

MESSAGE

The Honorable Risa Hontiveros

Senator of the Republic of the Philippines
19th Congress



I remember faint details of 1972, the year Martial Law was declared. I was six years old. There were curfews. I would frequent a balcony outside my cousin's room, listening in on the adults. There was a constant flow of political conversations. Year after year, their voices became softer yet fiercer, as if there was a brewing, inexorable anger that they were conscious to keep at bay.

Access to information, to facts, to truth became increasingly difficult, as Marcos ordered the sequestering of major networks' facilities, such as Alto Broadcasting System-Chronicle Broadcasting Network (ABS-CBN) and Associated Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). Nonetheless, alternative independent media emerged, albeit slowly and quietly. Publications like Veritas Newsweekly, Mr. and Mrs. Special Edition, WHO magazine, We Forum, and Malaya were covertly circulated – all sought to expose the lies fed by those in power.

Martial Law was officially lifted in 1981 but there was still a shared despair, an acute realization that the country's social, economic, and political atmosphere was deeply and systematically changed for the worse; that it could take decades, generations, and lifetimes, for our nation to truly heal and recover, not just from billions of pesos in debt, but from intergenerational injustice and trauma.

By 1986, it was clear that the Filipino people had had enough. I was in college, 20 years old, when we began heading to the rallies at EDSA. For four days, we prayed, sang, and chanted. I saw with my own eyes how the collective spirit of a nation, how the better angels of our nature can topple tyrants and their ilk. It was momentous. It proved that our democracy was still ours. It reaffirmed that we, the people, have the power.

The People Power Revolution—an essential part of history, a necessary element of any Martial Law story—has been routinely diminished, or worse, entirely denied. It is painful to see how the very event that, as a young activist, had given me so much hope for our country, is being scrubbed away, as though it is dirt in our past we must never speak of, as though it didn't give us the freedoms we enjoy today.

TALA Online Journal's effort to chronicle the perspectives of Martial Law, the stories of our past, and the weight of our history couldn't be more pertinent.

We live in a time when the truth is muddled by social media trends and deliberate campaigns to misinform the public. Journals such as this, one founded in historical research, may serve as an antidote to the distortion, the propaganda, and the lies. TALA's repository of historical analyses, commentaries, and stories invites us to a better way of engaging with information, a deeper way of processing our past, which, in effect, can provide us a clearer way towards our future. ✨