

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE TASK FORCE DETAINEES OF THE PHILIPPINES

Religious Opposition to the Marcos Dictatorship, 1972-1986¹

Mark John Sanchez
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
markjohnsanchez85@gmail.com

Abstract

As a representative of Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), Sr. Mariani Dimaranan traveled worldwide, working to highlight human rights injustice in the Philippines and to gather support for the efforts of her organization. TFDP's efforts to highlight political detention took place in the milieu of 1970s international human rights discourse. While the importance of Western Europe and the United States on this discourse is often highlighted, less attention is given to the work of grassroots activists in places such as the Philippines. This article highlights the navigation between local and international political issues within Philippine-based grassroots opposition to the Marcos dictatorship. In so doing, I add to the literature on international human rights as well as religious social movements in opposition to martial law.

Keywords

Human Rights, International Relations, Martial Law, Political Detention, Religion, Social Movements, Transnationalism

About the Author

Mark John Sanchez is a PhD candidate in History at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He is currently working on a dissertation that focuses on the transnational networks of anti-martial law activists. He was previously a Visiting Research Associate at the Institute of Philippine Culture in Ateneo de Manila University during the 2015-16 academic year.

Abbreviations

AMRSP - Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines

CBCP - Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines

CCHRP - Church Coalition on Human Rights in the Philippines

CNL - Christians for National Liberation

CPP/NPA/NDF - Communist Party of the Philippines / New People's Army / National Democratic Front

FFP - Friends of the Filipino People

FIND - Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance

FLAG - Free Legal Assistance Group

KAPATID - *Kapisanan para sa Pagpapalaya ng mga Bilanggong Pulitikal sa Pilipinas*

KDP - *Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino* (Union of Democratic Filipinos)

MARTYR - Mothers and Relatives Against Tyranny and Oppression

MSPC - Mindanao Sulu Pastoral Committee

NASSA- National Secretariat for Social Action

NOVIB - *Nederlandse Organisatie Voor Internationale Bijstand* (Dutch organization for international aid)

PAHRA - Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates

SELDA - Samahan ng Ex-detainees Laban sa Detensyon at Aresto

TFDP - Task Force Detainees of the Philippines

UCC - United Church of Christ

INTRODUCTION

Before the International Ecumenical Council of the Philippines in New York in 1983, Sr. Mariani Dimaranan of Task Force Detainees Philippines (TFDP) said the following:

The side we have taken has been imposed upon us by our histories. The people's cry calls us to shift sides — by words, by deeds, but especially by our presence and support in their struggle. Thank you for committing yourselves to a long-term solidarity. While we are grateful for outbursts of enthusiasm, especially in emergency situations, we need your partnership over a long period of time, especially after the first initial victories as the events in Nicaragua and Central America remind us. Thank you for bonding in ecumenism. In a special way, thank you for assuming responsibility for broadening and deepening international solidarity. (Bravo 73)²

Speaking to a crowd of religious leaders from all around the world, Sr. Mariani called for long-term solidarity, for continued international support of her organization and its cause. She connected the Philippine political situation with the overthrow of Somoza in Nicaragua, clearly hoping that Marcos would soon follow. In other speeches, Sr. Mariani referred to human rights within authoritarian states as a global problem that demanded international answers (Bravo 242). In so doing, Sr. Mariani linked the burgeoning human rights movement in the Philippines to the also growing international human rights discourse in the 1970s. Religious activists like Sr. Mariani led the human rights movement against Marcos within the Philippines. Though they drew heavily upon the growing attention to human rights in Western Europe and the United States, religious activists in the Philippines worked to build a human rights movement attuned to local considerations. To do so required these activists to comprehend and navigate international human rights concerns while maintaining a continuous focus on the needs and demands of the detainees with whom they organized.

The historiography of human rights has richly documented the formation of organizations and advocacy initiatives originating in the United States and Western Europe (Bradley; Buchanan; Moyn; Keys; Snyder). While some have argued that human rights was primarily Christian conservative in its origins (Moyn 215), others such as Vania Markarian note that in spaces such as Uruguay, human rights was the terrain of leftist exiles. Indeed, with the rise of liberation theology, which highlighted more progressive and radical sectors of the Catholic Church (Nadeau), scholars must consider *both* the religious and the radical political legacies within the human rights movement of the Philippines.

Timothy Nunan and Eyal Weizman have usefully drawn attention to the ways that human rights operate as a discourse and distribution of power, limiting the autonomy of local spaces and leaving them susceptible to multiple forms of violence (Nunan 2016; Weizman 2012). While these works have much broader applicability in that they raise attention to the dangers of human rights, for the purpose of this work they raise another important question of autonomy within human rights regimes. In funding and legal relationships that mobilize both powerful and less powerful nations, what are the seams and fractures in which grassroots organizations can maintain autonomy?

There have been vibrant conversations and debates regarding the importance and presence of Filipinos at the beginnings of the contemporary human rights moment, whether at the writing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 or within the early implementations of international human rights in the 1960s (Burke; Claudio, "The Anti-Communist Third World"; Espiritu). In his comparative study, Vincent Boudreau has widened the lens on social movement studies to link democratic movements throughout Southeast Asia. Focusing specifically on the Philippines, Robert Youngblood is remarkably attentive to the multivalent politics of church resistance to Marcos, and his work opens up numerous potential avenues of study in the international ramifications of such church-based opposition. For studies of the anti-Marcos mobilizations, Mina Roces, Lisandro Claudio and Mark R. Thompson have also offered definitive texts drawing attention to gender studies, historical memory, and histories of democratic transition respectively (Roces; Claudio, *Taming People's Power*; Thompson).

Other works draw attention to the importance of legal human rights and civil liberties organizations started during martial law. Dorothea Hilhorst has pointed crucially to the influence that the NDF has had of this mode of organizing around on human rights and NGO practice in the Philippines. Likewise, in his own comprehensive and invaluable study of TFDP, Gerald Clarke has underscored the "inherently political character of Philippine human rights NGOs" (Clarke 188-189). In his work, Clarke underscores the difficult navigations required of a human rights organization such as TFDP as it tried to maintain some semblance of independence both from the CPP as well as its international funders (Clarke 169-170). It is the question of international funding relationships that I take up within the course of this article. Building upon and bridging these critical studies on international human rights and the anti-Marcos resistance, I aim to examine the role of Sr. Mariani and TFDP within the international human rights movement of the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s.

In this article, I draw upon oral history interviews, newsletters and quarterly reports of Task Force Detainees Philippines, and archival research from the

Philippines, the United States, and the Netherlands. These disparate archival sources allow a global intellectual history that traces how ideas about human rights in the Philippines circulated internationally during the Marcos period. This is an institutional history in that it focuses on a particular human rights organization, TFDP. Yet, I also suggest that in her mobility and political navigations, Sr. Mariani functioned as institution as well. As TFDP members often underscore, Sr. Mariani in many ways *was and is* TFDP. As such, I weave between discussions of formal institutional operations and the specific forms of protest from Sr. Mariani in an effort to gesture towards an institutional history that is attuned to the gendered bodily labor undertaken by those within the institution. I make three main arguments within this article. First, I argue that through its efforts to combat political detention, TFDP was integral to the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship. Second, I suggest that Sr. Mariani was at the forefront of the creation of international solidarity efforts to support anti-Marcos mobilizations. Finally, I argue that TFDP and other Philippine-based organizations like it were not mere pawns of international funding agencies. I suggest that despite their close affiliations and reliance on financial support, they strove to construct an independent and empowered Filipino human rights movement.

RADICAL RELIGIOUS, SISTER MARIANI, AND THE TASK FORCE DETAINEES

In 1974, at a time when church leaders and members were just beginning to interpret Vatican II for local contexts, at a time when liberation theology flowed between Latin America and other spaces referred to as the “third world,” and at a time when Marcosian martial law curtailed civil liberties in the Philippines, The Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP) provided 10,000 pesos of seed money to help form the organization, Task Force Detainees Philippines (TFDP) (Serrano).³ Officially, AMRSP was the umbrella organization under which formed various task forces responding to social issues in the Philippines (Serrano). Under the Marcos government, TFDP estimated at least 70,000 political arrests had occurred (Bravo 93). The newly formed organization aimed to document political detention in the Philippines and support political detainees in their struggle for human rights. In so doing they desired to prevent torture and disappearances as well as raise international awareness to the political situation in the Philippines. The organization was primarily led by nuns and other religious and relied upon a vast volunteer network. Former political detainees often joined TFDP as volunteers when they were released from prison (Gaspar).⁴

TFDP’s initial leader was Father Mel Brady (“About Us”). At its conception, TFDP was primarily concerned with the political arrests of Catholics in the Manila area.

However, the organization quickly grew to cover political detention throughout the Philippines without consideration to political and religious persuasions (“About Us”). TFDP received its funding from several sources. The AMRSP provided some money on a yearly basis (Serrano). Human rights organizations, mostly based in Western Europe, also pledged funds, through sponsoring smaller projects and through annual support with the TFDP operating budget. NOVIB [*Nederlandse Organisatie Voor Internationale Bijstand* (Dutch organization for international aid)], a human rights organization in the Netherlands, served as the point of coordination for these donations. Other donations came from faith groups and fundraisers from various non-governmental entities outside of the Philippines. Many of these groups were connected to anti-martial law activist groups in the United States and Western Europe. These funding sources helped alleviate the hefty operating costs for the organization, which according to funding documents amounted to upwards of three million Philippine pesos (about \$382,000) each year by 1981 (Skinner; Dimaranan, “Letter to Dr. Sjef Theunsis”).

THE BRINGING TOGETHER OF THE CHURCH AND THE LEFT

According to TFDP, detainees came from all sectors of society. They were mainly united in their perceived threat to the government. While many would have been from the national democratic movement, TFDP saw itself as providing “all human rights for all.” In a 1984 publication, TFDP described those that were at risk of arrest:

The political prisoner may be the man you saw last week, drenched from the driving rain, but firm and resolute as he held his place among fellow workers behind a picket line. He may be one in a rally of youths you saw in yesterday’s front page photo, confronting a wall of shields held by helmet-clad, truncheon-wielding policemen. Some of them may be the women you saw manning the frontlines of a barricade protesting the demolition of their homes. (“Trends” 10)

TFDP understood that anyone standing up for their rights could be labeled a subversive. As such, they attempted to work on behalf of anyone that was arrested, whether politician, underground activist, or peasant organizer.

Of course, many of those arrested were part of underground mobilizations against Marcos. The role of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in the anti-martial law movement has often been overlooked or under discussed. As Vicente Rafael has noted in his introduction to *Subversive Lives*, the martial law memoir from the Quimpo family, the legacies of the Left must be critically examined to have a fuller understanding of martial law, its opposition, and the legacies of the martial law period (Quimpo and Quimpo). Following Sr. Mariani’s lead, however, it is not the purpose of this article to establish whether or not TFDP

was a CPP/National Democratic Front (NDF) organization. Instead, it is important to underscore that TFDP and Sr. Mariani willingly dealt with NDF activists, the Communist Party, as well as individuals and groups that were not NDF-affiliated. Bourdeau suggests that legal groups such as TFDP and FLAG (Free Legal Assistance Group) had no formal ties to the Left but were connected to the underground through the propaganda efforts and mainstream support (Bourdeau 136). Clarke draws attention to the ways that Sr. Mariani tried to distinguish TFDP from merely a front organization, pointing out that Sr. Mariani had lectured a CPP convention that TFDP was not “ beholden to any group.” (Clarke 169). TFDP, in short, was certainly well connected with the underground activist networks, especially as it facilitated communication between political detainees and international human rights organizations. However, as is the case with funding organizations to be discussed later, it would be a mistake to conflate this connection with NDF control.

One of the main conduits for the connection between TFDP and the NDF was the sectoral group Christians for National Liberation (CNL) (Jalandoni). As one of the organizers for CNL and longtime NDF spokesperson Luis Jalandoni explains, Sr. Mariani was close to the CNL and was admired for her ability to win support and solidarity to her cause (Jalandoni). Furthermore, the writings and detention experiences of another one of CNL’s founders, Father Edicio de la Torre, were regularly found within the pages of organizational publications. In many ways, martial law brought together the religious and leftists in the Philippines. With a mutual opposition to the Marcos regime as well as a shared interest in reinventing the social order to improve the quality of life for the poor, the radicalization of a number of religious and the incorporation of radical religious into the CPP/NPA/NDF seemed natural (Fuller 223-256).

While she rejected accusations of her own political affiliations with the CPP/NDF, Mariani herself often acknowledged the magnetism of the movement to her funders in Europe. To Peter de Haan, who was head of the Asia desk at NOVIB for many years, she said, “What can we do? The underground attraction is very strong” (Bravo 243). The CPP/NDF underground drew so many activists at this period because it provided the most well-organized and widespread way to combat authoritarianism and systematic oppression in the Philippines. Further, Marcos’s own descriptions of the communist menace in the Philippines, in a way, became its own self-fulfilling prophecy. As activists and political opponents were jailed under accusations of working against the regime, many decided to take more active roles in opposing Marcos (Rocamora 50-55).

In order to support detainees, TFDP took on multiple tasks. Documentation, which was attractive to international funding organizations, was a main commitment of the group. TFDP published information and precise lists of

detainees in publications such as *TFDP Update*, *Lusong* and *Pumipiglas* (“About Us”). The major publication attributed to Task Force Detainees was the *Political Detainees Update*. TFDP printed around 5,500 copies of the publication (de Haan, “Letter to Sr. Mariani”). Within its pages, the internationally circulated newsletter outlined major updates in disappearances and political detention. In addition, TFDP created a number of other publications, including *Trends* and *Political Detainees Quarterly Report*. These publications were also designed to draw broad attention to issues of political detention in the Philippines. TFDP’s umbrella organization also put out a major publication, *Signs of the Times*, which dealt with issues of political detention and social injustice in the Philippines.⁵

However, TFDP was also interested in ways to support detainees with their day-to-day needs such as having former detainees, or individuals that were particularly susceptible to arrest, serve as TFDP volunteers. Being recognized as a volunteer or employee of the organization cloaked some vulnerable individuals with a legitimized status that provided some protections. There are numerous examples of unofficial support for detainees such as helping hide at-risk peoples, providing for the schooling of children whose parents had been arrested or gone underground, and even providing small loans to help affected families meet their day-to-day needs. These forms of support were often not emphasized by international funders. However, these local connections helped TFDP come to be seen as the organization that could be relied upon to support and advocate on behalf of political prisoners in the Philippines.

Sr. Mariani was fundamental to the growth of Task Force Detainees Philippines. A fiery Franciscan sister, Sr. Mariani had already lived an interesting life and committed herself in service to the poor.⁶ In her youth, when her father refused to allow her to become a religious, she ran away from home and took her vows (Bravo 268). In the sixties, she grew increasingly concerned with social justice and human rights, often joining public demonstrations and working to aid the poor in local barrios. In 1973 a year after martial law was declared, she herself became a political detainee for 47 days for suspicion of being a communist (Lucero; Serrano; Roces 7-9).⁷ In fact, this suspicion was often used in attempts to discredit hers and TFDP’s work (Munro).⁸ Marcos had positioned the Philippines as a Cold War bulwark against the spread of communism in Southeast Asia (Bonner). As such, accusations of such political leanings carried the risk of being marked as a threat to national and regional security (Hamilton-Paterson; Cullather).⁹ Sr. Mariani detested having to engage with these accusations, explaining that “Systematic poverty, hunger, oppression of people’s basic rights are the real issues of the people, and not communism...” (Bravo 98). For Sr. Mariani, such questions of political affiliation overlooked the real problems. When asked specifically about her politics later on, she told scholar Mina Roces that they were not biased towards any political group,

replying that “We are overground, level ground, underground, whatever ground” (Roces 11).

As an above ground organization, Task Force Detainees occupied a crucial place in the legal opposition to Marcos and martial law (Simbulan).¹⁰ TFDP was critical to the development of a vast network of organizations working for civil liberties in the Philippines. In its reports to its European funders, TFDP detailed its role in supporting the establishment of KAPATID, which organized family members of detainees to work on behalf of relatives and other political prisoners (“TFDP Annual Report” 10-12). TFDP also claims a role in the establishment of human rights organizations such as FIND, MARTYR, and SELDA (TFDP, “About Us”). Clarke also details that at the founding of the Philippine Alliance for Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA), Sr. Mariani agreed to serve as the first chair of the fledgling national organization (Clarke, 176).

Sr. Cresencia Lucero, co-Chairperson of TFDP and long-time colleague of Sr. Mariani, recalls Sr. Mariani as extremely tough and determined, fearlessly traveling from prison to prison, morgue to morgue to document violations of human rights (Lucero). The ability to claim religious affiliation and formation helped provide some legal cover for their activism. As Mina Roces points out, however, Sr. Mariani recognized that it was primarily the “moral power” of the nuns in the organization that often allowed them leeway to continue their work (Roces 13-17). Roces suggests that traditional gendered hierarchies within the Philippines prescribed nuns the role of “moral guardian.” Seen as not aspiring to “official power” and as the caretakers of the virtue of the nation, activist nuns could sometimes successfully pressure the Marcos government through their performance of moral indignation and religious authority.

Socially conscious religious often faced harsh attacks, often from within the ranks of their own faiths. Religious activists had to walk a fine line. Leftist leaning clergy were commonly denounced on popular media such as radio shows (Koning).¹¹ Some faced accusations or questions from other religious regarding their commitment to their vows (Lucero). Others were criticized for their popularity among the masses as this was seen as a privileging of worldly concerns above spiritual ones (Hacbang).¹² Such experiences demonstrate that although this indeed was a time when many religious were turning towards social justice work, their politicization was not representative of the entire Catholic Church in the Philippines. Although prominent church leaders and church-based activists took strongly to discussions of making the Church a church of the poor, there was far from a universal acceptance of the more progressive readings of the Second Vatican Council (Youngblood 6). For some religious leaders, their activism certainly put them at risk (Youngblood 113).¹³ Arrests of clergy were not uncommon under martial law (McCoy). Some

religious leaders such as Fr. Zacarias Agatep and an Italian priest, Fr. Tulio Favali, were assassinated for their activism (Lahoz).¹⁴ Despite these attacks from within the church as well as from the Marcos government, there were a great deal of socially conscious clergy who sought out ways of connecting their spirituality with a response to the pressing political needs of the time.

Perhaps the most important work achieved by TFDP lay in the ways that the organization drew attention to political prisoners and gave some political prisoners and their families an arena to speak publicly their experiences and demands. With this ability, prisoners were often able to challenge the notion of political detention itself and also make connections to other injustices in the Philippines. For TFDP's 1981 annual convention, a collection of detainees that referred to themselves as "Political Detainees in the Philippines" sent a message to the convention attendees. The message highlights the comradely relations between TFDP and the political detainees they worked with. The detainees congratulated TFDP on its work as "a refuge to the victims of militarization and as an aide to those who resist the suppression of human rights..." ("Message of Political Detainees"). However, the detainees also saw fit to provide its insight on the direction that TFDP work must take in response to the increasing militarization of the Marcos government:

Organizing the people against militarization, and strengthening such people's organizations to the degree that they are capable of self-defense, is of primary importance. Hand in hand with organizing goes educating the people about their rights under natural and human laws and their communal duties

Eliciting external/foreign support, mostly moral and in some cases material, is a secondary factor to effectively the accelerating militarization. By its thorough documentation disseminated internationally, and by direct linkages with international human rights organizations, TFDP and allied organizations can bring stronger world pressure to bear upon the Marcos regime to stop its militarization course. ("Message of Political Detainees")

Given the indication of the primary nature of local organization and the allusions to armed struggle, it seems likely that the message was coordinated by detainees closely affiliated with CPP/NPA/NDF thinking at this time. But more important for the relationship between detainees and TFDP, these particular detainees offer the TFDP convention their own assessment of what the primary and secondary concerns of the organization should be going forward. There is a sense that they viewed TFDP as willing and able to carry out their political desires. Indeed, TFDP offered detainees a critical opportunity to have their voices and demands heard outside of the prison.

ACTIVIST SPIRITUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In 1979, Sr. Mariani gave a speech in Tokyo to explain the Church response to the Philippine situation. Sr. Mariani explained that the Catholic hierarchy was far from united on their orientation to martial law (Bravo 61). Yet, Sr. Mariani makes an even more crucial distinction earlier in her discussion. She explains what she means by the Church:

First, by Church, I do not refer to the institutional or hierarchical church alone but to the **people** - the Filipinos at large who are actively participating in the making and re-shaping of Philippine history and in particular, the oppressed Filipinos who are fighting for freedom and nationalism. (Bravo 41).

Here, she casts the people as the Church and the oppressed people as the active shapers of Philippine history. Sr. Mariani repurposes the Church as a mode for the people to respond to the Marcos dictatorship. As Sr. Mariani explained to Mina Roces, while liberation theology was an important development of the time, for her and many nuns it was primarily the oppression that they bore witness to that moved them towards their activism (Roces 8). Religious like Father Edicio de la Torre and Sr. Mariani then attempted to draw useful connections to liberation theology movements while also highlighting the specificity of their own contexts. Although the institution of the church as well as progressive/radical readings of the Second Vatican Council offered powerful possibilities, Filipino religious sought to emphasize their own national sovereignty in their theological reorientations.

In very practical ways, the Catholic Church served as an important node for activists to respond to the Marcoses. Youngblood's work on the Catholic and Protestant church in the Philippines establishes the importance of the church in anti-Marcos action. He notes that even the CBCP (Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines) had progressive members that were sympathetic to Marcos's opposition (Youngblood 72). While the official policy of "critical collaboration" did not condone the radical opposition to Marcos, Cardinal Jaime Sin did sometimes speak up to express concern over military policies (Youngblood 73, 159). International funding that supported the anti-Marcos struggle often funneled through church organizations such as NASSA (National Secretariat for Social Action) in order to reach their less publicly known recipients (Fuller 18-19). Former political detainees and those at risk of arrest often found in parishes and in organizations such as TFDP a place to hide or a place to claim positions in the "legal" struggle if they felt in particular danger of arrest or reprisal. Beyond TFDP's assistance of political detainees, it, like many other legal organizations at the time, found various ways to support those underground activists working to build a movement against the

Marcoses. Its legal cover as a church organization provided sanctuary for both its members as well as the activists they supported.

TFDP saw its role as much more than mere documentation of human rights violations. Through its indirect services, TFDP took an active role in rural education, training of paralegals, and seminars throughout the Philippines about social interests (Plant 1980). Further, TFDP established a scholarship fund to assist families of detainees with education costs as well as a small projects fund to assist groups around the Philippines to fund livelihood projects (“Proceedings” 1980; Monnasso 1986). In addition to the official forms of assistance, TFDP members provided volunteer positions for former detainees, allowed churches and schools to be used as activist safehouses, and performed countless hours of labor raising material support for its activism (Lucero). These indirect services were rooted in a spiritual understanding that TFDP’s role was to align itself with the poor and marginalized. They aimed to spread awareness about social injustice within the Philippines as well as beyond it through a wide-ranging educational mission.

The importance of human rights as an international political concern in the 1970s and 1980s clearly was not lost on TFDP leadership. Yet, an examination of TFDP’s navigation of circulating human rights discourses demonstrates that human rights discourses in the Philippines was not simply a reiteration of Western Christian notions of human rights.¹⁵ In a Question and Answer portion of the 1980 National Convention of TFDP, an attendee asked how press was tapped. The respondent answered with some suggestions on how to use the press, explaining, “Human Rights issues in general are usually picked up (*kinakagat*) by local press” (“Proceedings”).¹⁶ To draw in potentially sympathetic local media outlets, the use of a human rights language was quite an important tool. The international and local importance of human rights further provided TFDP cover to continue its organizing activities, both against government/military forces as well as the institutional church. As Roger Plant writes in his NOVIB-commissioned report on TFDP:

Because of the current international situation, and in particular the threatened change in the direction of the human rights policy of the United States government, the perspectives for the future are inevitably uncertain. It is quite possible that TFDP has been given an unusual leeway in recent years, because of the sensitivity given to human rights issues during the Carter administration. (Plant, “Recommendations to TFD”).

The language of human rights afforded TFDP the opportunity to draw attention to social injustice in the Philippines as it drew in local/international press attention and spoke to circulating international considerations such as the Carter administration’s attention to human rights worldwide (Keys 2).

In contrast to large, international human rights bodies at this time, TFDP rejected notions of functioning as an unbiased observer. This was often a critique of TFDP offered by partner organizations such as Amnesty International. A former detainee indicated that Amnesty International shied away from detainees that were thought to have been involved in armed struggle (Ocampo; Moyn; Buchanan).¹⁷ In a letter describing his meetings with Amnesty International staff, Peter de Haan drew attention to A.I.'s hesitance to work fully with TFDP, which was made clear to de Haan in conversations with A.I. representative Anthony Goldstone:

It is not always possible for A.I. to act on all cases revealed by organisations like the Task Force as A.I. restricts itself to causes with a 'political content'. Sometimes it is difficult to establish that somebody is killed or has disappeared because of political reasons. This in many cases is very difficult to assess. Whereas TFDP would act in these cases, A.I. cannot always do so. (de Haan, "Report of Visit to London")

Here, we see some of the differences between international human rights organizations and human rights at the grassroots level. Amnesty International had made official missions to the Philippines in 1975 and 1981, and their well-circulated reports on the situation in the Philippines drew much needed international attention to the Marcos government's abuses. As made clear in the reported conversations between Goldstone and de Haan, A.I. expected cases to be fully and rigorously documented and serve a particularly "political content," the underlying meaning of which is unclear from de Haan's notes ("Report of Visit to London"). De Haan underscores that Amnesty International "was very appreciative of the quality of the documentation done by the Task Force" ("Report of Visit to London" 3). However, he also notes some wariness on the part of A.I. that some of the victims of abuses were subversives, further suggesting that A.I. desired particular individuals that were unaffiliated with armed struggle. In explaining A.I.'s decision to not work as an active donor of TFDP, de Haan notes that Goldstone stated on at least two occasions that "we (A.I.) try to maintain an impartial and political unbiased approach" ("Report of Visit to London" 4).

Goldstone's division between political and non-political, in tandem with Amnesty's prisoner of conscience requirement, runs the risk of presenting human rights as a salvational mission rather than a solidarity one. Amnesty's coverage of what it understood to be politically motivated violence alongside its refusal of cases in which aggrieved peoples take up arms against their oppressor negates the possibility of victory without the intervention of human rights agencies. If victimhood was a prerequisite, situations could only become legible as human rights cases if activists were stripped of their radical politics and represented solely as casualties of authoritarian violence. Moreover, in such cases, international human rights agencies could function as the arbiter of appropriate and inappropriate

responses to injustice. What gets counted as “political content” then is the ability to present a suffering and helpless victim in need of international support. TFDP often ran afoul of such modes of accounting as its direct focus on the local contexts of the Philippines did not always overlap with the needs of international human rights agencies.

In fact, NOVIIB evaluator Roger Plant also expressed a concern for TFDP’s ability to operate in “international human rights machinery.” In his 1983 report to NOVIIB, Plant opined:

At some stage, TFDP workers might require specialised training in how to use the international human rights machinery. This issue is perhaps more concerned with human rights lobbying than with documentation use. It may be that the PCHR is a more appropriate organisation for this type of work, in that lobbying often becomes a politicised task, and they may not wish to be openly involved (Plant, “Plant Assessment Mission 1983” 11).

Plant is careful to note the potential difficulty that this would present to TFDP, noting the ways that this delved much more into political lobbying than the work that TFDP currently performed.

While Amnesty International could only devote time and resources to particular human rights victims, Task Force Detainees was determined to draw attention to a wide range of individuals. Further, as they were so well connected within the Philippines, TFDP could be more attentive to modes of documenting human rights injustice that might not seem legible as “extensive and correct documentation” (Plant, “Plant Assessment Mission 1983” 3-4). Working in and out of the prisons with detainees, detainee families, legal and underground activists allowed TFDP to develop a wide network of information, whether by first-hand witness accounts or by rumor to understand the depths of oppression of Marcos opponents. Further, TFDP could focus its energies against the very notion of political detention by eschewing an unbiased approach to the Marcos government. Its open opposition to Marcos government abuses made it a hub for grassroots knowledge on political oppression. It also acknowledged that political detainees were working for the political cause of the removal of Marcos from power and/or the creation of a more just Philippines. Questions of political bias and correct documentation tended to overlook the ways that such an impressive array of records (which Amnesty International relied deeply upon) came to be collected.

ECUMENICAL SUPPORT FOR TFDP

Knowing that their work needed support beyond what could be provided by their congregants and AMRSP, Sr. Mariani went about creating a broad network of international solidarity. She made speeches in front of the United Nations, Amnesty International, and international religious meetings. She traveled to the U.S., Switzerland, the Netherlands, and throughout Asia. Throughout these visits, she called for financial support, for heightened political awareness, and crucially for criticisms of national foreign policies that either turned a blind eye to or actively supported martial law in the Philippines.

Religion, or at least a claim to an emancipatory theological component, connected people of faith from different spaces. In the struggle of political prisoners in the Philippines, Catholic clergy elsewhere saw parallels with their own contexts. TFDP, and many other Philippine-based church groups, had a great deal of influence on the work of religious organizations outside the Philippines as well. For example, church groups in the United States such as CCHRP (Church Coalition on Human Rights in the Philippines) and the Protestant components of FFP (Friends of the Filipino People) relied heavily on publications from TFDP. Church connections with the Philippines also played a formative role on a small group organized out of the Mennonite Central Committee, called Synapses. Members of Synapses such as Dorothy Friesen and Gene Stoltzfus had come to an anti-racist and anti-imperialist political position through their faith and their experiences in the Philippines (Friesen, Interview). Gene had been a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War. Recently married, Gene and Dorothy moved to the Philippines to get involved with grassroots activism there. They worked with the United Church of Christ (UCC) conducting research on the role of Castle and Cooke in the Philippines. Mostly based in Mindanao, they became closely associated with Karl Gaspar and the MSPC (Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference) (Tiu). As mentioned earlier, Gaspar also worked closely with TFDP in Davao City so he was able to connect Friesen and Stoltzfus with TFDP and a number of other groups in the Philippines (Friesen, Interview).

In 1979, Stoltzfus and Friesen decided to return to the United States. They teamed up with like-minded, Mennonite individuals that had seen grave injustices in South Africa and Central America and began to publish and circulate *Synapses Messages*. The organization articulated its purpose through its name. “Transposed to the global body, SYNAPSES is a flow of ideas, energy, sharing across the continents. The purpose of SYNAPSES MESSAGES is to link issues of justice domestically and internationally.”¹⁸ The newsletter started with a circulation of 500-600, gradually increasing to about 2,500 issues published every other week (Friesen, Interview). Synapse members were asked to donate half a day of wages, work, or other support

of each month to help with the organizational upkeep. As an organization, they aimed to become deeply integrated in their own local community (Chicago) but also worked to connect their local issues with the world around them.

Their newsletters covered issues from all across the world from apartheid to martial law, attempting primarily to highlight and challenge U.S. foreign policy. Friesen continued to cover the Philippines in these issues, drawing from her connections with religious activists in the Philippines. She often returned to the Philippines to gather information, bringing along other people of faith, often non-political, to show them firsthand the issues they discussed within the Synapse pages. For her, TFDP was always one of her stops in the Philippines (Friesen, Interview). Sr. Mariani would give her the latest news, share TFDP's newsletters, and provide information on what political detention campaigns to work on from abroad.¹⁹ This was one of the major ways that TFDP's newsletters would circulate. Visiting observers, individuals on exposure trips, and other foreigners coming to the Philippines would often find themselves at TFDP offices or meeting with Sr. Mariani to gain quantitative and qualitative data on human rights abuses going on throughout the Philippines.

Karl Gaspar, the individual that had initially facilitated Friesen and Stoltzfus' entrance into religious activist circles in the Philippines, eventually was detained several times under the Marcos government. Friesen greatly admired his communication skills so when Gaspar began to write from prison, *Synapses* readily published his letters and reflections. These reflections, along with TFDP's reports, became the primary lens through which Synapses audiences came to understand the situation in the Philippines. Upon his release, Gaspar indicated his gratitude for the solidarity work of friends around the world: "Your solidarity concretely manifested God's mercy on me and God's love for prisoners and the oppressed. Your solidarity helped me survive the long dark night of this prison experience. Ultimately, your solidarity set me free!!!" (Gaspar).²⁰ There are indications that persistent phone calls to prisons, letters to Malacañang, and international pressure were at the very least an irritant to the Marcos government and military authorities. For one, Juan Ponce Enrile and Carmelo Barbero offered point-by-point rebuttals of human rights violations reports presented by groups such as Amnesty International ("Amnesty International Correspondence"). Their detailed engagement with these human rights reports indicates an acknowledgement of their importance in perceptions of the Philippines. On the anecdotal level, one interviewee recalled the complaints of prison guards about the constant barrage of international phone calls related to the detention of the interviewee's family member (Harriet).²¹

Synapses also made it possible for people from the Philippines to come in and share their experiences with the Chicago community. Sr. Mariani, for example,

was able to give a speech to the American Friends Service Committee through the help of Friesen (“Hitting Raw Nerves”). Synapses eventually took in activists such as Karl’s sister Helen as well as Myrla Baldanado to help coordinate the work of Synapses in the United States as well as help these individuals develop networks of their own (“Pulsation” 1989; “Pulsation” 1987; Friesen, Interview). These visiting individuals would engage the local community through weekly discussions on pressing issues in the Philippines and other community work as well.

Synapses became closely affiliated with the U.S. and Canada based anti-martial law movement. They coordinated their work against political detention with the CCHRP, which was led by Dante Simbulan. They worked together on U.S. legislative lobbying efforts with Friends of the Filipino people and worked to support the efforts of KDP (Union of Democratic Filipinos) as well. When Friesen was asked about the importance of her time in the Philippines and her work within these religious networks, she answered that this work “gave her a way to understand the larger structures of things from a grassroots perspective” (Friesen, Interview). The work of individuals like Sr. Mariani as well as Karl and Helen Gaspar really helped set the tone for what solidarity work would mean. Friesen saw her role as a “white, middle class person in the United States” as working to highlight the U.S. government’s role in authoritarian structures worldwide, to support grassroots activists in local spaces, and to make it possible for people in places like the Philippines to determine their own futures (Friesen, Interview).

MATERIAL SUPPORT FOR TFDP

One of the main sources of financial support for the work of TFDP came from the solidarity groups that were formed in the Netherlands. European based solidarity was quite important to the anti-martial law movement as it provided a great deal of material support to the legal and underground struggle against Marcos in the Philippines (Quinsa 2015).²² During the late 1970s and 1980s, TFDP drew much of its funding support from the Dutch organization, NOVIB. According to NOVIB’s records, the organization often took the lead in funding efforts for TFDP, coordinating groups all around Europe to also provide material support for TFDP efforts (Dimaranan, “Letter to Dr. Sjef Theunissen” 1980).²³

As Edgar Koning relates, Sr. Mariani came often to the Netherlands and the support groups there helped Sr. Mariani plan out her itinerary during travel throughout Western Europe (Koning). Mariani would often do interviews in newspapers and on television, would meet with funding and government authorities, or even hold discussions with small groups. Organizers in Western Europe found

audiences to be quite receptive to Sr. Mariani's messages and the messenger herself. Sr. Mariani was able to move people to support TFDP through her unflinching explanations of the situation in the Philippines. Given that these descriptions came from an elderly nun in a habit, few doubted the veracity of her speeches. She would come to Europe often, always prepared with a tightly organized itinerary and with logistical support from local solidarity workers (Hautvast and Hautvast).²⁴ Several interviewees in the Netherlands recount the exhausting itineraries for Sr. Mariani's trips to Europe. These were difficult tasks for Sr. Mariani as she would tirelessly shuttle around the Netherlands and Western Europe, giving talks, conducting television and radio interviews, meeting with potential donors, collecting material support, and other forms of work in a limited amount of time.

While TFDP actively encouraged an international support network, it consciously demanded that Filipino grassroots activism remain at the center. And for the activists that were involved in TFDP, it was the political detainees that were the focal point. Sr. Mariani once remarked, "We are strong because the detainees themselves are strong" (Bravo 242). Remarks such as this were reflected in organizational practice as former detainees often staffed, planned, and implemented TFDP initiatives. To comprehensively address detainee needs, TFDP focused its work on what it called Direct and Indirect Support Services. Direct services such as legal support and documentation were balanced out with indirect assistance such as family support, education, workshops for potential volunteers, and workshops in tandem with the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG) to inform activists of their human rights and what they might do in the case that they were arrested.

Sr. Mariani was committed to creating information networks between the prison and the outside world. In a video interview, Sr. Mariani shared the tactics through which she and other religious workers would get documents in and out of the prison. Speaking in Tagalog, she indicates that she eluded guards by hiding documents in her false teeth and in the hem of her skirt (Dimaranan 199?).²⁵ In another interview, Sr. Mariani indicates that her position as a nun often made guards more sympathetic towards her and afforded her a great deal of leniency in terms of mobility restrictions within the detainee camps ("Interview with Sister Mariani"). Sr. Mariani's engagement in these embodied forms of protest highlight the ways that her travels and access to the detention camps were made possible because of her bodily performance (Anderson 153).²⁶ Her charismatic presence as a woman of faith helped her a great deal as she undertook untold hours of visible and unrecognized labor. Among those unrecognized labor was the work of navigating gendered performance within the narrow possibilities often afforded to a religious. As a nun in a habit, Sr. Mariani presented herself to guards and those to whom she appealed for help as a kind, gentle, and moral presence. Through adhering to the expected optics of religious matronly authority, Sr. Mariani would rarely

experience the indignity of a body search on entering the prison camps. Although a tenuous form of protection at best, it was precisely Sr. Mariani's sartorial, religious, and gendered presentation of herself that allowed her to enter and exit the prisons with relative freedom and also to highlight the seriousness of Marcosian authoritarianism.

Sr. Mariani's recognized position within the Catholic Church ensured that she was able to move within the Philippines and internationally, gathering and disseminating information critical of the Marcos regime (Burton 274).²⁷ The moral authority that Mariani derived from her religious position and deployed as a mode of opposition is made possible because Mariani is viewed as a non-sexual and non-threatening authority. Seemingly aware of this view, Mariani often used perceptions about her to her advantage. Interviewees tell stories ranging from her fearlessly standing up to prison guards to smiling sweetly and politely to potential accomplices. Sr. Mariani often elicited shock from her audiences when she spoke explicitly of sexual violence and torture under Marcos (Hautvast). The shock that Sr. Mariani could provoke arose from the notion that a petite, elderly, Filipina nun would be put in a position to have to speak of such injustices pointed powerfully to the moral decrepitude of the regime. In such fashions Sr. Mariani's performance of gender used widely accepted forms of heteropatriarchal ordering against themselves, protesting and resisting in ways not seen as possible for a woman of her kind.

Through the efforts of Sr. Mariani, TFDP, and detainee families, information, and even goods, traveled from within prisons to the outside world with regularity. Using this maneuverability, a number of detainees became involved in craft production, creating artwork, pendants, and other materials that were sold outside the prison and internationally (De la Torre, "The 'Political Economy' of Prison Pendants." 125-127; Koning 2016). This allowed detainees to begin a prison economy to focus on their collective welfare. The movement of the goods produced was facilitated by TFDP but the prisoners worked among themselves to manufacture goods and determine worthy causes for their funds. These information exchanges also helped detainees access different ways to exert pressure on their captors. In detention camps like Bicutan, detainees organized themselves and fought for increased rights within the prison. For example, food rations for detainees often amounted to about four pesos per day. When detainees uncovered the embezzlement of their food rations, they demanded and won the ability to control their own food purchases and preparation (Ocampo).

Working closely with the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG), detainees and TFDP developed an acute awareness of the utility of human rights language in an international arena. Aside from the close relationship between the well-known

nationalist lawyer Jose “Pepe” Diokno and Sr. Mariani, the aims of the FLAG and TFDP lined up quite well (Clarke 169). While TFDP documented political detention and supported detainees and their families, FLAG provided much needed legal services to detainees, allowing them to contest their detention as well as gain an overall awareness of their rights. For those working against the regime, FLAG’s handbook of rights and the telephone numbers for Diokno and Sr. Mariani were pieces of information that many kept on their person in case they were arrested. Funding agencies like NOVIB recognized the importance of this symbiotic relationship. In funding assessments of TFDP, references to FLAG regularly appeared, often describing the importance of the connection. One report on TFDP outlines the importance of the legal component that FLAG provided: “Effective legal aid not only provides the necessary support for the detainees, it also heightens the awareness and morale of their relatives. It is, therefore, an absolutely vital element in the work of TFDP, either on the national, regional or local level” (“Recommendations to TFD byT the NOVIB Team” 1980).

TFDP AUTONOMY AND ROLE IN HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT BUILDING WITHIN THE PHILIPPINES

The material support coming from European agencies may suggest that that these organizations exerted a great deal of control over the work of Philippine grassroots activists. Indeed, NOVIB at times offered recommendations to TFDP and also sent in assessment teams to verify the usage of funding support they provided. But it would be a mistake to assume that Sr. Mariani and TFDP unquestioningly took their direction from NOVIB. Rather, Sr. Mariani conceived of the relationship as a partnership in the most collaborative sense of the word. She was happy to work with these funding agencies, but she remained fiercely protective of the autonomy and leadership of the organization.

By 1981 it seemed that NOVIB had grown frustrated with several components of this partnership. As Clarke explains, European agencies had “formed a consortium to co-ordinate funding to TFDP in 1980, consolidating their influence” (Clarke 170). These communications were often conducted through NOVIB and Sr. Mariani would regularly communicate with the funders through financial reports as well as an annual donor conference. Over the course of several letters, Dr. Sjef Theunsis, Secretary General of NOVIB, offered several “unusually puzzling and biting” critiques around TFDP communications with external funding agencies (Dimaranan, “Letter to Dr. Sjef Theunsis”). Sr. Mariani understood the crux of Theunsis’s contention to revolve around his desire to appoint an expert from outside the Philippines to run TFDP (Dimaranan, “Letter to Dr. Sjef Theunsis”). Within her lengthy response to Theunsis, Sr. Mariani reiterated her organization’s refusal to consider such an imposition. Her step-by-step response is reprinted here

as it is a rich description of the intricate negotiations involved between grassroots activist organizations and their oftentimes-foreign funding agencies:

(a) We are not closed to the idea of evaluation, expertise on management and administration and the like. As a matter of fact, we accepted NOVIB Mission Evaluation last year (March 1980), a team of three: two foreigners and one Filipino. TFDP started implementing the suggestions and up to now is in the process of implementation.

(b) We believe Filipinos with correct orientation and expertise would understand us and know better TFDP's conditions relative to Philippine struggle in general and to the struggle of political detainees and other victims of injustice in particular. For this matter the NAB has appointed Sister Violeta for this charge with the help of Filipino experts.

(c) We don't operate in Western lines of thinking especially in (the) matter of administration and management. Our cultures and backgrounds differ, so do problems, solutions and perspectives. We don't want to be governed by the Western efficiency-at-all-cost mentality while people suffer and die.

(d) We are not prepared to allow foreigners to meddle into our administrative operations.

(e) Your suggestion of the "inclusion of a person with a genuine managerial/administrative background" (p. 4, last two lines of first paragraph) is a violation of the concept of real partnership which should underlie our relationship since you would even decide on the profile of the person based on the findings of your organizational expert (p. 4, last paragraph).

(f) If we are to operate on partnership and trust as you emphasized for a good number of times, let us go by real, genuine suggestions and not by subtle impositions under the guise of pre-requisites and what not.

(g) Again on the basis of partnership allow us to operate and develop according to our own pace. TFDP is a people-oriented organization, not system-oriented. TFDP workers, irrespective of their tasks and level of work, try to give themselves to people and not to promote systems (Dimaranan, "Letter to Dr. Sjef Theunsis" 4-5).

Sr. Mariani's response is striking for a number of reasons. First, as mentioned earlier NOVIB was the major funding organizer to TFDP. Even though a number of other agencies provided funds to the TFDP projects, communications and reports were most often coordinated from the NOVIB office. Yet, Mariani was unafraid to critique the source of TFDP's material support. Second, she outlines the importance of partnership on several occasions. She even prefaces this list by saying, "And precisely in a partnership, a partner should not expect all its suggestions and subtle impositions to be followed. A partner given all the forces at play should be left to decide. Else this will not be a real partnership, but a plain colonial stewardship" (Dimaranan, "Letter to Dr. Sjef Theunsis") Even as she sought material assistance for her work, Mariani openly expressed wariness for the uneven power dynamics often found within funding relationships. For Sr. Mariani, this was a crucial issue

especially as she considered national sovereignty to be particularly important to TFDP's work. In a speech in Switzerland, Sr. Mariani stated, "Filipinos seek more intently the full exercise of our collective right to genuine democracy, national sovereignty, and freedom from all foreign domination, particularly from the United States" (Bravo 91). Sr. Mariani was not interested in trading one overlord for another. Aware that her organization needed material international support, she worked to foster these funding relationships while maintaining that the sovereignty of the Filipino people was a non-negotiable condition of solidarity.

Furthermore, Mariani draws connections to the spirituality that brought so many religious during this time towards social justice causes in the Philippines. Mariani emphasizes the people-centeredness of her organization's approach and distinguishes it from western human rights methodologies. She takes umbrage at suggestions that a more efficiently streamlined organization would necessarily improve TFDP's work. Dimaranan underscores how TFDP's work cannot necessarily be measured in quantitative measures. In their inquiries to TFDP, NOVIB often asked for explanations regarding numerical increases and decreases in political arrests, in funds spent, and in people assisted. TFDP often complied with these requests, presumably with an understanding that this was part of doing business with a large funding agency. However, here Mariani pushes back at such metric-centered orientations. She instead takes a nationalist line and draws attention instead to the ways that Filipinos would best understand the important specificities involved in a Philippine-based movement. She points out that a focus on the indices of human rights ignores so much of the work that TFDP had undertaken (Merry).²⁸ There is no indication of any pause or decrease to TFDP's funding in the immediate aftermath of this exchange. TFDP's connections within the Philippines were vital to understanding the political situation within the archipelago, and funding organizations were surely aware that they could not replicate TFDP's work.

A similar situation with the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG) may help explain why international funding agencies were wary of breaking off their relationships with groups like TFDP, even after their requests were rejected. In 1985, Jose Diokno as chairperson of FLAG took exception to NOVIB suggestions, which he felt demonstrated a loss of confidence in his abilities to administer FLAG. Diokno suggested that if NOVIB was unhappy with his leadership, that it would perhaps be best to terminate their partnership. In internal correspondence, NOVIB conceded that, "FLAG's relevance is out of question and needs continued moral and financial support" (Monasso and Henneman). Concerned at losing their relationship with Diokno, NOVIB scaled back its suggestions and accepted some the considerations agreed to by Diokno and FLAG as an adequate response to their review of FLAG's operations (Diokno). In this case, Diokno was too important to NOVIB's operations. NOVIB saw it as crucial to their organizational mission to

remain involved in supporting the anti-Marcos struggle. As a struggle against an anti-democratic ruler (Marcos) with ties to the United States government carried out in a Christian nation with many citizens who spoke English, the human rights crisis in the Philippines was certainly at the forefront of international human rights groups working to establish their legitimacy as something of a third political pathway between Cold War communism and capitalism. In order maintain such connections and expertise, NOVIB would have had no choice but to continue to support such renowned local activists such as Diokno and Sr. Mariani. Both Diokno and Sr. Mariani understood that their local work within the Philippines made them indispensable to human rights groups wanting to be involved in documenting injustice in the Philippines, and they used this knowledge to sometimes tip the balance of power in favor of themselves, detainees, and the grassroots struggle against Marcos in the Philippines.

CONCLUSION

The contemporary iterations of human rights in the Philippines were, in large part, forged through protests against Marcosian authoritarianism. The determined and relentless labor of Sr. Mariani and Task Force Detainees brought political detention under Marcos to an international audience. That it was an elderly nun that spoke publicly of state violences certainly lent a moral authority to the cause. Yet, the success of human rights organizing in the Marcos period also required constant diplomatic maneuvering on the part of Sr. Mariani and TFDP. Organizations like TFDP and FLAG maintained spaces of organizational autonomy precisely because they were indispensable to their funders and stakeholders. Sr. Mariani regularly used her political savvy to demonstrate this indispensability. TFDP's presence was felt widely, with its reports and contacts appearing in publications all over the world, ranging from small organizational newsletters to official human rights organization reports. Sr. Mariani's travels also brought the plight of political detainees before audiences large and small in Asia, Europe, and the Americas. At the height of anti-Marcos organizing, TFDP invested its resources not only into documentation, but also towards increasing the quality of life of detainees, former detainees, and their families. This commitment established a notion of human rights advocacy that sought to empower and enrich communities in addition to discussions of those victimized within the Marcos state. The efforts of TFDP to garner material support and yet remain steadfastly committed to its social justice goals are worthy of study for its implications on international histories of human rights as well as the role of progressive and radical religious in opposing the Marcos regime.

Notes

1. The author wishes to acknowledge the support from the Graduate College at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities, and the Nelle M. Signor Scholarship that enabled the research and writing of this article. Previous drafts and portions of this article were presented at the Kritika Kultura Forum, the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations Conference, the Social Sciences Historical Association, the Department of History Graduate Symposium at University of Illinois, and the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities. The author wishes to thank those who helped organize these events and those in attendance who provided invaluable feedback. He also wishes to express his gratitude to the anonymous reviewers. Finally, he wishes to dedicate this article to those that have and continue to defend human rights in the Philippines.
2. This is an incredible compilation of a number of Sr. Mariani's speeches. One is struck by the sheer number of places that Sr. Mariani visited in her efforts to speak on human rights. It is also significant to note Sr. Mariani's attention to the audience as speeches in international arenas often highlighted human rights discourse, while those in the Philippines tended to draw more attention to national liberation and sovereignty.
3. At the time of interview, Sunshine Serrano was in charge of documentation efforts as well as the Museum of Courage and Resistance at the Task Force Detainees National Office.
4. Karl Gaspar was an activist with the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference as well as with TFDP. He was detained in the late 1970s and early 1980s.
5. As of 1978 AMRSP-TFDP were still used together or interchangeably in TFDP publications and both organizations were housed in the same complex.
6. Sr. Mariani passed away in 2005 at 81 years old.
7. At the time of interview, Sr. Crescencia Lucero was on the Board of Directors of TFDP. She had also worked very closely with Sr. Mariani during and after the martial law period. Aside from the important insights gained from her discussions with Sr. Mariani, Roces's important essay draws attention to the fact that TFDP was, in fact, a women's organization early on as the membership, leadership, and labor were dominated by women.
8. In fact, there were several exposes written by right-wing journalists seeking to discredit NGOs and Philippine grassroots activists by revealing their connections with the New People's Army and the Communist Party of the Philippines. While in many ways these were open secrets, in these particular instances they were presented as a "red scare" tactic.
9. Previous Philippine presidential administrations had also pursued suppressive measures against communist and other subversive groups, often with the support of the U.S. CIA.

10. I am grateful to Roland Simbulan for sharing his unpublished paper on church opposition to Marcos.
11. Koning was a Carmelite priest based in Escalante at the onset of martial law. He would later return to Holland and work with the solidarity group FGN (Filippijnengroep Nederland).
12. Hachang, a priest in Samar during martial law, was criticized for his role presiding over a particularly democratized church region.
13. Youngblood estimates 22 different church raids from 1973-1984 including at least 3 directly affiliated with AMRSP and TFDP.
14. Lahoz had direct experience with this, having been imprisoned at Camp Olivas during martial law.
15. However, it is also important to note that it was precisely the Catholic orientation of the Philippines and TFDP likely played a fundamental role in the ability of Philippine activists to gain international attention to their human rights activism. A number of activists interviewed acknowledged that the perception of the Philippines as a Christian nation likely made their work more palatable to human rights and funding organizations (such as World Council of Churches and Bread for the World) in comparison with efforts to address political detention in Indonesia.
16. Kinakagat translates most directly to bite or biting.
17. In the case of Satur Ocampo who has held various leadership positions in the CPP/ NDF as well as the electoral party, Bayan Muna, although Amnesty International as an organization was hesitant to support his case, several individual chapters of Amnesty International decided to lobby actively on his behalf.
18. Emphases in the original. This message was found on the back cover of most Synapses Messages issues. I am grateful to Michael Cullinane for providing access to many issues in the Synapses Messages print run.
19. For an example of how these campaigns would have been addressed in the pages of Synapses Messages, see "Action Alert! Mila Aguilar," Synapses Messages, September 1984. One notices detailed courses of action in the form of addresses to send complaints to as well as concrete demands such as "1. Humane treatment 2. Access to press and other visitors 3. Dropping of charges and her release." Further, true to TFDP form, some of Aguilar's poetry accompanies the description of her arrest. TFDP and Synapses aimed to show both the oppressive conditions under which many Filipinos were detained as well as circulate the political and cultural critiques that they were imprisoned for.
20. The relationship between Karl and Synapses allowed for much support work between Synapses members and Davao detainees. Synapses members corresponded prisoners and provided material support through the purchase of crafts products made by detainees.
21. A pseudonym.
22. Quinsaas explains the social and political conjunctures that allowed Western Europe, particularly the Netherlands, to function as an important political hub for the National Democratic movement of the Philippines.

23. In this letter, Sr. Mariani mentions OXFAM, CAFOD, Asia Partnership, Swiss Lenten Fund, and Bread for the World as contributing international agencies coordinated through NOVIB.
24. The Hautvast, along with Koning, were among the founders of the FGN solidarity group in the Netherlands.
25. Unfortunately, it is unclear who is conducting the interview and when exactly the interview was conducted. I thank Task Force Detainees for sharing this video with me.
26. My use of performance throughout should not be misconstrued or equated as pretending.
27. Helpful here is Antoinette Burton's work in the body and world history. Burton suggests eloquently of the body that "If we think of the body itself as an access point, an index not only of specific women or genders and sexual practices but as a dynamically interconnective historical force, contingent on time and place; absorbent and irritating; vulnerable to exploitation and contagion yet hardy and resourceful; danger to would-be hegemony and a carrier of all kinds of power- if, in other words, we rethink the body as a kinetic and malleable agent, actor and acted upon- we might just be able to realign it with the project of world history and, in the process, persuade our students of its transformative impact on that enterprise, and the worlds they live in as well."
28. Merry usefully argues that quantification's links to supposed objectivity obscures the underlying power dynamics at work in human rights initiatives.

Works Cited

- Abano, Rhodora. Personal Interview, 12 July 2016.
- Abinales, Patricio, editor. *The Revolution Falters: The Left in Philippine Politics After 1986*. Cornell University Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1996.
- "About Us Page." *Task Force Detainees of the Philippines*. 2009, <http://www.tfdp.net/about-us/history>. Accessed 22 Feb. 2017.
- "Action Alert! Mila Aguilar." *Synapses Messages*, Sept. 1984.
- "Amnesty International Correspondence with Enrile and Barbero," 1983. Task Force Detainees Library.
- Anderson, Patrick. *So Much Wasted: Hunger, Performance, and the Morbidity of Resistance*. Duke UP, 2010.
- "Annual Report," 1981. NOVB Papers Box 963 Fil. 5359. National Archief Nederlands.
- Bonner, Raymond. *Waltzing with a Dictator*. Vintage, 1988.
- Boudreau, Vincent. *Resisting Dictatorship: Repression and Protest in Southeast Asia*. Cambridge UP, 2004.
- Bradley, Mark Philipp. *The World Reimagined: Americans and Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge UP, 2016.
- Bravo, Sr. Marie Teresita. *Mariani: A Woman of a Kind*. Task Force Detainees Philippines, 2001.
- Buchanan, Tom. "'The Truth Will Set You Free': The Making of Amnesty International." *The Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 37, no. 4, October 2002, pp. 575–97.
- Burke, Roland. *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*. U of Pennsylvania P, 2010.
- Burton, Antoinette. "The Body In/As World History." *A Companion to World History*, edited by Douglas Northrop, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, pp. 272–84.
- Clarke, Gerard. *The Politics of NGOs in South-East Asia: Participation and Protest in the Philippines*. Routledge, 1998.
- Claudio, Lisandro. *Taming People's Power: The EDSA Revolutions and Their Contradictions*. Ateneo de Manila UP, 2013.
- . "The Anti-Communist Third World: Carlos Romulo and the Other Bandung." *Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, April 2015, pp. 125–56.
- Cullather, Nick. *Illusions of Influence: The Political Economy of United States-Philippines Relations, 1942-1960*. Stanford UP, 1994.
- de Haan, Peter. "Letter to Sr. Mariani," 2 Feb. 1983. NOVB Papers Box 963 Fil. 5359. National Archief Nederlands.
- . "Report of Peter de Haan on Visit to London," 1982. NOVB Papers Box 1009 Fil 82-54M-83. National Archief Nederlands.
- De la Torre, Edicio. *The Philippines: Christians and the Politics of Liberation*. CIIR Justice Papers No. 9, 1986.

- . "The 'Political Economy' of Prison Pendants." *Tibak Rising: Activism in the Days of Martial Law*, edited by Ferdinand C. Llanes, Anvil, 2012, pp. 124–27.
- "De La Torre Refutes Government Accounts of 76-Day Fast- A Letter." *Signs of the Times*. 19 Mar. 1976.
- De Vera, Jose. "Detained Priest Is Well, Barbero Finds." *Signs of the Times*. 19 Mar. 1976.
- "Defense Asks ST to Publish Government Version of Olivas Fast." *Signs of the Times*. 19 Mar. 1976.
- "Detainees." *Synapses Messages*, Sept. 1984.
- Dimaranan, Sr. Mariani. "Letter from Sr. Mariani to Dr. Sjef Theunsis," 10 Aug. 1981. NOVIB Papers Box 963 Fil. 5359. National Archief Nederlands.
- . "Letter to Dr. Sjef Theunsis, Secretary General, NOVIB," 19 June 1980. NOVIB Papers Box 944 4229-PM-80 Philippines TFDP Interim Program. National Archief Nederlands.
- . "Letter to Sjef Theunsis," 10 Aug. 1981. NOVIB Papers Box 963 Fil. 5359. National Archief Nederlands.
- . TFDP Video of Interview with Sr. Mariani, 199AD. Task Force Detainees Library.
- Diokno, Jose W. "Letter to Dr. Sjef Theunsis," 12 Aug. 1985. NOVIB PAPERS Box 1017 Fil 85-36. National Archief Nederlands.
- Espiritu, Augusto Fauni. *Five Faces of Exile: The Nation and Filipino American Intellectuals*. Stanford UP, 2005.
- "Ex-Detainee Juliet Chin Bares Conditions in Malaysian Prisons- New Asia News, 26 Mar. 1976." *Signs of the Times*. 16 Apr. 1976.
- "Financing a Revolution: The NPA's European Backers." *Executive Intelligence Review*, vol. 15, no. 50, December 1988, pp. 52–61.
- Friesen, Dorothy. *Critical Choice: A Journey with the Filipino People*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988.
- . Personal Interview, 7 Sept. 2015.
- Fuller, Ken. *A Movement Divided: Philippine Communism, 1957-1986*. U of the Philippines P, 2011.
- Gaspar, Karl. "Letter to Synapses." *Synapses Messages*, Mar. 1985.
- Hacbang, Nonoi. Personal Interview, 26 July 2016.
- Hamilton-Paterson, James. *America's Boy: A Century of United States Colonialism in the Philippines*. Henry Holt and Co., 1999.
- Harriet (a pseudonym). Personal Interview, December 2015.
- Hautvast, Dolf. Personal Interview, 19 July 2016.
- Hautvast, Hanneke. Personal Interview, 19 July 2016.
- Hilhorst, Dorothea. *The Real World of NGOs: Discourses, Diversity and Development*. Ateneo de Manila UP, 2003.
- "Hitting Raw Nerves." *Synapses Messages*, Sept. 1987.
- "Interview with Sister Mariani Dimaranan, SFIC." *Philippine Human Rights Update*, vol. 20, no. 1, Sept. 2009, <http://www.tfdp.net/publications/phru/volume-1-number-1/25>. Accessed 22 Feb. 2017

- Jalandoni, Luis. Personal Interview, 12 Aug. 2016.
- Josol, CSsR, Abdon Ma. C., ed. *Responses to the Signs of the Times: Selected Documents: Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines*. Claretian Publishers, 1991.
- "KCIA Detain, Torture South Korean Seminarians." *Signs of the Times*. 16 Apr. 1976.
- Keys, Barbara J. *Reclaiming American Virtue: The Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s*. Harvard UP, 2014.
- Koning, Edgar. Personal Interview, 27 July 2016.
- Labayen, Bishop Julio X. *Option for the Poor - What Does It Mean?* vol. 3, no. 1. Socio Pastoral Institute, 1984.
- Lahoz, Manuel. Personal Interview, 28 Feb. 2016.
- Liberation Theology and the Vatican Document, Volume 2: A Philippine Perspective*. Claretian Publishers, 1986.
- Lucero, Sr. Crescencia. Personal Interview, 11 Jan. 2016.
- Macy, Paul Griswald. *The Story of the World Council of Churches*. World Council of Churches, 1944.
- Markarian, Vania. *Left in Transformation: Uruguayan Exiles and the Latin American Human Rights Networks, 1967-1984*. Routledge, 2005.
- McCoy, Alfred W. *Priests on Trial: Father Gore and Father O'Brien Caught in the Crossfire between Dictatorship and Revolution*. Penguin, 1984.
- Merry, Sally Engle. *The Seductions of Quantification: Measuring Human Rights, Gender Violence, and Sex Trafficking*. U of Chicago P, 2016.
- "Message of Political Detainees to the Fourth Annual Convention of the Task Force Detainees Philippines," Oct. 1981. Task Force Detainees Library.
- Molina, J. Michelle, and Donald K. Swearer, editors. *Rethinking the Human*. Harvard UP, 2010.
- Monasso, Wim, and Ko Henneman. "FLAG: Mission Hans Thoolen to FLAG, Annual Convention," 20 Sept. 1985. NOVI B PAPERS Box 1017 Fil 85-36. National Archief Nederlands.
- Monnasso, Wim. "Letter to Sr. Mariani about Small Projects Fund," 28 May 1986. NOVI B Papers Box 1014 Fil 84-48m-84 TFDP Small Projects Fund. National Archief Nederlands.
- Moyn, Samuel. *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*. The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2010.
- . *Christian Human Rights*. U of Pennsylvania P, 2015.
- Munro, Ross. "The New Khmer Rouge." *Commentary Magazine*, Dec. 1985, <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/the-new-khmer-rouge/>. Accessed 22 Aug. 2017.
- Nadeau, Kathleen M. *Liberation Theology in the Philippines: Faith in a Revolution*. Praeger, 2002.
- Nunan, Timothy. *Humanitarian Invasion: Global Development in Cold War Afghanistan*. Harvard UP, 2016.
- Ocampo, Satur. Personal Interview, 12 Jan. 2016.
- Paik, A. Naomi. *Rightlessness: Testimony and Redress in U.S. Prison Camps since World War II*. U of North Carolina P, 2016.

- Plant, Roger. "Plant Assessment Mission 1983," 22 Dec. 1983. NOVB Papers Box 965: Plant Assessment Mission, October-November 1983. National Archief Nederlands.
- . "Recommendations to TFD by the NOVB Team, April 1980," 1980. NOVB Papers Box 961 Fil 3122-PA-79 TFDP. National Archief Nederlands.
- . "Report of the NOVB Evaluation Mission to the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines," 1980. NOVB Papers Box 944 4229-PM-80 Philippines TFDP Interim Program. National Archief Nederlands.
- "Political Detainees in the Philippines: The Church and Political Detainees." *Signs of the Times*. 31 March 1976.
- "Political Detainees Update." Task Force Detainees Philippines, 7 June 1978.
- "Proceedings of the Third National Annual Convention of the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, October 22-24, 1980," 1980. NOVB Papers Box 944 4229-PM-80 Philippines TFDP Interim Program. National Archief Nederlands.
- "Pulsation." *Synapses Messages*, September 1987.
- "Pulsation." *Synapses Messages*, March 1989.
- Quimpo, Nathan Gilbert, and Susan F. Quimpo. *Subversive Lives: A Family Memoir of the Marcos Years*. Anvil, 2012.
- Quinsa, Sharon Madriga. "Diaspora Activism in a Non-Traditional Country of Destination: The Case of Filipinos in the Netherlands." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 39, no. 6, 2016, pp. 1014-1033.
- "Recommendations to TFD by the NOVB Team," April 1980. NOVB Papers Box 961 Fil 3122-PA-79 TFDP. National Archief Nederlands.
- Rocamora, Joel. "Crummy Crame: Mirror on Society." *Tibak Rising: Activism in the Days of Martial Law*, edited by Ferdinand C. Llanes, Anvil, 2012, pp. 50-55.
- Roces, Mina. "The Militant Nun as Political Activist and Feminist in Martial Law Philippines." *Portal*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2004, pp. 1-26.
- . *Women's Movements and the Filipina, 1986-2008*. U of Hawai'i P, 2012.
- "RP Christians Call on Sokor Ambassador: Ask Release of Kim Chi Ha, 152 Arrested, By a Correspondent." *Signs of the Times*. 17 Oct. 1975.
- Rutten, Rosanne. *Brokering a Revolution: Cadres in a Philippine Insurgency*. Ateneo de Manila UP, 2009.
- Schumacher, S.J., John N. *Revolutionary Clergy: The Filipino Clergy and the Nationalist Movement, 1850-1903*. Ateneo de Manila UP, 1981.
- Serrano, Sunshine. Personal Interview, 28 Jan. 2016.
- Simbulan, Roland G. "Ang Radikalisasyon at Pakikilahok Ng Simbahan Sa Oposisyon Laban Sa Diktadurang U.S.-Marcos, 1972-1986." presented at the ADHIKA ng Pilipinas, Nueva Ecija, 28 Nov. 2007.
- Skinner, Charles. "Letter to Sr. Mariani Dimaranan," June 4, 1982. NOVB Papers Box 963 Fil. 5359. National Archief Nederlands.
- Snyder, Sarah B. *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network*. Cambridge UP, 2011.
- Thompson, Mark R. *The Anti-Marcos Struggle: Personalistic Rule and Democratic Transition in the Philippines*. Yale UP, 1995.

- Tiu, Macario, ed. *O Susana! Untold Stories of Martial Law in Davao*. Ateneo de Davao University Publication Office, 2016.
- “Trends: A TFDP Report on Political Detention, Salvaging and Disappearances, January-June 1984.” Task Force Detainees Philippines, 1984.
- Weekley, Kathleen. *The Communist Party of the Philippines, 1968-1993: A Story of Its Theory and Practice*. U of the Philippines P, 2001.
- Weizman, Eyal. *The Least of All Possible Evils: Humanitarian Violence from Arendt to Gaza*. Verso, 2012.
- Wurfel, David. *Filipino Politics: Development and Decay*. Ateneo de Manila UP, 1988.
- Youngblood, Robert L. *Marcos Against the Church: Economic Development and Political Repression in the Philippines*. Cornell UP, 1990.