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FOR SOLIDARITY, NOT THE STATE:
THE ERASURE [AND POWER] OF FILIPINO AND CHICANO SOLIDARITY
ORGANIZING IN THE 1965 DELANO GRAPE STRIKE

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In partial fulfillment of a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Asian American Studies and Politics,

2022-23 Academic Year, Scripps College, Claremont, California

Readers:

Nancy Neiman

Todd Honma

25 April 2023

Abstract

In 1965, Delano County, CA, agricultural workers celebrated their five-year strike and boycott campaign with new union contracts guaranteeing better working conditions and wages. The now infamous agricultural strikes led by the United Farm Workers in the 1960's were initially based out of coalitional organizing between both Chicano and Filipino union leadership—and yet, rarely do we learn this history of solidarity in mainstream narratives of social movements in the United States. While celebrating the history and the collective power of the Delano Strike, I investigate how the erasure of histories of interracial solidarity in public education sites speaks to state repression and systems of colonialism dictated by the American state. In doing so, I work to build a theoretical connection between colonial education interests and state-mandated curriculum as an explanation for the historical erasure of solidarity organizing in the 1965 Delano Strike. Through my literature and theoretical research, I found that the American state's interest in the historical erasure of solidarity organizing is based on dividing interracial coalitional power—organized power which could potentially be used to protest the legitimacy of the state itself. Therefore, education has become weaponized as a tool of state hegemony to further its own interests. To conclude my research, I celebrate the history, power and potential of solidarity organizing, gaining perspective and inspiration from our ancestor's histories which we reclaim *not* for the state, but in the name of our communities and the complexities of histories we embody.

Key terms: solidarity, American-Empire, colonialism, repression, education, historical-memory

I would like to acknowledge that I currently reside on and wrote this thesis on the ancestral territories of the Tongva/Gabrielino Nation. They are the original and current caretakers of the land, stolen through systems of colonization and now currently occupied by Scripps College. There can be no true anti-colonial solidarity movement without alignment and coalition with Indigenous struggle, story, and resistance.

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I would like to thank my family (in all its various definitions) for teaching me everything I know (and letting me know when I still have things to learn). Shoutout to Robin and Bruce for teaching me to be curious, loving, and questioning of the world and how it treats me, the people around me, the people I know and especially the people I do not. Thanks to Ev and Annie for teaching me the patience and persistence of sibling love; you all ground and humble me like no others. Thank you so much to my readers Nancy Neiman and Todd Honma, and my advisors Sumita Pahwa and Warren Liu for helping me across the finish line of thesis and undergrad! Thank you to all my professors and teachers and community-folks who have taught me to look at the world completely differently in the most joyful, healing, and inspiring ways. All love to my friends who have become family. Thank you to the historians, storytellers, teachers, narrative-weavers and memory-keepers who have come before me. Salamat!

Introduction

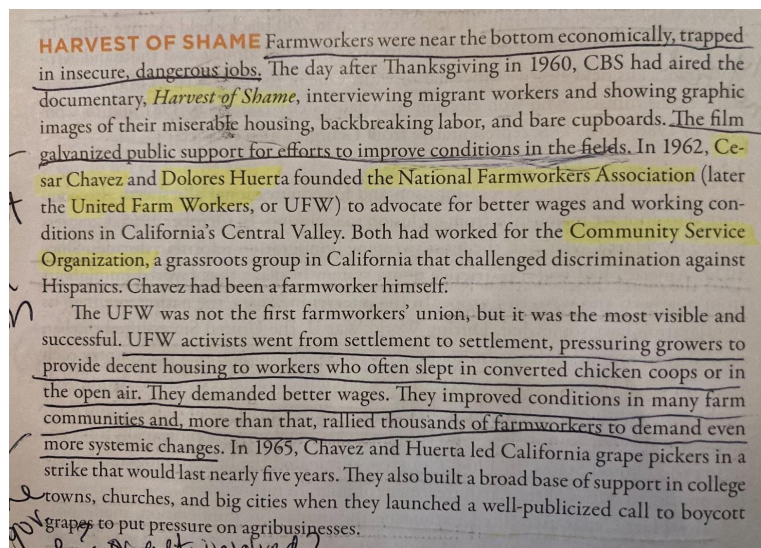
“I also feel the hurt of a generation. It’s our story, and it demands our love, and attention and respect, and we need to tell this story.” (Khokha 2018)

-- Dr. Dawn Bahulano Mabalon

Stories of Filipino/x/a American experience have been passed down to me from the moment I was born. From the moment my parents met, the moment my lola became ordained, the second my Grandma Acoba married a US soldier. My family is one of storytellers, and as such I have been lucky enough to learn my personal history through the stories of my elders, manangs and manongs, grandmas and yaa-yaas, elders and ancestors. But so many stories have been erased because of the colonial context that embodies America. I’ve learned parts of my family history, but always wondered where that left me in the history I learned in school. Growing up in San Francisco, I learned from a young age about Martin Luther King, Jr and Cesar Chavez as figureheads for civil rights and social justice (there are SFUSD schools named after both figures). I learned about the farmworker struggles in the 1960’s and 70’s, and how important it was to fight for your rights when infringed upon by an unspoken larger power. In school, we learned about the power of nonviolence, how you can achieve your goals with patience and perseverance, even against, again, an unnamed yet racist power.

As I grew up, I learned more about my family’s history while witnessing and experiencing how systems of domination were far from dismantled. I became more interested in becoming involved in the kinds of social justice movements I’d been taught, and was drawn to history and politics. In my high school US history textbook, there were two paragraphs dedicated to the agricultural rights movement, and no mention of Filipino farmworkers at all (Gilmore &

Sugrue 2016). Neither of my older or younger siblings remember ever learning any Filipino/American history in high school, much less the history of Filipino farmworkers. Since there was no mention of Filipino farmworkers, I did not even feel that sense of absence, since I had no idea that history existed in the first place. I never learned about the possibilities of resistance and organizing which had been endured before me. The curriculum quickly moved on, and therefore so did I. The story of Filipino farm workers stayed erased for the time being, in my mind and understanding of US history. This is the case for many if not most courses and materials on US history. Some textbooks erase the history of the 1960's farmworkers struggle completely (APUSH Textbook, PDF). Some include the history of Filipino farmworkers in the 1965 Strike, but mainly as secondary or background forces (Corbet et al 2021). Rarely are there academic portrayals of the solidarity organizing which went into the success of the strike and boycotts.



My high school Modern US History Textbook:

Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth and Thomas J. Sugrue, *These United States: A Nation In The Making*. New York: W.W.

Norton & Company, 2016.

When I began taking Asian American Studies courses at Scripps College, I started to connect the stories of my own family members to historical narratives I had never learned before. I traced the immigration path of my great grandfather through the fields in Hawai'i and my great grandmother's marriage and then abandonment by a GI in Arkansas as they made their way to Stockton, CA, the forces that brought them together and how larger systems, policies, and patterns shaped my family dynamics, for good and bad. Through ethnic studies courses, I was able to find my own personal connection to larger historical arcs in ways I never had before. The history became alive in my mind, it became present and personal. History is not just a field of study, or a topic of interest, but also an organizing tool that, for me, worked to undermine the authority of the US state (in the best way). Revealing the history of the US state through an ethnic studies lens quickly tells the story of colonial empire, systems of domination, racial capitalism, anti-Blackness, heteropatriarchy, and other systems of domination. By exposing these systems, the legitimacy and power of the state can be questioned, protested, rejected, and remade. It makes sense that the state may have a staked interest in protecting its *own* telling of history. But how does it protect that history? Why that history in particular?

Fifty-seven years ago in Delano, California, Kern County, farmworkers went on a massive strike against California growers to protest dangerous working conditions and low wages. Chicano and Filipino farm workers organized in solidarity against growers in order to fight for each other's lives and futures. The power and influence of the strike and boycott came from shared organizing principles and collective actions from Chicano and Filipino farmworkers, fighting against larger corporate entities. And yet, rarely do we learn about the intense coalition-building that was key to the success of the legendary Delano Grape Strike. What interests are tied to the erasure of Chicano and Filipino solidarity from narratives of successful

labor organizing? In asking this question, I will investigate how and why historical erasure is used as a tool by the state, to what ends, its impact, how communities work against those forms of state power, and the possibilities of education outside of colonial control.

Methodology

My methodology will focus on answering my research question through literature-based theory-building. After first providing a background on relevant theories, I will be piecing together answers by linking previous separate theories to the Delano Grape Strike in an attempt to explain the erasure of Chicano-Filipino solidarity. I will attempt to fill in the gaps in previous research by utilizing previous distinct theories as building blocks to answer my questions. In my writing, I utilize the term “Filipino” rather than “Filipinx” to reflect the language largely used at the time of the Delano Strike. Within my analysis, I will also utilize three critical frameworks: an “anti-hegemonic historical narrative” from *Introduction: An Old World Is Dying* by Jordan Camp (2016), the practice of “apprehending empire” from Victor Bascara (2006), and the practice of “thick solidarity” from Liu and Shange (2018). Camp’s narrative is helpful as a theoretical framework to work through historical events while keeping in mind the impact of state hegemony on historical memory. It helps to frame the “mainstream” historical narrative of state repression, power, colonialism, and labor resistance as one dictated by state hegemony, while keeping in mind that there are historical possibilities outside of the strict state historical narratives.

Utilizing Bascara’s “apprehending empire” as a research framework—in addition to an organizing strategy in the tradition of ethnic studies—grounds my research in the political commitment to hold the United States accountable for its history as an imperial power. My research is based on revealing the insidious history and violence of the US state, and Bascara’s framework helps to base these histories within the larger system of US empire throughout my writing. Thick solidarity is also a key framework in my research as a grounding principle. Liu and Shange define thick solidarity as “a kind of solidarity that mobilizes empathy in ways that do

not gloss over difference, but rather pushes into the specificity, irreducibility, and incommensurability of racialized experiences” (2018, p. 190). Rather than attempting to paint myself as a neutral academic, I hold the concept and practice of thick solidarity as a necessary framework in understanding that there is no such thing as neutrality. Neutrality and inaction function in favor of the state’s idea of academia, and therefore is not actually a neutral stance at all. There is no point to my research if it is not then turned into practice; with this in mind thick solidarity is a key grounding theme and reason for my research which I will keep in mind throughout my analysis.

Literature Review

Impact and Mechanisms of Colonial Education

The historical narratives taught in mainstream American public education settings are often dictated by the state via elected boards of education. Analyzing the role of the state in dictating educational systems helps to contextualize its motivation in elevating specific historical narratives and excluding others. Educational settings play a key role in identity and value formation, becoming deeply influential in cultivating political stances (Constantino 2008; Idris et al 2012). As such, it is in the states' interest to form educational systems which espouse a narrative that supports their claim to legitimacy (Hardin 2009), and which discourages any dangerous collective power (Constantino 2008; Nwanosike 2011). Critical pedagogy as a field has explored many of the complexities of education in relation to systems such as white supremacy, capitalism, cis-heteropatriarchy. The concept of the "hidden curriculum" as introduced by Philip Jackson (1968) within critical pedagogy encapsulates the untended impacts of teaching, and lends itself to understanding the impossibility of having schools be politically and socially neutral. Scholar Peter McLaren details how schools have been used as sites of systemic oppression in the past, and how government policies contribute to the problematic nature of many classrooms (2014). A formative framework for the structure and impact of US colonial educational systems on Filipino identity comes from Renato Constantino (1970). Constantino details the role of colonial educational systems, particularly the American colonial education system in the Philippines, and how that has emphasized American exceptionalism and American narratives over indigenous history in the Philippines. Constantino explains how the education system instituted English language requirements, and taught American culture and

values, which established a hierarchy in the Philippines based on proximity to English/Americanness.

This framework detailing the impact of colonial education in the Philippines is helpful to understand the unique relationship between the Philippines and the United States government and will help to feed into larger discussions on language, the “subaltern,” systems of domination, and American cultural influence (Flores 2013). However, I will be using it to analyze the impact of colonial education in the colonial American context with the help of additional texts on Filipinx colonial experience (Labrador 2021). Other relevant frameworks include the concept of “internal colonialism,” as originally defined by Robert Blauner (1969) to explain racial dynamics between white and Black communities in the United States as “those of colonizer and colonized,” analyzing colonization as a “social, economic, and political system” rather than its traditional definition “as a process” (p. 393). Internal colonialism explains how colonial structures enact violence against people of color (particularly Black and Chicano people) within the state-sanctioned boundaries of the physical colonial state itself (Blauner 1969; Gutiérrez 2004). This theory applies to the positionality of Filipinos and Filipino Americans in the U.S., particularly in terms of their previous government status as “colonial nationals” when migrating to or living within the physical state boundaries of the U.S. during the official American colonization of the Philippines (San Juan 1998). Internal colonialism speaks to one aspect of how colonialism has both adapted and yet maintained power throughout history and context, in the effort of the US state to maintain control over specific communities of people.

Another important framework is the concept of “soft power,” defined as state influence through non-physical or non-violent means (Nye). This will help to contextualize the potential impact of education as a mechanism of non-physical state repression. Important to note is the

intergenerational tensions between older Filipino migrant farmworkers and “Filipino-Americans [who] are here as nurses and doctors” and who “want to forget very quickly that they came from farmworkers” (Cowan 2019, pg. 3). These community dynamics can be attributed to cultural expectations, but are also deeply bound to colonial structures of success and exceptionalism. There is a gap, however, in literature dealing with the connection between colonial educational structures and state repression theory, which I attempt to connect to historical erasure in the United States.

State Repression of Labor and Solidarity Efforts

The organizing power of coalitional politics poses a threat to the hierarchy of the state and the power of the capitalist economy, which the state then responds to with movement repression tactics. This pattern has been demonstrated by the US state throughout the history of its existence (Boykoff 2007). Understanding the studies of state repression of labor and solidarity efforts helps to build a theory around how the state apparatus may have worked to erase the history of Filipino labor power, as well as Filipino and Mexican solidarity efforts during the Delano Grape Strike.

The United States has a well-documented history of physically, ideologically, and systemically repressing labor and union organizing, particularly when organizations threaten the established capitalist hierarchy (Oppenheimer & Canning 1978). The “apparatuses of repression,” as described by Oppenheimer & Canning (1978), represent a key framework to understand the function of state and capital power against movements. One form of repression by the state against labor power has been physical violence, such as in 1934 when “local police and armed vigilantes” attacked Filipino and white agricultural workers on strike (Lee 2015, pg. 182).

However, the U.S. has often minimized state repression to retain the concept of American democracy (Boykoff 2007). Boykoff (2007) has identified four key mechanisms of social repression in the United States: resource depletion, stigmatization, divisive disruption, and intimidation, with an additional ten “Action Modes” of how the repression is carried out. To understand the more understated, but still powerful, modes of state repression one must understand these mechanisms as well. Though Boykoff delineated ten action modes of state repression, she and other academics fail to discuss the role of education as a repressive action by the state, which I investigate.

Though Boykoff does not directly connect these repression mechanisms to labor issues, the mechanisms and action modes still apply to my research context. In line with Boykoff’s social mechanisms of repression, the state ideologically repressed labor organizing (this practice fits into both stigmatization and intimidation mechanisms). The anti-communist restrictions aimed at radical Filipino union leaders in the late 1940s and 50s serve as one example (Mabalon 2013). The state has also repressed labor movements by systematically failing to consistently uphold and defend the rights of agricultural workers in judicial and governmental systems (which can be categorized as stigmatization and resource depletion) (Vazquez 1990; Tamayo 1999). Current literature on U.S. state repression lacks analysis of the repression of Filipino farmworkers, and as such, that is a core purpose of my research. Additionally, there is little research concerning how state repression theory relates specifically to repressing solidarity efforts, and how people continue to resist those efforts by the state to erase them.

Defining Thick Solidarity and Anti-State Resistance

Solidarity has been defined as “collective action” (Nielson 1985), as well as a shared acknowledgment of suffering, and support in the fight for justice (Coulthard & Simpson 2016). Additionally, Roseann Liu and Savannah Shange (2018) theorize “thick solidarity,” which “mobilizes empathy in ways that do not gloss over difference, but rather pushes into the specificity, irreducibility, and commensurability of racialized experiences” (p. 190). Conceptualizing “solidarity” becomes key to researching the nature of Filipino and Mexican coalitions in the Delano Grape Strike, particularly when thinking about organizational dynamics and collective goals between unions and ethnic groups. State repression of solidarity efforts, especially interethnic and interracial efforts, are well-documented in the U.S. context (Kim 2003; Lee 2010; Gilmore 2018). Examples include both physically and socially (e.g. Model Minority Myth) dividing interracial and inter-ethnic solidarity (Middlebrook 2019; Yi et al 2020). State repression mechanisms of solidarity efforts are often similar to labor repression mechanisms, and both threaten the power of the state through the mass mobilization of marginalized groups. However, there is little literature connecting the erasure of Filipino-Mexican solidarity during the Delano Grape Strike directly to state repression, therefore my research will work to draw those connections.

Another helpful framework is the concept of becoming a “nobody” in the eyes of the state (Dean Spade Interview by Sarah Lazare 2017; Stanley 2021). Rather than strive to be acknowledged by a colonial empire such as the United States, in becoming a “nobody”—living without the surveillance of the state—people could reclaim autonomy and power. This concept views the “mainstream” narrative of the state—such as the mainstream narrative on agricultural labor struggles—as inherently tied to state surveillance and control. Therefore, becoming invisible

to the state may be a way to avoid the imposition of state power (Dean Spade Interview by Sarah Lazare 2017; Stanley 2021). The history of Filipino and Chicano agricultural labor solidarity during the Delano Grape Strike has been de-centered from labor movement histories, but perhaps this is an opportunity to understand the potential power reclaimed from state-based historical erasure. State-based narratives are not the only form of historical memory, and the framework of “becoming a nobody” is helpful to investigate possibilities for reclaiming narratives of solidarity. While defining thick solidarity and forms of anti-state resistance is important, it must be situated within the specific context of the Delano Strike, including literature on union dynamics, organizational tactics, and leadership tensions.

Current California Ethnic Studies Policies

The origins of ethnic studies have always been political, dating back to its mainstream establishment through student strikes and protests in the 1960’s (Umemoto 2016). Historically, the sphere of ethnic studies courses in the United States has been maintained to higher education institutions. Even in those contexts, ethnic studies departments are often targeted and/or neglected by the university or college (Wang 2016). However, in 2021, California governor Gavin Newsom signed law AB 101, which established ethnic studies courses as a high school graduation requirement beginning with the class of 2030 (Hong 2021). While some CA counties had already established ethnic studies courses in high schools, this was the first bill signed into law to create a state-level mandate (Hong 2021). There was one previous version of the model curriculum which did not get passed due to criticisms that it was antisemitic and too critical of capitalism. The final version “contains more neutral descriptions of capitalism and addressed various concerns from the Jewish Caucus” (Hong 2021). Though there is the proposed

curriculum, it is not required that teachers use it for the ethnic studies requirement. With the law, “there is no mandatory curriculum, allowing the districts to develop their own approach” (Tucker 2023). Though the bill has been signed into law, there is still significant debate over what material will be taught and how it will impact the students. There are significant studies which show the positive impacts of ethnic study courses, including higher GPA’s, “increased high school graduation, attendance, and the probability of enrolling in college” (Dee & Penner 2016; Bonilla et al 2021, p. 1). Even so, the debate over ethnic studies in California continues, and nationally we continue to battle even mentions of race and identity in elementary and high school classrooms (Tucker 2023). Understanding the current political landscape around ethnic studies helps to contextualize the importance and impact of learning about Chicano-Filipino solidarity during the Delano Grape Strike. Ethnic studies is not a neutral topic but rather has been intentionally politicized. Being pro- or anti-ethnic studies promotes specific ideologies and beliefs about the history of race and racism, imperialism, capitalism, cisheteropatriarchy, and other systems, institutions, and constructions. Rather than seeking to assimilate into the existing body of “American history,” ethnic studies courses upset the linear telling of white supremacy and “progress.” It is necessary to contextualize the history of solidarity between Filipino and Chicano farm workers within this larger battle for ethnic studies and all it symbolizes in order to understand the overall goal of my thesis, which is to upset rather than fit into traditional narratives of American history.

Coalition Labor Organizing in The Delano Grape Strike

Literature on coalition organizing in the Delano Grape Strike helps to contextualize how and why the state may seek to play a role in the removal of these events from historical

narratives. The solidarity organizing throughout the Delano Strike helped to increase the power and pressure against the growers, while sending out a far-reaching message about the scale and importance of ongoing agricultural struggles (Garcia 2013). In short, coalition building was central to the success of the Delano strike (Garcia 2013). Significant historical studies and literature analyze the history of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee and National Farm Workers Association coalition in the Delano Grape Strike (Kushner 1975; Cruz 2016; Kim 2017). As I am focusing more on the Filipino organizers, literature detailing the role of prominent Filipino labor leaders, such as Larry Itliong and Philip Vera Cruz, who helped to facilitate the coalition from the AWOC side, help to contextualize the goals and motivations of the movement from the Filipino organizer perspective as well (Rony 2000; Chang 2013).

Though many Filipino and Mexican strike leaders established solidarity efforts and coalitional politics between the AWOC and the NFWA, tensions also existed between leaders as the UFWOC became more influential and powerful. While much of the literature on union dynamics focuses on the solidarity organizing between unions, it is also necessary to analyze conflicts between AWOC and NFWA leadership, which fluctuated between interpersonal disagreements as well as different perspectives on union strategy (Mabalon 2013). Many of these studies focus on critical perspectives on Cesar Chávez (Chang 2013, Vera Cruz et al 1992). Additionally, a relevant framework for understanding the Delano Strike itself is literature on the role of the state in supporting non-violent protests and repressing militant ones (Cobb 2015; Gelderloof 2018). There was initially some disagreement between the unions on non-violent versus violent protest, so connecting this conflict to the role of state power is important. These tensions contextualize how the state apparatus may have intervened to inflame conflicts and interject in organizing, and therefore how the state may have impacted the erasure of the

solidarity organizing during the Delano Grape Strike. In contextualizing existing literature on Filipino-Chicano coalition building, I hope to explain the intent and impact of historical erasure by situating the role of colonial education systems, state repression theory, and thick-solidarity within both the Strike itself and how it is remembered today.

In having defined the extent and structure of United States colonial systems, particularly education, we are able to contextualize the ideology of American exceptionalism internalized as historical narrative in both the United States and the Philippines. We see the direct impact of these educational processes through functions of “internal colonialism” and “soft power” as discussed above. I hope to connect colonial education systems to state repression theory as defined above, and in doing so solve some of the mysteries behind why the history of the Filipino and Chicano solidarity has been erased from the history of agricultural struggle. Contextualizing anti-state resistance and the organizing of the Delano Strike further helps to understand why and how marginalized groups dissent from and resist against the state. I argue that colonial educational systems create processes of state repression, which actively erase the historical and political memory of solidarity efforts in order to dispel organized power against the state. But in the name of contestation and radical remembrance, I hold that remembering histories of organized solidarity amongst marginalized groups like the Delano Strike is a form of resistance against state colonial powers, particularly the United States.

Section 1

Dividing and Conquering Since Kindergarten: Connecting Colonial Education Systems and State Repression Theory

In the land now branded as America, there is a history of educational systems reflecting the interests of US state control. Education is an influential sphere in which the powers in charge can insert beneficial narratives and create norms for students to adopt throughout their lives, good and bad (Idris et al 2012). In the domestic United States, the federal government allows for education requirements to be decided by state governments (“State Education Practices” 2017). However, the Department of Education still acts as the larger federal power in educational affairs, including private, charter, and home schools in addition to public education (“Federal Role in Education” 2021). In California, education for children ages 6-18 is state-mandated (“State Education Practices” 2017), with institutional powers holding students punitively accountable if absent (“Truancy - Attendance Improvement” 2022). State-sanctioned public education has historically been entirely political; in all aspects (attendance, curriculum, staff, institutional structure) the state attempts to enable a specific beneficial narrative. The concept of public education in and of itself is not repressive. Conservative advocates who argue that teaching about race in any sense is a repressive act of state power are not working towards political liberation from the state; they are acting in service of the “antistate state” as coined by Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2017). They “gain state power by denouncing state power,” accumulating electoral power by protesting state curriculums (Gilmore 2017, p. 43). Alternatively, public education is often understood as a positive resource and a key part of maintaining democratic governments. However, the state has historically utilized it as a tool to further the structures of

colonialism and white supremacy. Educational control presents the state with an opportunity to craft and establish its colonial hegemonic narrative of history, society, and culture (Nwanosike 2020). In dictating a hegemonic version of history, the state is able to erase events and structures which may cause backlash and resistance to its control. Education presents a space wherein the state has the power to dispel dissenting bodies of knowledge, which works to discourage solidarity and coalition building. The American state is no different; it uses education to teach people not to organize against it. As such, the United States government has been intentional in its colonial pursuits to take hold of education systems in the territories which it colonizes.

Throughout the period of official US colonization in the Philippines, the American state utilized education as a tool of empire and colonial reinforcement. For example, in the American education system established in the Philippines, students were taught English and discouraged from speaking any Filipino languages. This created a hierarchy based on someone's proficiency in English; people who spoke English had a proximity to American institutions, and therefore a closeness to American opportunity and idealized exceptionalism (Constantino 1970). In addition to prioritizing English, American culture and values were taught above the history and culture of the Philippines, especially Indigenous history (Constantino 1970). The establishment of American educational standards in the Philippines is a clear example of the institution of state hegemony through education. American schools in the Philippines espoused the authority of the United States as a rightful colonial power, cultivating colonial hegemony and American exceptionalism in the Philippines. In addition to utilizing education as a means of colonial control in the Philippines, the American colonial state utilized paternalistic ideology to portray the Philippines as its "little Brown Brother" in comparison to the shining streets of America in

the effort to recruit and expand Filipino migration labor to the domestic US (“The Philippine War - Suppressing An Insurrection - Presidio of San Francisco” 2015).

The colonial education system instituted in the Philippines by the United States colonial government functioned as a mechanism of state repression through the subduing of Filipino national identity and resistance to American rule, mainly through “stigmatization” and “divisive disruption” mechanisms as defined by Boykoff (2007). In teaching only English, the American state isolated anyone who spoke Filipino languages, establishing “stigmatization” mechanisms by immediately creating a separation between people who spoke English and those who did not. People who did speak English were rewarded with a sense of proximity to America, while those who did not suffered a lack of opportunity controlled and distributed by the American colonial state. The state actively worked to repress and disadvantage any population who did not acquiesce to English, the language of American colonizers. Through education, the American state worked to establish American hegemony in place of narratives of Philippine independence, embodying “divisive disruption” as a mechanism of state repression. Constantino argues this in that “Indigenous Filipino ideals were slowly eroded in order to remove the last vestiges of resistance” (pg. 430 Constantino). Narratives of American necessity and legitimacy worked to actively divide and disperse the movement for Philippine independence. The American educational system espoused the legitimacy of the US state to be present in the Philippines, discouraging the organization of people against US colonizers. In the active dispersion of anti-colonial ideals, the US state used divisive disruption as a state repression mechanism in order to maintain their power in the Philippines. The educational systems which the United States established during their official colonization period in the Philippines are still present today, in impact, structure, and memory.

A modern day example of historical erasure in the Philippines can be found in the election of Bongbong Marcos in the Philippines, who was elected just over 30 years after his father and dictator Ferdinand Marcos was forcibly pushed out of office by the People's Power rebellion. Though the people spoke loudly and forcibly pushed him out of office to democratically elect a new leader, historical erasure and a new version of history has erased much of that history in the Philippines—so much so that Marcos' son was elected president of the Philippines 40 years after the people had forcibly pushed his father out of office. This is the power of historical erasure.

By analyzing the ways in which Filipino history was erased through American colonial education structures, we can look at how those patterns translate to the experiences of Filipino/x/a's as “previous” colonial subjects while in the domestic United States, specifically using the frameworks of “internal colonialism” and “soft power” as defined in the previous section (Blauner 1969; Gutiérrez 2004; Nye 1990). In recognizing both the similarities and differences between American colonial education structures in the Philippines and in the U.S., I posit that internal colonialism applies to Filipino/x/a Americans in that it works to erase histories of resistance against the American state in the name of colonial hegemony (just as it did in the Philippines). Internal colonialism acts to position groups within a “colonizer” and “colonized” binary (Blauner 1969): maintaining colonial power in the colonial state itself through both physical means and through narratives of essentialism, exclusion, and assimilation (San Juan 1998). The latter systems can also be understood as soft power mechanisms—non-physical, yet still accomplishing the state's agenda (Nye 1990). When put into the context of schools and education in the U.S., internal colonialism and soft power come together to explain the US state's interest and method of introducing colonial logics into classrooms. In the case of Filipinos in the

United States—and specifically in the Delano Grape Strike—the dual framework of internal colonialism and soft power prove the role of the American State in utilizing educational structures for historical erasure towards a global colonial agenda. For example, if Filipino/American history were to be taught in American schools, there would be the danger of exposing the intense Filipino resistance to the American colonialism embodied by the Filipino-American War. The legitimacy of America's involvement and connection to the Philippines might be questioned, and constituents might then protest their categorization and participation as "Americans." As such, the state's use of soft power can mitigate the cultural and political positioning of Filipinos in the United States in favor of American power so as to discourage radical retribution against American colonialism. Though education may be a somewhat less visible form of state interference, in that it is not physically violent, these frameworks help to prove that current educational systems can be abused by the state functioning in the name of colonial hegemony.

The impacts of colonial state education, as it was in the Philippines, perpetuates a very specific historical narrative, wherein only specific key figures, events, and dates are state sanctioned to be taught as history in schools. In the history of social movements, the United States' educational system has emphasized the visibility of non violent civil rights struggles, while sidelining and erasing the role of armed struggle in furthering social movement agendas (Gelderloos 2007, Cobb 2014). In the early stages of organizing the Delano Strike, Filipino strikers were prepared for an armed strike, as trade-union strikes had traditionally been organized (Mabalon 2013). However, the National Farm Workers Association discouraged militant action in favor of nonviolent protest. Why might the American state advocate for the exposure of non-violent social movements (such as Cesar Chavez as a figurehead for agricultural struggle)

while ignoring the impact of potentially violent ones (such as Filipino organizers willing to engage in militant struggle)? In endorsing non-violent protests and figures and “stigmatizing” violent ones, the state legitimizes nonviolent dissent as the only path available to constituents against state violence while repressing armed struggle possibilities. The state enacts “divisive disruption” through dividing histories of organized resistance as morally superior (non-violent and successful) and morally inferior (violent and destructive), as seen in the mainstream historical telling of 1960s agricultural struggles as nonviolent movements. The state has an active history of encouraging and forcing social movements into “passive” means of resistance, whereas the state is able to claim “the role of the sole legitimate purveyor of violent force” (Gelderloos 2007, p. 32). Alternatively, violent anti-state struggle presents a danger against the state’s own violent power (Gelderloos 2007). In the effort to dissuade people from militant means of resistance, armed struggle is portrayed as beneath the moral authority of American citizens, with iconic figures such as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. or Cesar Chavez upheld by the state to prove the power of non-violence, and figures such as Malcom X being villainized or erased for even questioning non-violent resistance (and figures such as Dolores Huerta erased almost entirely from the conversation). In actively erasing and marginalizing histories and possibilities for armed struggle against state violence through educational restrictions, the state blatantly embodies mechanisms of state repression against histories of armed struggle.

Just as histories of armed struggle against the American state are marginalized, the mainstream narrative of the agricultural struggle of the 1960’s often excludes the stories of Chicano/Filipino coalition organizing. Colonial education and American state repression go hand in hand with furthering the colonial interests of the state. In connecting colonial education to mechanisms of American state repression, we are able to better understand the interest of the

state in erasing the history of Delano Strike solidarity organizing. Though our educational reality is currently inhibited by colonial structures, it does not have to be like this. The work on undoing the harm of colonial educational structures is partly to imagine the possibilities of public education if the histories of marginalized communities were to be included, when movements for justice and accountability are not actively erased in the name of state hegemony and white supremacy (Hartman 2019). The other part is to actually design an education system that centralizes the histories and experiences of BIPOC communities. Educational spaces should be spaces of community building and historical memory, rather than the repression of marginalized communities. In order to better understand what is at stake in the American state's utilization of education as a means of repression against the history of the Delano Strike, we must also think about the power of solidarity and remembering our histories.

Section 2

The Pledge of Allegiance to APUSH:

Hegemony, American State Legitimacy, and Memory

What are the state's interests in utilizing historical erasure in particular to dispel solidarity organizing? What is powerful about history, in particular? Learning history is a key way in which people claim their identity (Idris et al 2012), and the state knows this as well. In conversation with high school history teacher Charisse Wu, she spoke about how some believe the purpose of U.S. history to be to create patriots. Even if this is just speculation, the state is clearly aware of the power of history; otherwise, curriculum would not be so regulated and controversial in the United States. The full telling of history does not paint the state in a good light. Erasure and intentional narrative setting allows for the state to dictate its image. History carries power; the state knows that and through erasure attempts to subvert it.

In understanding how the American state has utilized education as a hegemonic tool, we can begin to unpack the larger intention of American imperial hegemony. As explained above, colonial education in both the Philippines and the United States erases the histories of collective action, such as erasing the history of the Delano Strike. The histories of solidarity and organizing across state-sanctioned barriers gets written out of history through colonial logic. This not only dispels histories of discontent about the state, but it protects state hegemony. In protecting a version of state hegemony which focuses on a facade of democracy, the United States aims to sustain its image as a liberator, as the land of liberation and justice. From this we see beliefs such as the American dream and bootstrap theory come to life and maintain vibrancy despite constant information and experiences saying otherwise. The narrative of American state hegemony

remains powerful enough to sway the constant evidence which questions it (Bates 1975), and education is a key part in sustaining that agenda.

In the United States, hegemony props up the legitimacy of the United States government. The United States as a colonial power must maintain its depiction in the minds of constituents, in order to maintain its legitimacy. In order to do so, the state must maintain its image of it as a liberator, as a savior, taking on the white man's burden of educating constituents about democracy. Maintaining legitimacy as a state allows it to maintain sovereignty and power. Because of the nature of education in the United States, the intentions and motivations of the state translate into the motivations of educational systems. The legitimacy of the state is sustained through the erasure of anti-state resistance histories. With the erasure of anti-state resistance histories, there becomes much less precedent to rebel against state power. Legitimacy of the state questioned by coalitional organizing; it shows the collective outrage at the power and violence of the state.

The power of systemic historical erasure is cyclical. In our same conversation, Wu mentioned how it is important to note how teachers, too, are "products of the education system" (Wu, interview 2022). Teachers were once students, learning from the same educational systems still in function today. Most students in the United States school system learn a very condensed, American-centric history, and many of those students become teachers forced to teach those same histories. It is up to teachers themselves to add to the curriculum, if that is even possible within the confines of their specific schools. Wu noted how it is up to teachers to bring in their own materials to history classes, which puts the responsibility of telling a more authentic version of history on the teachers themselves. For example, Wu makes an effort in their history classes to incorporate histories of communities traditionally excluded from historical narratives, making

sure to include ethnic studies, feminist studies, and queer studies within their curriculum. Additionally, Wu mentioned how dependent history courses are on teaching to the AP US History (APUSH) test. Though Wu teaches at Urban School of San Francisco, a private high school, the influence which the APUSH test carries post-high school is enough to influence their teaching. The test is important to many students, and therefore Wu still includes lessons based on it, even though it tends to uphold a very specific state-centric form of American history. Bearing the responsibility to teach a more authentic version of history in combination with the constraints of teaching in general (time, resources, etc) makes challenging the normative history of the American state much more difficult for teachers on an individual level.

In reality there is a rich history of solidarity organizing, both in the US and internationally—one simply has to refer to the history of the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America (OSPAAAL) or the Third World Liberation Front strikes at colleges in the United States (Padilla & Palieraki 2019; Umemoto 2016). Besides historical erasure, these movements often faced physical state violence in reaction to coalitional organizing. For example, in 1969 the Black Panther Party, Young Lords and Young Patriots in Chicago formed an organization named the Rainbow Coalition of Revolutionary Solidarity, emphasizing multiracial coalition focused on class and racial struggles (Middlebrook 2019). The coalition remained intact until 1972, after countless and regular invasions by COINTELPRO to surveille, harass, and attack the organizations and the murder of Fred Hampton resulted in the dissolution of the coalition and deeply shook the individual organizations themselves (Middlebrook 2019). The goal of COINTELPRO was to disrupt the coalition until it quite literally could not go on, clearly enunciating the state's negative opinion on interracial solidarity.

Lacking context about collective action makes the formation of solidarity coalitions extremely difficult. It creates the narrative that every solidarity movement must start from scratch in order to build coalitions, and that there are no previous community connections or historical relationships from which to organize from. This absence discourages coalition building. This pattern can be understood as a form of state repression and soft power, in that it indoctrinates people into a state-based understanding of resistance histories. Most people go through history classes and the education system never learning about how Filipino and Chicano farm workers organized together to successfully bargain for better worker rights. State-sanctioned histories work to have us forgetting the community bonds and relationships made throughout history in work against state violence.

The specific political positioning of Filipino and Chicano workers as subjects of American empire speaks to the state's colonial interest in erasing solidarity organizing. The state has a particular interest in sustaining colonial power in order to maintain its image of superiority and saviorism. The state needs to maintain the narrative that their imperial involvement was to the benefit of the Philippines, of Central America, in order to justify its continued involvement in places like Palestine, Puerto Rico, and Hawai'i to name just three. Though state violence impacts everyone under its power, shared Chicano and Filipino retaliation against colonial structures presents a particular threat to state legitimacy, which also gives more reason for the American state to dispel histories of solidarity organizing. The Delano Strike presents a history and example of overall successful coalitional organizing against established powers. This precedent is dangerous; it shows the community ties which have previously been established, and which create generational knowledge for future activists.

Solidarity works as a threatening tool because of its potential to create mass mobilization against state powers. It is a fairly straightforward logic; the state wants to prevent large groups of people from organizing against it. One of the goals of solidarity organizing is to do this very thing; bringing together large groups of people, who may face different forms of state violence, but who all regardless face state violence of some kind, in an act against the state presents a real opportunity to contest state power. In Delano, Chicano and Filipino workers were able to organize together in the name of shared interests against growers and grower allies (Mabalon 2013). Filipinos and Mexicans in the United States had often shared similar experiences of exploitation under parallel systems of state oppression. This includes both countries being colonized by Spain, both encouraged by the U.S. to migrate for a cheap exploitative labor pool, and a similar racialization under white supremacy as inferior to white people (Thananopavarn 2019). But the coalitional organizing also points to the ways in which Filipino and Mexican communities were able to find shared cultural understandings, whether through religion, language, or youth culture (Guevarra Jr. and Guevarra 2012). State violence had impacted both communities, in different ways, but there was enough intercultural understanding that they were able to understand their shared stake in the struggle for their wellbeing and livelihoods. This sense of solidarity is a threat to state violence.

Conclusion

Halo Halo Love:

Thick Solidarity and Coalitional Politics As Anti-Colonial Resistance

What does it mean to remember our history? And what do we do next in order to keep the memory of history alive? I again offer the wisdom of Roseann Liu and Savannah Shange and their theory of “thick solidarity” as a guide. I understand thick solidarity against the state to be the practice of both rejecting state-sanctioned narratives of social movements and re/learning histories of thick solidarity. We choose to remember the Third World Liberation Front, and the power of marginalized groups working in thick solidarity to claim space against systems of domination. I acknowledge that the land I reside on is stolen, and know that no movement will ever be fully anti-colonial without solidarity with Indigenous people. We honor coalitional politics as a rejection of colonial erasure and hegemonic narratives, understanding that we have both shared and individual histories and that there is power in claiming both. Thick solidarity works as a pedagogical tool, an organizing value, and life manifesto, the list goes on.

I also offer the concept of being a “nobody” in the eyes of the state as discussed first by Tourmaline and then by Dean Spade, wherein invisibility and avoidance of state intervention becomes a form of resistance (Dean Spade Interview by Sarah Lazare 2017; Stanley 2021). Throughout history, the attempt for visibility in the eyes of the state has often only resulted in more surveillance and violence against marginalized communities. Rather than striving to be a “someone” in the eyes of the state, we can subvert state power by avoiding assimilation and visibility politics. We can reclaim historical erasure not by calling to be included in the state-sanctioned narrative, but by utilizing that erasure to avoid the surveillance of the state.

Inclusion in the state narratives of history should not be the goal. Assimilation is certainly not the goal of my research and thesis. Instead, the goal is to imagine something completely different from what the state has taught us to believe is possible. We dismantle the system through learning our histories, through learning each other's histories. Power can come from our communities, rather than the state. The Young Lords did it back in the 1960's, designing their own curricula which focused on political education, Puerto Rican and Black American history, and connections between daily struggles and larger systems of oppression (Fernández 2020). In Seattle, a new year-long course on Filipino American history was just approved in 2022, designed by educators and college students and committed to “cross-cultural solidarity movements, identity empowerment and community building” (Yoon-Hendricks 2022). In learning our authentic histories, in learning the real history of this land forcibly named the United States, we reject state legitimacy, and move forward the fight for collective liberation.

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