

Philippines: Dictator Ferdinand Marcos was a national catastrophe, not a national treasure

Have Marcos buried anywhere else but the Libingan ng mga Bayani

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Full Statement of Walden Bello for the human rights coalition I-Defend at the Rally against Marcos' Burial at the LNMB. Luneta, Aug 14, 2016.

There is no doubt that Ferdinand Marcos was a remarkable character. There are few parallels to the havoc that was created by his explosive combination of high intelligence, deceit, insatiable greed, lust for power, and murderous intent. He was a national catastrophe, not a national treasure.

His war record was an amazing compilation of exploits that the US Army found to be pure fiction. There are thousands of heroes of the Second World War who should be buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani instead of Marcos. Among them is my uncle, Buenaventura Bello, a high school principal who was bayoneted by the Japanese and left for dead for defying an order to bring down the flag. It is an insult to his memory and to those of so many others that a master of deceit is being interred in a resting place for patriots.

Marcos' greed left the country bankrupt and \$26 billion in debt. We are still paying off that debt. In exchange for being bailed out, he assisted the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in imposing structural adjustment policies that increased poverty and inequality and made our country the sick man of Asia. Park Chung Hee of Korea was a feared dictator and the Korean people were right to revile him, but some argue that Park had a bit of redeeming value in that some of his economic policies contributed to making Korea a tiger economy. Marcos, in contrast, terrorized the people while also sucking the economy dry. *Sa wika ng mga mambababoy, si Marcos ay "dobol dead."*

How I wish that President Duterte could visit the Commission in charge of determining compensation for human rights victims during martial law. In reading through the 50,000 valid claims, he would encounter a compendium of horrors done to the Filipino people: extra-judicial execution, massacres, torture, rape, detention, and displacement. He would find a man engaged in a war against his own people. Were Marcos alive today, I have no doubt that he would be tried for crimes against humanity in the Hague, like Charles Taylor of Liberia and Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia. Indeed, I think he should be tried posthumously by the International Criminal Court.

Burying Marcos at the Libingan would be rewarding deceit, greed, and crimes against humanity. Its message would be that dictatorship is okay. It would give the wrong signal to the young. Instead of healing the country, it would perpetuate dissension and division. It would subject our country to international ridicule since it would be seen as an act akin to burying the Mafia mobster Al Capone at the Arlington Cemetery.

Mr. President, please reconsider your decision. Have Marcos buried anywhere else but the Libingan ng mga Bayani. Salamat po.

