred me to Titania Bucholdt, a Filipina American cultural worker of Ifugao lineage, who generously played the *kulintang*, a Filipina/o indigenous instrument, for us.¹⁸⁸ Nica Salcedo, one of the youth members of Ugnayan, offered a powerful poem.

While some seasoned activists expressed uncertainty about “healing,” perhaps questioning its connection to psychology and individualism, many others showed openness to the framework. It was the first time that some participants had talked about these memories in many years. Some people cried. An exchange of stories revealed that a young generation of activists too had experienced similar feelings of distrust and disorientation that the older activists felt. Could this represent the passing down of trauma from one activist generation to the next?

¹⁸⁷ This excerpt is from our workshop notes, but the description was listed in the FANHS program.

¹⁸⁸ Titania Bucholdt is the daughter of Thelma Bucholdt, a Filipina activist who was a legislator for the Alaska House of Representatives from 1974 to 1982.

During the second part, “Reflect, Recover, Rise Up: Transnational Community Organizing By Young Pin@ys from 1970 to the Present,” we invited 1-2 Filipina/o activists from each decade, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s, to share lessons from their work. Several speakers were people I had interviewed for my research, including Angela Agustin-Mascarenas, Ermena Vinluan, Estella Habal, and Melvin Lagasca. We were intentional about diversifying speakers with varying political, ideological, and organizational viewpoints and were cognizant about including representatives from organizations that had previously been in tension with each other. According to the workshop description:

Young Pin@ys have been and continue to be a powerful force in fighting for social change. We have led movements to challenge discrimination, racism, sexism, inequality, human rights violations, dictatorships, plunder and war. We have come together to build communities, organizations and alliances to transform society towards a vision of justice that every person and living thing deserves. But how many of us are connected to the stories, womxn, immigrants, US-born, LGBTQ, and young people survivors who have led these movements? Listen to first-hand testimonies from speakers representing various periods of progressive community organizing h@rstory. What victories and challenges have young people leading these movements faced? What lessons have we learned in the last 50 years? What remains to be done? How can we support young Pin@ys to lead strong movements for justice? Participants will be engaged in an interactive workshop as we reflect, recover and rise up to meet the call of our time!¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ This excerpt is from our workshop notes and Facebook invitation page.

Cita Brodsky generously prepared the food, while numerous other volunteers set up the space, cleaned facilitated small discussion groups, and cleaned up afterward.

Both workshops drew full rooms and reflected the collaborative preparation of Ana Liza Caballes, Cecilia Lim, Janry Manalang, Micaela Millan, Eliza Paran, Terrenze Rienton, Nica Salcedo, and myself. They were also unprecedented, as there have been few spaces that allow people to learn about the history of Filipina/o American organizing across organizational and ideological paradigms.

Following the workshops were a series of small group and one-on-one meetings to address the intra-organizational split experienced by my collective in 2013. These small groups were led by Cecilia Lim and Ana Liza Caballes, who were trained in facilitating peer counseling techniques. Organizations that had previously split began communicating again and are in the process of working toward further reconciliation and organizational allyship.

Takeaways from the Filipina/o American Transnational Anti-Imperialist Left, 1968-1992

The invisible work of Ester Soriano-Hewitt and Prosy Abarquez Delacruz in Los Angeles, Jaime Geaga, John Silva, Cecilia Gonzalez, Sandy Aguila, Ia Rodriguez, and other LGBT members of KDP, Delia Aguilar, the women of KALAYAAN, Angela “Ging” Agustin-Mascarenas, and the foremothers of CIRCA Pintig reveal moments when historical “accidents” merge with personal experiences and relationships to create the subjectivity required for individuals to push back collectively and intervene, further altering the course of history and compelling organizations to evolve.

Some of their invisible work, like dealing with the weight of the AIDS crisis (Chapter 2), reflects their marginality in society, adding another layer of stress and negotiation to their lives as political activists. Yet other forms of invisible work, like being

expected to clean bathrooms in the APC meeting house (Chapter 1), navigating internalized homophobia (Chapter 2), and dealing with macho male leaders who dismiss the intellectual contributions of female kasamas (Chapters 3 and 4), illustrate the internalization of social values- namely heteropatriarchy- attached to capitalism. While rendering invisible work legible is imperative to give credit and respect where it is due, this act is not enough. The breakthrough happens when we catalyze awareness to the point of restructuring social spaces so that invisible work does not fall on the shoulders of the same people, namely women of color and LGBT people of color; especially organizations that are designed to fight injustice. Indeed many forms of invisible work are necessary to move social movements forward.

The four chapters reveal other themes. One is the tension between local organizing in the United States and organizing in support of the Philippine movement. This was true in Pintig's fight for organizational autonomy from APC, the larger umbrella alliance created to prioritize solidarity for the National Democratic Front. This was also true in KDP's prolonged tension with the Communist Party of the Philippines, namely when it began to transfer members to Line of March. By the end of two decades of transnational organizing, anti-imperialist diasporic activists of various ideologies realized they could not mobilize support for the Philippines without addressing the immediate concerns of mass members living in the United States. In other words, local organizing is part and parcel to international solidarity organizing. The sala stories show that there is room for both types of organizing and that they have the potential to strengthen each other.

According to some, the Filipina/o American anti-imperialist left is divided because some organizers have prioritized local organizing over national democracy in the Philippines. I

think this perspective flattens the complexity of contradictions that are crucial for understanding transnational activism. Although Agustin-Mascarenas's perspective in Chapter 4 does not represent all Filipina/o American anti-imperialist mothers, many radical expectant mother organizers have grappled with similar concerns. I know at least one mother from my years of organizing who departed the movement because she did not feel supported and that her organization did not reflect her desires for her children. Thus, the interventions made by the foremothers of CIRCA Pintig are applicable today.

Another theme is the importance of multi-racial and multi-ethnic alliance building. In Chapter 1, we observe collaboration between former Black Panthers and a Filipino radical, the intentional multi-raciality of the Sunday Morning Group, and the multi-racial participation of the Philippine Support Committee. In Chapter 2, it is evident that KDP members' support of Cuban comrades was important in their politicization, while white lesbians were pivotal for the survival of lesbian Filipinas like Cecilia Gonzalez and Ia Rodriguez. In Chapter 3, we learn that without the other Third World women in Delia Aguilar's Marxist study group, Aguilar may not have been able to contribute to the creation of Third World feminist theory they jointly worked to produce. Finally, in Chapter 4, we observe that some of Pintig's mothers engaged in romantic relationships with non-Filipino men, leading the mothers to decide that they needed to create an organizing model that reflected their changing conditions and multi-racial families. The documentation of all of these instances of multi-racial alliance building, particularly Black-Filipina/o solidarities in Chapter 1, is inspiring for Filipina/os' role as what Alicia Garza would call "co-conspirators" of #blacklivesmatter, and vice versa. Stories documenting their shared

investment in each others' liberation are particularly crucial when stories of anti-Blackness in Asian Pacific Islander American communities drown out stories of solidarity.

The academy is a prominent figure in each chapter. While critical university studies scholars problematize the academy as a site of neoliberalism, these sala stories illustrate that until its abolition, it can be a productive site of politicization and dissent. For the Filipina/o anti-imperialist left, the university has been a catalyst for revolutionary possibilities outside of the academy. The first stirrings of an anti-Marcos movement in the United States occurred when University of the Philippines (UP) alumni converged at a party in New York City. In fact, the political ferment at UP-Diliman played a crucial role in politicizing Prosy Abarquez Delacruz and Angela "Ging" Agustin-Mascarenas. UP-Tarlac was also where Enrique de la Cruz politicized his students. Delia Aguilar and E. San Juan, Jr. both used the university as platforms for teaching their students revolutionary ideas, and the Philippine Study Group, where Filipina/o anti-imperialists first collaborated before Marcos declared martial law, sprung informally at University of Chicago. UC Berkeley exposed John Silva to feminist paradigms that taught him to view his sexuality as a political act that was inseparable from race and class. Delia Aguilar utilized the university system and a Ph.D. dissertation to confront an inadequate national liberation paradigm that neglected women's oppression. Meanwhile, Jaime Geaga's transformation as a leader in the AIDS Movement directly related to his return to school for his Physician's Assistant degree.

Another lesson revealed stems from the absence of sexuality in Chapters 1 and 3 and disability in most of the chapters. When I asked narrators about LGBT kasamas in NCRCLP, Ugnayan, and APC, most people replied that there were none. They themselves expressed surprise given the prevalence of gays and lesbians in the ND movement in the

Philippines. The absence of LGBT members in international solidarity groups implicates a hetero-nationalism persistent in the Filipina/o Left diaspora from 1968 to 1992.

Regarding issues of disability, its absence does not mean that concerns of illness and disability did not exist in the movement. For example, in Chapter 2, several KDP members referenced burnout and psychological wellbeing as being reasons for their departure.

Additionally, a Chicago-based activist in APC expressed guilt about leaving his organization due to family responsibilities that included caring for an autistic son.¹⁹⁰ Thus, my lack of discussion reflects both a major shortcoming of the Left and my own social justice “blind spot” when I began this project. My diagnosis with a chronic and potentially disabling autoimmune condition two years into my research led me to think about what activists call “disability justice.” However, it felt too late to incorporate it in my fieldwork. Activist Mia Mingus defines disability justice as “a multi-issue political understanding of disability and ableism, moving away from a rights based equality model and beyond just access, to a framework that centers justice and wholeness for all disabled people and communities.” Today disability justice collectives challenge attacks from the U.S. government and pharmaceutical industry, which together undermine and threaten working people’s access to adequate and affordable healthcare. These collectives also resist traditional activist culture that prioritizes marches and rallies (often inaccessible to those who cannot walk or stand for long periods of time and/or need to use the restroom) over other invisible forms of social justice work. Such work includes building inter-dependent communities of care, engaging in political education through performance, and theorizing connections between disability,

¹⁹⁰ “Gus Alito” is a pseudonym. “Gus Alito” in discussion with the author, April 2015, Telephone.

ableism, and capitalism. In short, more work should be done to reveal the intersections of disability and disabled people in the history of social movements.

Lastly, the theme of family, both “blood” and “chosen,” is consistent throughout the chapters. Chapter 1 reveals the location of the home as fertile ground for revolutionary thinking between roommates and romantic partners in SMG, while Chapter 2 illustrates the importance of “chosen family” for the lives of gays and lesbians in the KDP. Chapter 3 displays radical relationship building between kasamas (the term kasama evoking love and family) Aguilar and Fe, as well as the effort of E. San Juan, Jr. to raise the Woman Question for his wife, Aguilar, at the Chicago meeting when it was an unpopular opinion from both women and men. Finally, Chapter 4 shows the role of family in political movements, as Agustin-Mascarenas refused to “disown” her family and thus moved to the United States to continue her organizing there. She eventually created a new form of intergenerational organizing that addressed the gap between parents and children in the movement. The stories of CIRCA Pintig mothers reveal the power of collectivizing biological families and personal relationships. In these ways, these activists reinforce Mina Davis Caulfield’s argument that family systems have been central to the physical survival, cultural identity, and anti-imperialist struggles of people of color (1974).

Thinking Back and Moving Forward

It is important to acknowledge the transnational Filipina/o American anti-imperialist left for its role in pushing to change U.S. foreign policy, contributing to the fall of the Marcos regime, and removing U.S. military bases in the Philippines. I also recognize the invisible work of its women and LGBT activists who pushed their organizations forward and agree with Delia D. Aguilar who reminds, “I am certain that it was their [the women’s]

immersion in the movement that gave them the confidence to express dissent without feeling vulnerable to the facile charge of “divisiveness” (2005, 173). In other words, had it not been for strength gained by participating in the movement, women, and I would add LGBT, activists would not have pushed back on it.

The Filipina/o American anti-imperialist left today is equally devoted to articulating an anti-imperialist analysis of the United States’ relationship to the Philippines. It continues to exist in the same fierceness and conviction as its anti-Marcos predecessors. It is vital to draw out these sala stories, recognizing that “intersectional” approaches integrative of homosexuality (Chapter 2), “nationalist feminism” (Chapter 3), and organizations like CIRCA Pintig (Chapter 4) do not simply emerge from nowhere, but were born from women’s and LGBT interventions that catalyzed imaginative visions notwithstanding conflict and difficult decisions. Examining contradictions can offer tools to current-day organizers to approach contradictions with the insight of living archives who lived through comparable challenges.

I asked many of my narrators to read drafts of my chapters and offer feedback. Comments from John Silva (whose story about his experiences being gay in KDP I discuss in Chapter 2) were somber and pensive:

Reading our activist past is sobering. In the Philippines we are back to having authoritarian rule reign again. The AIDS count there is a catastrophe. It is as if our efforts didn’t seem to make a dent, or maybe society just goes through these swings and we are in dark times yet again, but for us, we will fight back in some

fashion. For me, greying and wanting peace in old age will only give so much. It's the young ones turn.¹⁹¹

Indeed, individual and organizational healing is only part of the healing process and temporary until systemic injustice ends. That many of my narrators requested anonymity reflects their fear of being targeted by the government in the Philippines and in the United States. Furthermore, according to the 2017 UNAIDS Report, the rate of HIV infection in the Philippines has become the highest in the Asia Pacific region, with 83 percent of new infections occurring among men who have sex with men and transgender women who have sex with men in 2016 (“Thousands,” 2018).

Still, young people have been heeding the call to be leaders of a new movement. High school and university students of the group “Block Marcos,” were active demonstrators who worked in solidarity with martial law survivors from the Marcos era to protest the burial of Ferdinand Marcos in the Libingan ng mga Bayani from 2016 to 2017 (Hincks 2016). Meanwhile, young people are using the #WalkOut PH hashtag to organize students from different universities to protest against Rodrigo Duterte’s human rights violations against the poor and freedom of the press. In North America, groups like Malaya and the Filipino American Human Rights Alliance have formed in solidarity and outrage. In unison, Filipina/s in the Philippines and in the diaspora today still chant, “Makibaka!” while their kasamas, some former leaders in the anti-Marcos movement respond, “Huwag matakot!” almost fifty years since they began using the phrase.

Within the Filipina/o anti-imperialist left, the promise of unity under the threat of a new dictator is on the horizon. I think of the moment at the end of our healing workshop

¹⁹¹ John Silva, e-mail message to author, April 17, 2018.

when KDP members conversed with National Democratic Movement veterans who had heard only negative things about the KDP for decades but had never met a KDP member. They were surprised to learn that American born KDP members knew the words to “*Bayan Ko*” (“My Country/Homeland”), which anti-Marcos activists in the Philippines frequently sang to express love for the Philippines in protest. During the American colonial period, the song represented opposition to the United States’ occupation of the Philippines. The Philippine Left revived it during the Marcos period, leading Marcos to ban public performances of it, which he considered seditious.

I began this dissertation with “Makibaka!” or “Struggle!” But it is in the spirit of the brief moment of connection I glimpsed when I saw KDP and ND activists, preceded by decades of organizational conflict, singing “Bayan Ko” together at the healing workshop, that I wish to end this dissertation with its lyrics. It is a reminder that embedded within struggle and militancy is love for one’s country and people. It is this kind of love that links people together in spite of past errors, “line” differences, and geographic distance from the Philippines. This love of country and people made its women and LGBT members fight to create new pathways for liberation inside and outside of their organizations while battling sexism, homophobia, and the AIDS epidemic. It is this love that makes me believe that new directions are waiting to be forged to bring true liberation for all people once and for all.

“Bayan Ko”

*Ang bayan kong Pilipinas,
lupain ng ginto’t bulaklak.
Pag-ibig ang sa kaniyang palad
nag-alay ng ganda’t dilág.
At sa kaniyang yumi at ganda,
dayuhan ay nahalina.
Bayan ko, binihag ka,
nasadlak sa dusa.*

*Ibon mang may layang lumipad,
kulungin mo at umiiyak!
Bayan pa kayáng sakdál dilág,
ang ‘di magnasang maka-alpas?
Pilipinas kong minumutyá,
pugad ng luhá ko’t dalita,
aking adhika:
makita kang sakdál laya!*

“My Country, My Homeland”

*Philippines, My Country, My homeland,
Gold and flowers in her heart abound,
Blessings on her fate did love bestow,
Sweet beauty's grace and splendor's glow.
How her charms so kind and tender
Drove the stranger to desire her;
Land of mine, in fetters kept,
You suffered as we wept.*

*Birds that freely claim the skies to fly
When imprisoned mourn, protest and cry!
How more deeply will a land most fair,
Yearn to break the chains of sad despair?
Philippines, my life's sole burning fire,
Cradle of my tears, my misery;
All that I desire:
To see you rise, forever free!*

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Appendix 1: A Brief History of Filipina/o Migration to the United States¹⁹²

Although Filipina/os had been in various parts of the Americas since 1587, U.S. colonization of the Philippines from 1901 to 1945 opened up the systematic arrival of Filipina/os to the United States for the first time in history. During this period, Filipina/os' status as "nationals" allowed them to immigrate to the United States, despite anti-immigrant legislation that prevented immigration from most of Asia.

Initially, students and agricultural workers comprised the first "wave" of Filipina/o migration to the United States. On August 26, 1903, the Philippine Commission, under Governor General William H. Taft, passed the Pensionado Act, which granted scholarships for Filipina/o students to study in U.S. universities. These students, called *pensionados* since they were scholars studying at the expense of the colonial government, were comprised of both men and women. Upon their return to the Philippines, pensionados were given promotions or better job opportunities within the colonial bureaucracy. While the government recruited pensionados from the elite classes in the early American colonial period, in its later years, one did not need to be wealthy to be a pensionado. While some pensionados stayed in the United States, most eventually returned to the Philippines.

Meanwhile, the Hawai'i Sugar Planters Association (HSPA) recruited Filipina/os from the Ilocos and Visayas regions as skilled laborers to work in Hawai'i canefields. These men, known as *sakadas*, first arrived in 1906, and by the 1930s, Filipina/os comprised the largest ethnic group in Hawai'i's sugar plantations. Being the lowest paid workers housed in the worst conditions, sakadas refused the abuse knowing the strength in their numbers. As

¹⁹² This section is adapted from a chapter I co-wrote with Teresa Hodges and Maharaj Desai for Lan Dong's anthology, *25 Events That Changed Asian American History*.

early as 1918, they organized for better treatment, and from 1924-1925, held strikes on multiple plantations on O'ahu, Kaua'i, Maui, and Hawai'i under the leadership of Pablo Manlapit and Carl Damaso.

From the late 1910s, through the 1920s and 1930s, the asparagus in California's Central Valley and salmon canneries in Alaska also targeted Filipina/os as a source of cheap labor, and many Filipina/os moved from Hawai'i to the mainland. Experiencing harsh living conditions, inadequate pay, and "divide-and-conquer" tactics by growers, these *Manongs* and *Manangs* (or older brothers/uncles and older sisters/aunts in Filipino), as they are affectionately called in public memory, collaborated to form interracial unions. The Manongs and Manangs militantly and successfully advocated for fairer wages and labor practices, just as they did in Hawai'i.

In 1934, the Tydings-McDuffie Act stated that the United States would grant full return of sovereignty and autonomy to the Philippines after a period of ten years during which the U.S. would "groom" the Philippines to set up infrastructure modeled after the United States. Immediately after the Tydings-McDuffie Act was passed, the U.S. Territory of the Philippines was renamed the U.S. Commonwealth of the Philippines. Because of the Tydings-McDuffie Act, Filipina/os went from being U.S. nationals to "aliens" ineligible for citizenship overnight, restricting Filipina/o migration to only 50 individuals per year. In 1935, the following year, Congress passed another act: The Philippine Repatriation Act. This legislation offered to pay for the return voyage of any Filipina/o wishing to go back to the Philippines if s/he signed a contract stating they would never return to the United States.

World War II pushed a second "wave" of Filipina/o migration to the United States. At the war's outbreak, the U.S. government barred Filipina/os from joining the armed

forces, as they were “aliens” according to the Tydings-McDuffie Act. However, on July 26, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt called into service all “organized military forces,” leading to the participation of more than 260,000 Filipina/os during World War II. An amendment to the Nationality Act of 1940 granted U.S. citizenship to almost 10,000 Filipina/os who joined the U.S. military during World War II, yet the Rescissions Act of 1946 disqualified them from receiving the same rights, privileges, and benefits as others who served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

In 1945, the War Brides Act passed, allowing spouses and children of U.S. military to immigrate to the United States regardless of quota restrictions of origin countries. As a result, many Filipina/o World War II veterans brought brides who they had met and married in the Philippines during and immediately after the war. Additionally, Filipinas/os were able to enter the U.S. to train as nurses and healthcare workers (Choy 2003). This pre-1965 wave of Filipina/o nurses experienced unfair labor practices and exploitation in hospitals just like the Manongs experienced in Hawai’i, California, and Alaska.

When the United States granted the Philippines independence in 1946, it did so with stipulations that favored U.S. military, business, and political interests. For example, the Bell Trade Act, also known as the Philippine Trade Act, was passed by U.S. Congress in 1946 and governed trade between the Philippines and its former colonizer. The act placed preferential tariffs on American goods imported to the Philippines, fixed the exchange rate between the U.S. dollar and Philippine peso, and allowed American citizens equal access to Philippine resources. It also solidified the neocolonial relationship between the United States and the Philippines in place today. Meanwhile, the devastation of World War II left Manila and many other places in the Philippines physically and economically devastated, and the

Philippines became responsible for repairing the damages of the war. While the Laurel Langley Agreement in 1955 revised the Bell Trade Act by making parity privileges reciprocal, abolishing the United States' authority to control the U.S. dollar-Philippine peso exchange rate, and extending the sugar quota, among other changes, the imbalance of power between the two countries remained both politically and economically.

The Lyndon B. Johnson administration passed the Hart-Cellers Immigration Act in 1965, partially in response to national controversy about the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, and to position itself in contrast to the Soviet Union. Yielding the third “wave” of Filipina/o migration, the Hart-Cellers Immigration Act created provisions for skilled workers, particularly in fields that were underemployed in the U.S. such as healthcare, engineering, science, and education, to immigrate. The act increased immigration quotas from Southern and Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa. It also replaced the national origins system with a “preference system” for determining visa eligibility. The act led to a wave of Filipina/o professionals arriving to the major cities in the United States, including those on the East Coast, drastically changing the class and geographic demographics of Filipina/os in the country. This shift in demographics created an urgent need to address the demands of new immigrants for equal access to education, workplaces, and housing.

In 1974, President Ferdinand Marcos formalized the Philippines' reliance on migration as a source of national revenue with Presidential Decree 442 (Choy 2003, 65). This new worker policy of export-oriented industrialization would dramatically shift the Philippines migration demographics. Marcos issued numerous labor codes, merged government agencies, pushed manufacturing export programs, and established Overseas Contract Worker (OCW) agreements with other nations to provide employment

opportunities for Filipinas/os that could not be found domestically. Unable to repay foreign debt and address rising unemployment, the Marcos administration was forced to seek relief by borrowing more money from the International Monetary Fund in the late 1970s, which only furthered the Philippines' economic crisis due to its imposition of structural adjustment programs (SAPs). Meanwhile, transnational corporations in first world nations like the United States began sending previously domestic jobs offshore, benefitting from SAPs and the creation of export processing zones, which exempt employers from complying with minimum wage requirements and other labor regulations. These developments would lead to the Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) phenomenon of today where at any given point of time, 10 percent of the Philippines' population is working abroad, typically as domestic and service workers, in order to survive and sustain the economy.

Appendix 2: Consent Form (Updated January 8, 2018)

Makibaka!: A Feminist Social History of the Transnational Filipina/o American Left in the United States from 1968 to 1992

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This purpose of this study is to gather information on the history of Filipina/o American activism particularly in the 1970s and 80s. To recover that history, I am using oral history interviews, archival materials, and secondary sources.

PROCEDURES: You are being asked to: (a) participate in oral history interview(s) with me; (b) have the interview(s) recorded by handwritten notes and/or audiotape; and (c) verify the accuracy of the written transcriptions of the interviews. In addition, you may be asked to: (a) provide me with archival materials from your personal collection; (b) provide photographs; (c) provide follow-up information in writing or by telephone; and/or (d) recommend others with whom the investigator can speak.

Each interview session will last between one to three hours, unless we agree to extend the interview session. It is anticipated that there will be one to two interview sessions. With your permission, I would like to audio record the interviews and take notes by hand. I will record the data under your name or under the pseudonym you choose. There will be no physiological manipulation or intervention.

RISKS: The potential risk to you is minimal. First, there is risk that the published materials may harm your personal reputation, professional status, and/or engender embarrassment when the material contains negative aspects of your activism or personal lives or interpretations with which you disagree. Second, topics discussed during the interviews such as the personal costs of political activism (e.g., strained relationships, death

of friends, incarceration of friends) may cause some psychological or emotional distress.

I will inform you if I plan to publish the material you discussed. I aim to publish both the strengths and weaknesses of the movement and the activists involved. I will make a concerted effort to allow you to review any of your quotes I wish to use in published writing or conference presentations.

I plan to identify you by name in any published works if possible. Doing so allows me to document the contributions of Filipina/Filipino American individuals, organizations, and movements to the making of Asian American and US history. The potential risk to you involves the publication of material about your political activities that may negatively affect your employment, legal, or personal status. The risk is greatest if you participated in illegal activity and choose to disclose this information to me. You have the right to choose the topics you are willing to discuss and can choose not to discuss it and/or withdraw any material at any time.

BENEFITS: This study may benefit you--and activist communities at large--through the documentation and dissemination of material about Filipina/Filipino American activism and about your own activist activities. By participating in the interviews, you may also gain insight into the significance of your political activism and/or insights into how your activism affected your family, friendships, etc. Having others read about their long-time political practice can be an affirming experience to those who have dedicated their lives to social justice work and whose activist work remains largely invisible. The research may benefit society and advance knowledge by producing one of the first comprehensive studies of the anti-imperialist Filipino Movement based in North America.

CONFIDENTIALITY: I will ask for your consent to identify you by name in the study

and in any future published work. In the case that you wish to remain anonymous, I will respect your request in all published works and in future conversations that I have with other movement activists. In addition, you will have the opportunity to review quotes and the context in which they are used in future published material. This risk is anticipated to be minimal because: (a) you can determine what information you choose to disclose to me and have the right to not disclose illegal activity or any other information; (b) you have the right to request that I not publish certain material that you disclose, and I will abide by this request; (c) you may already be known for your activism and may have published materials (e.g., newspaper articles, academic articles, interviews, documentaries, video or audio recordings of speeches) documenting your political activities and perspectives.

According to UCSB's child abuse policy, I am mandated to report knowledge of child abuse acquired during research.

Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, since research documents are not protected from subpoena. I will record all notes so as to protect your identity. The data (handwritten notes, audio files) will be stored in a locked suitcase, on a password-protected computer, and/or will be in my possession. The audio files and other material will be identified by your name or the pseudonym you choose. I will transcribe audio files using a word processing program in my possession. Audio files and transcriptions will not be shared with the public and will be saved for use in writing future publications.

COSTS/PAYMENT: There will be no payment for your participation in this study.

RIGHT TO REFUSE OR WITHDRAW: You may refuse to participate and still receive any benefits you would receive if you were not in the study. You may change your mind about being in the study and quit after the study has started.

QUESTIONS: If you have any questions about this research project or if you think you may have been injured as a result of your participation, please contact:

**** Karen B. Hanna, 609-432-8992, karenbhanna@umail.ucsb.edu****

or the Human Subjects Committee of UC Santa Barbara at hsc@research.ucsb.edu

****PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW WILL INDICATE THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY DESCRIBED ABOVE. YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP.**

Signature of Participant or Legal Representative: _____ Date: _____

Please initial on the lines below where appropriate:

___ I wish to remain anonymous in any future published materials. I have chosen a pseudonym to be used in my name's place.

___ I am comfortable with other Fil-Am Left movement activists knowing that I was interviewed for this study. I understand that the details of my interview will not be linked to my name to protect the confidentiality of our conversation.

___ I do not want my name shared with anyone as a participant of this study.