

**DEMOCRACY IN THE PHILIPPINES :  
THE AQUINO PRESIDENCY**

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**C E R T I F I C A T E**

The thesis entitled, "**DEMOCRACY IN THE PHILIPPINES : THE AQUINO PRESIDENCY**", submitted by Miss **SHELLY SONI** for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full for the award of any degree or diploma of any University or Institution. This may be placed before the examiners for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## P R E F A C E

This Thesis, "Democracy In The Philippines : The Aquino Presidency" is devoted to examining the origin and growth of the state system and democratic institutions, traditions and foundations of the Philippines and its erosion during the period of martial law.

An attempt has been made to study the working of President Corazon Aquino during her six year period in strengthening and consolidating democracy which was restored in 1986 in Philippines. The study also analyses the performances of the Aquino government in its mission to uphold the spirit of the "Peoples Power Revolution" and the impediments she encountered in her endeavour. In the course of research, the history of Philippines, from the pre-colonial period till the transfer of sovereignty from the US in 1946 has been analysed.

While working on the subject, latest approaches of research available were applied to make a comprehensive and analytical study on the subject. The approaches used in the course of research are the historical approach, the sociological approach, the dialectical approach and the structural functional approach. The approaches have helped in throwing light on various problems that developing nations have to encounter in the process of democratization. The work is based on both primary and secondary sources. It is expected that this study would help in providing further insight into the subject.

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**CHAPTER - I**  
**INTRODUCTION**



## Chapter I

The events that shook the Philippines in February 1986 symbolized the triumph of 'people's power' and the 'democratic process', over the structures of authoritarianism established by President Marcos since September 1972. The new government came ~~to power through~~ an extraordinary set of circumstances - "a military rebellion, reinforced and strengthened by the physical support of no less than a million people in Metro Manila otherwise known as 'people power'." Another statement highlighting the revolutionary and democratic trend goes as follows "A government that is instituted by direct action of the people and in opposition to the authoritarian rule cannot escape its being revolutionary and democratic at the same time."<sup>2</sup>

This clearly shows that people's revolution contained in itself a new wave and form of struggle in recent history and the fact that it was a bloodless revolution and first of its kind. When Corazon Aquino came to power as the seventh president of the Philippines she was faced by a country in a serious state of affairs because under the martial there had been complete abuse of power, weakness in the foundation of the economy, errors in economic management etc. All these factors showing that democratic principles had not been properly implemented.

Thus when she came to power through a 'peoples power' it

1. Mata Nestor, Cory of a thousand days, (Manila, 1989), p.7.
2. J Edgardo Angara, "Aquino's Revolutionary Government", Bulletin Today, March 22, 1986, p.6.

paved way for the democratization of Philippines; Her triumph through 'people power' has been described by various authors. As Walden Bello observes that "Mrs. Aquino's government is a triumph of 'people power'. Thus she depends on massive popular mobilization and she is not influenced by the elite." Others say that "her government has exhibited a spirit of revolutionary puritanism that is one who is precise and pure in morals".

Thus as authors point out Corazon Aquino restored democracy in the country through a mass mobilization and participation. This mass movement was against the oppressive regime of Marcos under which people were being denied political and economic rights.

But before an effort is made to study the political and social structures in the society the Philippine society it would be useful here to understand the essence of democracy itself.

Democracy has its origin in a Greek word combining two shorter words 'demos-people and kratos-power'. One scholar says that "Democracy is a rare and desirable political form, vulnerable in theory and practice and always incomplete in certain respects." Another scholar points out that "The core of democracy lies in the principle of popular sovereignty which

3. Walden Bello, "Aquino's elite populism: Initial reflections", Third World Quarterly, Vol.8, No.3, July 1980, p.1028.
4. Alex Magno, "Political Parties from Fray, We Forum, Vol.4, No.3, September 1986, p.7.
5. Graeme Duncun, Democratic Theory and Practice (Cambridge, 1983) p.3

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points out that government can be legitimised only by the will of those whom it governs."<sup>6</sup>

An apt definition of democracy was given by US President Abraham Lincoln. According to him "Democracy is a government for the people, by the people, of the people." This observation highlights the basis of democracy.

In a democracy there is freedom of expression, dissent or opposition and independence and impartiality of judiciary ; a system in which people can exercise democratic self-control and are committed to the norms and values of a democratic order; also where there is a trained organised civil service. In a democratic system there is a legislature as the focal point of the political system, organised on the basis of adult franchise.

The modern concept of democracy emerged in the sixteenth century. As a concept, democracy originated after Renaissance. John Locke talks of natural rights of man "right to life, right to liberty and right of estates."<sup>7</sup> These rights are therefore given to every man by nature as man is born free and equal. This equality should be extended to each man through political democracy.

From this concept, thus was born the postulates of Welfare

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6. Ghia Noida, "Nationalism and Democracy", Journal of Democracy (Baltimore) Vol.3, No 4, October 1992, pp.3-7.
  7. John Locke, Two treatises of government (ed) and translated by Philip Abrams (London, 1967) pp. 21-28.

State. Social justice, economic and political equality constitute the modern concept of democracy. It is based on opinion of the people. As a scholar said "Democracy means people's power and a democratic state is a community in which masses are powerful."<sup>8</sup>

The period under study shows the the emergence of democracy through a bloodless revolution. The people showed their intolerance for authoritarian rule and supported and brought Corazon Aquino to power through revolution.

Interestingly, Madam Aquino's coming to power marks a transition from authoritarianism to democracy. That explains why she faced strong pressures from within and without the political system. These emanated from the common masses. She had to initiate progressive reforms and promises of a democracy and freedom. She had to provide the principle of government responsibility, public accountability, separation of powers and respect for the concept of rule of law.

The study investigates whether Mrs. Aquino was able to bring about social, economic and political reforms as promised and how she was able to bring equality through democratic principles. Democratization also brings about political and social mobility. In democratic political systems, change is inevitable and these changes have a great impact on the people.

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8. Ivor Brown, Meaning of Democracy, (London, 1970), p.25

Democracy, as it was sought to be restored had certain trends in the history of the archipelagic country both in pre-colonial and colonial times. The basic issue here is to study the socio-political condition of the Philippine society and the progress achieved in context in the Philippines. For a study of this type, one has to briefly go through the pre-colonial and colonial times and see in what way different colonial masters had their impact on the Filipino people. In this connection the American role in implanting the seeds of democracy have to be given due consideration.

The other chapters deal with Marcos's concept of democracy and government and how the people ultimately discarded his form of authoritarian rule. Finally the study discusses Aquino's government and the challenges it faced in different fields like economy and foreign policy. Also how inspite of heavy odds restored democracy and democratic form of government in the country.

Philippines is an archipelago with more than 7100 scattered islands and islets.<sup>9</sup> Thus, political unity in such a vast geographically disparate political entity is quite difficult. It is surrounded by the Pacific, the Chinese sea and the Celebes sea. The country has a tropical climate. The land area is about 300,000 sq km.<sup>10</sup> Almost all islands have rivers, plains and mountains. The tropical climate and abundance of rainfall make Philippines a

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9. See Appendix I. p.175

10. Philippine Alamanac, Book of facts, Anrore Publication, 1990, p.10.

fertile land and thus help in creating an agricultural base. The country also has mineral and natural resources. Philippines has many harbours and land blocked straits which are used to build up maritime industry.

Boundaries of water and mountains make internal travel and communication difficult. Each of these natural divisions have different ethnic groups, languages etc. It has been observed by scholars that "Historically and in some cases upto the present, boundaries have cultivated parochial loyalties and given rise to internecine conflicts which inhibit nationalism and unified development."<sup>11</sup>

#### **Pre-colonial times**

Filipinos lived in scattered 'barangays'<sup>12</sup> which were small units, based largely on kinship. Each barangay was an independent social, economic and political unit that was generally selfcontained and economically self sufficient. The barangay was organised roughly along the model of the family whence it sprung.

As its head, 'the datu' was a paternal protector and political leader. The succession of the datu was based on

11. Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A Reforma, Government and Politics of the Philippines, (Singapore, 1988), p.5.
12. Barangay has been derived from the Malay term Balangay, meaning a boat, this boat had brought the Malays to Philippines.
13. Datu in tagalong language means, leader.

hereditary but sometimes someone could become a datu by demonstrating leadership abilities and prowess in battle.

"The community consisted by four groupings based on roles defined by their rights and privileges, their duties and obligations."<sup>14</sup>

The society was based on the principle of patron-client relationship that is was "paternalistic form of societal structure where relationships were largely person to person, informal and reciprocal."<sup>15</sup>

As historians have pointed out, each barangay (boat) had brought an extended family consisting of the datu and his family and followers. Thus barangays became essentially a group of extended families."<sup>16</sup> Thus the family in a kinship was a major force in pre-colonial Philippines.

14. The datus formed a group at the apex because of their wealth, power, prestige and following. Second came 'Maharlikas', the warrior group of 'freeman' who were born of noble blood and who served as chieftains in war and provided them with counsel in peace. Third came the 'Timagua' who made up the commoners who had neither the privileges of the datus nor the obligations of the 'Alipin' who were a subordinate and dependent group. The Alipin were divided into two, the 'Aliping Saguiguild' who helped in all kinds of work and whose children inherited their status and the 'Aliping Namamahay', who lived in their own houses but helped the master to build his house and harvest his crops and who accompanied him during his travels and fought for him. The servitude of the Alipin was lifelong. Cited in John Leddy Phelan, The Hispanization of Philippines, (Winconsin, 1959), p.22
15. Clark Neher, "Political Clientalism and instability in the Philippines", Asian Affairs - An American Review, Vol.12, No.3, Fall 1985, p.8.
16. Onofre D Corpuz, The Philippines (New Jersey, 1965), p.22.

As mentioned earlier, each barangay was a self sufficient unit with its own administration, therefore they had developed its own administration therefore they had developed an indigenous system of administration. Some of the datu or patrons established absolute authoritarianism, and some of the others were benevolent. The decision making totally lay in hands of the datu or chief.

In a kinship system "most of members of a community were related by blood, besides kinship, common economic interests and shared rituals formed the bases for community cohesion. The barangay was a social rather than a political unit each one a separate entity with only informal contact with other villages."<sup>17</sup>

Interpersonal or social relations tended to be informal and the "government was based on kinship rule and custom rather than on enacted law and administrative regulation. The value governing social relations and individual behaviour were the kinship groups."<sup>18</sup>

Like other peoples of South East Asia before their conquest by western imperialists. The Filipinos had developed their own set system of administration. This can clearly be understood by this observation :-

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17. Renato Constantino, A History of the Philippines, (London, 1975), p.28.

18. Onofre D Corpuz, No.16, pp. 22-23.



"Filipinos had developed indigenously their free village communities, tilling their own land, governing themselves according to their own customs and traditions, fighting each other on occasion, and combining in loose confederation under the always precarious suzerainty of the datus. Thus for the South East Asians, freedom, 'Merdeka' is neither an imported word nor an imported thing."<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, these units may not have been specialized political units but some kind of organization was prevalent. May be it was not democracy in the modern sense of the term but it had contained seeds of democracy which were sprouted later. The main urge during pre colonial times was to serve the family in a kinship where decision making was influenced by patron-client relationship. This trend of patron-client relationship carried on even after independence. This can be seen clearly in the party system which emerged after 1946 in which family loyalty overrode ideology.

Thus, political decentralization, ethnic diversity, fragmentation and isolation made the Spanish colonialization swift. "Only Muslims or Moros (the Spanish term for Muslims in the South) resisted colonization because the Sultanates of Sulu and Mindanao had consolidated there territories under one religion Islam with a common culture and political ideology they

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19. De La Costa, Reading in Philippine history, (Philippines 1965), p.25

had formed the leases for unity and political organisation." <sup>20</sup>

### **Spanish legacy**

The imperialist ideology of Spain sought to promote her powers and influence in the Philippines by both spreading Christianity and gaining from mercantilism.

The Spanish integrated the Non-Muslims into one administrative entity and thus laid the foundations of centralization in the Philippines. But the Filipinos had no direct participation or representation in the government. Therefore the basis human rights were being denied to the Filipino masses.

The Spanish assimilated the Barangays and appointed former chieftains as cabezas de Barangay (heads of barrios) and Gobernadorcillos (heads of the pueblos or towns). <sup>21</sup> These were the only positions offered to the Filipinos under the colonial rule. Thus in turn these bureaucrats supported the Spanish. These native magistrates known as 'principales' gained prestige and influence and they started using this influence to exploit the masses. During this time, a new class

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20. Peter G Gowing and Robert Mc Anis (eds), The Muslim Filipinos, (Manila, 1979) p.45.

21. John Leddy Phelan, The Hispanization of the Philippines, (Winconsin, 1959), p.127

of 'Mestizos'<sup>22</sup> came into being. Education was limited to a few leading families known as the 'Ilustrados' and the 'Mestizos'. This denial of education enforced the domination of the Spanish. As Corpuz observed, "The Filipino subjects were rendered<sup>23</sup> incapable of self-improvement through intellectual growth". Even the education provided was inclined towards Christianity rather than overall intellectual development. Only some of the 'mestizos' could go abroad for higher education and thus Filipino masses were not in contact with the Western World or their liberal ideas. Hence, the masses could not know of their political rights or freedom. Some educated Filipinos did try to take up the grievances of the people but they were very few in number.

By exploiting the Filipinos economically, the Spanish thought that the Filipino people would not be in a position to develop socially and politically. The Spanish had framed their colonial policy on exploitation of resources and human labour. They introduced the 'Encomienda system', 'Tribute System',

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22. As the Chinese were considered indispensable thus in order to assimilate them in termarriages were permitted in the formation of a new class of people called 'mestizos'. These mestizos were sons and daughters of Spanish or Chinese fathers and Halay mothers. These people could get education Keith light foot, The Philippines (London 1973), pp 59-60.

23. Ibid

'Forced Labour', 'Bandala System' and monopoly of 'Galleon Trade'. Another outstanding feature of the Spanish rule was its theocratic nature : the Union of the Church and State, thus, making the church powerful and giving the friars (priests) participation in colonial administration.

Despite their policies of exploitation, the Spanish contributed and laid some of the basis for Filipino nationhood and democratic self rule. As far flung barangays were brought under the central control of the Spanish, they laid roots of centralization. As John Phelan has observed, "The Pax Hispanica created law and order throughout the provinces like Luzon and Bisayars, Spanish forms of political organization spread and

24. Encomienda belonged to the military order in Spain, originally it was a feudal institution used in Spain to reward the deserving generals. In the Philippines, it was not a land grant instead they were given right to exact tribute from the nations. According to this the Spanish in the Philippines had got the right to collect tribute from an area of land which was granted by the king of Spain. 'Tribute System' - Filipinos who were in age group of 19-60 years old had to pay tribute, a kind of household or read tax to the Spanish colonial government which was even forcibly collected by the soldiers.

"Forced labour" A system by which the natives who had attained the age between 10 to 60 years had to undertake their forced labour for 40 days in every year. During near time, they were forcefully taken from their houses and took more than one year to come back. Bandala system' - one was to give some 'quota' of crops to the Spanish colonial government at a tower price. If crops were not sufficient he had to purchase it for higher price from the market and give it to the government.

'Galleon Trade' - Native people were demand the right galleon trade and only the colonial government had the right to do it. So they could not get a chance to earn foreign capital through galleon trade, cited in Renato Constantino n.15, pp.40-55.

Catholicism gave the Filipinos a kind of cultural unity." Even President Quezon had declared in 1936, "We owe to Spain the foundation of our national unity."<sup>26</sup> Thus, Spanish deprived the people of Philippines of political freedom but laid down the roots of nationhood. The Spanish also introduced, a system of bureaucracy in which bureaucrats were chosen from the 'mestizos', but these bureaucrats favoured the interests of the colonial regime in order to preserve their own private interests.

The economic exploitation by the Spanish led to the formation of the "Protest Movement"<sup>27</sup> against the Spanish by the Filipino masses. This was the first attempt of its kind towards the demand for freedom. There rose some revolts in Ilocos in 1807.<sup>28</sup> There occurred a Cavite Mutiny in 1872. This was a mutiny of the Filipino soldiers and dockyard officials in the port of Cavite arising out of the day to day grievances. But the government exploited this situation and linked the uprising to a number of priests and after a brief trial, the priests Jose Burgos, Mariano Gomez and Jacinto Zamora became national heroes and this mutiny became a symbol of patriotic

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25. John Leddy Phelan, n.14, pp. 127, 161.

26. Joseph R. Hayden, The Philippines : A Study in National Development, (New York, 1955), p.9 27. Movements against the Spanish Regime were called protest movements, cited in R.V. Jose, "The Philippines struggle for Freedom", The Philippine Science and Humanitarian Review, Vol. xxxvi, n.1-4, March 1971, p.1 28. In Ilocos, the revolt brokeout in 1807. It was against the Spanish monopoly right of tobacco and wine in Ilocos, cited in Renato Constantino, n.17, pp.102, 130-131.

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martyrdom. This gave impetus to other national movements. Thus, this movement was important in terms of nationalist feelings. Later, there was even a Propaganda Movement between (1870-1892). All these movements laid grounds for demand for more land reforms and equal rights.

To bring people directly into the reform movement, Jose Rizal in July 1892 formed the 'Liga Filipina',<sup>30</sup> which aimed at the unity of the archipelago. This movement aimed at social reform and a struggle against evils of Spanish rule. Thus, it was a struggle for democracy. After Jose Rizal Andres Bonifacio formed a secret society called 'Katipunan'<sup>31</sup> whose aim was 'struggle for independence from colonialism in order to end injustices and cruelties heaped upon the Filipino people, thereby laying the demand for democracy. When Aginaldo became President of the Katipunan, he called for guerrilla warfare against the Spanish and for land reforms but later negotiated a compromise 'Biak - na-Bato pact' and accepted exile to Hongkong, in return for money, thus lessening the effect of the revolution. So far as democracy is concerned the Spanish legacy is the concept of centralization and public administration. They supported the patron-client relationship prevalent in the

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29. Ibid.

30. Renato Constantino, n.7, p.153.

31. Katipunan is a tagalog word meaning association. The full name was Kataastaan Kagalangalang Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan - The Highest and Most Respectable Association of the sons of the people. See Adib Majul, The Political and Constitutional Ideas of the Philippine, (Quezon City, 1969), pp.3, 28, 29.

Philippines to their benefit because they favoured the elites who used give them as a free hand in the country with regard to trade and community. So far as the promotion of democracy in the Philippines is concerned, the Spanish could not make such headway, as they themselves had failed to adhere to the principles of democracy in their own country.

### **American Legacy**

The Katipuneros did continue to revolt against the U.S. in the early stages of US rule but they were very less in number. Before the US came to power around April 1899, the Malolos Constitution had been inaugurated on 23 January 1899 which embodied the ideas of liberal democracy, independence, political participation, political freedom and uplifting of masses.<sup>32</sup> Thus the first attempt of its kind towards the formation of 'Nation State' was tried. Therefore, from the very onset of the US in the Philippines and efforts was being made to promote democracy.

Unlike the Spanish policy, the American policy from the very beginning was designed to allow Filipinos an increasing share in the colonial government. So they tried to spread and inculcate pro-American feelings among the Filipinos by introducing<sup>33</sup> "liberal, democratic values and an American form of education".

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32. Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, n.11, p-32.

33. Milter Creighton Stuart, Benevolent Assimilation : The American conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903, (London, 1982) pp.2-3

The Americans believed that if the powers of government ultimately were to be vested in the hands of the governed, their education was essential to the wise direction of that government. Thus public school education was introduced in the Philippines. This system started education at the primary level and then went upward. Even the University of the Philippines was founded in 1908.

In order to get the support of the Filipinos, the Americans introduced a presidential form of democratic system wherein representatives were to be installed through democratic elections. This paved the way for the formation of political parties to elect their representatives to the decision making bodies of the new democratic system of government, "These policies as part of 'benevolent assimilation' assisted American interests to remain in the new colony."<sup>34</sup>

The first political party in Philippines came up in the year 1900 with the name Partido Federal (Federalist Party). This party was pro-American and advocated the annexation of the Philippines as a state into the US.<sup>35</sup> Later on in 1906 elections were announced and many parties like "Partido Independista Imedialista" (Immediate Independence Party) and "Union Nationalist" (Nationalist Union) came into existence and

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34. Ibid

35. Manuel A. Caoili, "The Philippines Congress and the Political Order" cited in, Renato Velas Wo and Sylveno Mahivo, The Philippines Legislature Reader, (Quezon City, 1989), pp.2-3.



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later formed one party called "Partido Nacionilista (Nationalist Party)".<sup>36</sup> Thus, with the formation of political parties, democratic norms and values were adhered to in Philippines.

The Americans believed, that if powers of the government were to be vested with the people, education was essential in the wise direction of government. So they introduced the public school education system to 'inculcate the core values of democracy, honesty and patriotism',<sup>37</sup> To serve this end, the Univeristy of Philippines was founded in 1908.

As a result of this political socialization there developed the "system of electoral practices, system of party government, jurisprudence, doctrines of constitutionalism and theories of administrative management."<sup>38</sup> All these factors are an integrated part of democracy.

The US rule in the Philippines could be viewed in three phases. **The first phase (1900-1915)** can be described as one of the developing mechanisms for self government and initiation of land reforms based on William Tafts proposals. The Organic Act of 1902 gave importance to civil liberties, national legislature and supreme court with a Filipino Chief Justice. **The second phase (1913-1921)** put emphasis on establishment of political parties and holding elections. The two parties being Federalista and Nationalisata. This phase emphasized on capitalism, free

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36. Onofre D. Corpuz, n.16, p.60

37. Ibid, p.69

38. Ibid

enterprise, foreign trade and agricultural export. This was a new functional democratic system based on the US model. The Jones Act was passed in this phase in 1916 reiterating the intention of the US to recognise Philippines as an independent state. **The Third Phase from 1921** began with the establishment of the commonwealth in the Philippines. This phase was characterized by a high degree of self-government, freedom of opinion, a government in which power of the state was vested in the Filipino leaders with their own legislature and judiciary.

All these acts and their implementation increased political participation, thus unfolding democracy as the US sought it to be. Although Americans, professed to train Filipinos in democratic self-government but they did not create the necessary conditions for democracy to take roots and flourish. Moreover, by perpetuating the policy of free trade, the Americans increased economic dependency of the Filipinos and did not prepare the Filipinos for any kind of military self-defence. "The Americans found it necessary to form an alliance with the Filipino elite and retain the Oligarchic politics and centralized administration which were part of Spanish Legacy and leave untouched the mass <sup>39</sup>grievances". Thus, they too sided with the elite.

### **Japanese Legacy**

The Japanese invaded the Philippines around World War II, they introduced a policy of 'Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity

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39. John H. Esterline and Mac H. Esterline, How Dominos Fell, (USA 1985), p.341.

Sphere'. Japanese wanted to reform the Filipino society "by removing US influence and reorienting it to Japanese 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere'".<sup>40</sup> To win the Filipino support, they even sponsored the second Philippine Republic under Jose P. Laurel as President.<sup>41</sup>

But the Japanese during their colonial rule committed many atrocities on the people and therefore, the people repelled them. This resulted in the Filipinos revolting against them and one of the organised groups of this resistance movement was 'The Hukbalahap Organization' (Anti Japanese people's army). Only one party, the 'Kalibapi'<sup>42</sup> was founded during the rule of the Japanese military administration with Jorge Vergas as its leader. This was organized on territorial basis at town and provincial levels with the national executive in Manila. This was done to appease the people but it was used as a tool of the Japanese to have control over the population. The second stage of their programme was the formation of a 'Puppet Philippine Republic'<sup>43</sup> which basically had no independent character of its own and was based on Japanese will. Thus, the Japanese left the country with an underdeveloped economy and destruction and neglect of the masses. The nature of the patron-client relationship during this

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40. Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, n.11 p.48.

41. Ibid.

42. Kapisanam Sa Paglilingkad Sa Barang Philipinas (Association for service to the new Philippines), cited in Keith Lightfoot, The Philippines, (London 1973), p.121.

43. Keith Lightfoot, n.22, p.123.

time remained as before and the elite still had all the influence and power in their hands.

The Japanese occupation however ended abruptly, on February 23, 1945, when the US forces captured the Philippines and restored commonwealth with Sergio Osemena as the President.

### **U.S. Colonialism :**

#### **Second Phase**

The first task faced by the US was to reconstruct the socio-economic system destroyed by the Japanese. Secondly, they had to fulfill the promises of granting independence to the Filipinos. They expressed their intention of preparing the Philippines for a democratic self-government". They suggested a two part programme for development of democracy in the Philippines, "to gradually give governmental responsibility to those capable of undertaking it and assist in building the socio economic base for political democracy".<sup>44</sup>

The basic aspects of modern democracy are a gift of US colonialism. "In the Philippines, the political vocabulary - electoral practices, jurisprudence, doctrines of constitutionalism and theories of administrative management reflect an American origin, the US also exported its language, its ideas of education, educational administration and its hierarchy of social values."<sup>45</sup>

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44. Stephans Roberts, "The Prospect for social progress in the Philippines" , Pacific Affairs, xxiii , June 1950, p.149

45. Onofre D. Corpuz, n.16, p.69.

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However praiseworthy the US efforts in promoting democratic institutions, one fact that was common in their approach to that of the Spaniards was to reinforce the **patron-client** relationship as the basis democracy. As part of their policies, the Japanese in the period of their three and half years rule also.

It was this Clientalism which formed the basis of modern democracy in Philippines as the US transferred sovereignty to the Filipino leaders on July 4, 1946.

Since the time the United States transferred sovereignty to Philippines, till 1968, the Philippine polity worked within the constitutional framework of **Presidential Form of Democratic Government**.

"Democracy requires the freedom and ability of its citizens to participate in the governments decision making processes and it requires its citizens to be patriotic and rulers should be giving selfless service to the citizens of the country and make policies in terms of national interest." <sup>46</sup> With the establishment of democracy in the Philippines, it became imperative for the government to adhere to the principles of democracy and create the conditions required to nurture democratic ideals and carry forward the democratic traditions and values for the posterity.

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46. Ivor Brown, n.8, p.27

Having established democracy, it was now the task of the Filipinos to develop a political and economic system that would enable the people to participate and benefit from the processes of decision making which effects them. Hence, it becomes imperative here to study the development and character of democracy in the Philippines from 1946 till the assumption of power by Corazon Aquino in 1986.

#### **Development of Democracy in Philippines since 1946**

To understand the nature of democracy in Philippines, it becomes necessary to study the party system and how each of the president's have worked towards achieving socio-economic and political equality which form the basic ingredients of democracy.

#### **Party System Since 1946**

"The basic structure of the Filipino parties has been determined by the social class of their members. Each party is made up of leaders who bring their respective followers with them. The followers owe a personal allegiance to the corresponding leaders, not to the party as an organisation. The basic party scheme was 'cadre based'<sup>47</sup> and not 'mass based'.<sup>48 49</sup>"

All leaders usually came from the same social class origins and many leading families used party connections

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47. Cadre based parties are those parties which have no formal membership procedures and are based on personal interest rather than of the masses.

48. Mass based parties are those which have a formal membership procedure and adhere to the interest of the masses.

49. Onofre D. Corpuz, n.16, p.100

for the protection of their own interests. Thus their basic political outlook was the same. Corpuz has observed, "Filipino politics is a politics of personalities and not of Principles. Kinship and personal relationships played an important role in party system where political parties have served the interest of the elite."<sup>50</sup>

Another scholar has observed that "Philippine parties can be reduced structurally to a working alliance of patron-client system, an alliance between several leaders and their personal following."<sup>51</sup>

Due to the paternalistic form of society, where political life centres on relationships that are person to person, therefore, the government that emerged was based on personality rather than on policy. "The cadre character of Filipino parties gave rise to defection as each of the parties was bothered about its own party interest."<sup>52</sup> The parties basically had the same set of ideas and style of functioning and the leaders came from the same social class therefore 'defection'<sup>53</sup> was not frowned upon.

The national parties were organized on the basis of national perspective but they inherited their character from the

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50. Ibid, p.105-106.

51. Ibid

52. D.R. Sardesai, South East Asia; Past and Present, (New Delhi, 1981), p.326.

53. Defection means changing over from one party to another.

constituent units of local origin. "Local factions, parties and alliances were the building blocks of the national political parties."<sup>54</sup> Local leaders had immense influence over the political parties because these leaders belonged to the elite class.

The two parties, the 'Nacionilista Party' (N.P.) and the Liberal Party (L.P.) made up the party system. Both stressed on the importance of a two party system for the maintenance of a stable constitutional democracy. Gradually these parties became the "agents of transformation of a traditional society into a modern one by synthesising both western and traditional ideals"<sup>55</sup> on the other hand. Each of these parties had its own promises and objectives for mobilizing the people. They used these promises to recruit members in the party but there was no systematic recruitment of members from among the people. This was due to the elitist nature of the party system which was cadre based. As observation made by Carl Landy states that, "political parties had to link diverse ethnic groups and members of the electorate in an attempt to achieve an organized polity."<sup>56</sup>

#### **Philippines under different Presidents till 1972**

On July 4, 1946, Manuel A. Roxas was selected the President of the Republic when Philippines became a sovereign state. The

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54. Carl Lande, "Leadership and Followership in a Philippine Village", in John T. Alister Jr. (eds), South East Asia - The Politics of National Integration, (New York 1973), p.292

55. Ibid, pp.156-157.

56. Ibid.



programmes and promises made in his manifesto to improve the socio-economic and political condition of the masses included "promotion of social justice; improvement of education; improvement of public health services; to promote freedom of opinion; to promote economic development; and to promote and provide a responsible and stable government for an enduring democracy."<sup>57</sup> He had to reconstruct a society in transition. But lack of social mobility in rural areas due to the absence of education proved detrimental to his promises. Due to shortage of finance, had to look to US for financial help. Lack of funds also hindered the implementation of land reforms. The law and order also became a problem. "Another task of Roxas was to gain Philippine acceptance to the **Bell Trade Act** passed by the US congress which entitled free trade to the US and also conferred equal rights to exploit natural resources till 1974."<sup>58</sup> Roxas also had to devote his attention to the Hukbalahap movement.

When Roxas died in 1948, and Quirino became President. His policies and programmes included "rehabilitation; achievement of balance of imports and exports; development of national economy; elimination of governmental corruption; and unification of the people to counter-defend against destruction allied to

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57. Onofre D. Corpuz, n.16, p.120.

58. American business and Philippine Economic development p.300.

communists.<sup>59</sup> But 'graft and corruption'<sup>60</sup> and lawlessness became rampant due to which, the Huks became strong. Thus, his promises of "restoring democracy, peace and strengthening of the morale of the people failed as, he supported the elite class, and their interests and paid less attention to the interests of the masses."<sup>61</sup>

Ramon Magsaysay's administration, in 1953 was different than others because in his campaign he targeted the weaker sections of society. In his manifesto, he included "restoration of people's faith in democracy; restoration of land to landless Peasants."<sup>62</sup> He also made efforts in breaking-up the Huk movement. He succeeded in this effort because "his field commanders adapted themselves to gurrilla warfare."<sup>63</sup> He also promoted industrialization in the Philippines and created jobs for the people. He paid attention to the development of villages and implementation of land reforms. All these policies were aimed at welfare of the masses. Initially voting was confined to the economically powerful but he extended "this to the masses in far-off barrios also."<sup>64</sup> Thus Magsaysay's term tried to break

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59. Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, n.11 p.40.

60. Graft and Corruption are applied to the behaviour of individuals and groups acting in favour of personal and private interests, contrary to larger national interest. Cited in Onofre D. Corpuz, n.16, p.79.

61. Amado Guerro, Philippines Society and Revolution, (Oakland, 1979), p.40

62. Ibid.

63. George Mc. Turnan Kahin (ed.), Government and Politics in South East Asia, (New York 1975), pp.139-140.

64. Ibid.

up the elitist nature of the Filipino polity but his death put an end to these reform programmes. Carlos Garcia, who became the next president in 1957 emphasised "a nationalism based on Filipino First Policy and of "attainment of respectable independence"<sup>65</sup>. The government adopted a tough posture towards the Chinese overstaying in the country. But settlement with the US on issues relating to 1947 military agreements proved unsuccessful. He could not make much headway with the land reforms.

Macapagal won the election in 1961. He campaigned to alleviate the conditions of the common man and introduced programmes like " agricultural lease hold system to replace share cropping; to establish a fixed rent on land ; to protect tenants from eviction; and to encourage the expansion a nationalist spirit."<sup>66</sup> He shifted the independence day from July 4th to June 12th.<sup>67</sup> He faced a series of incidents involving jurisdiction of US servicemen staying in Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base.<sup>68</sup> Simultaneously corruption went on and economic reforms were not achieved, and wealth and economic resources remained concentrated in a few privileged families. This prompted people to have a change. Proceeding martial law came to

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65. Louis Paul D. Benson, Political Leadership through Political Riders : A New Approach for Analysis of Philippine Provincial Leadership Positions, Ph.d Dissertations (Honolulu, 1970), pp. 139-140.

66. Louis Paul D. Benson, n.65, p.83.

67. It was Aguinaldo, the Katipunan leader who had for the first time proclaimed independence on June 4, 1898.

68. Onofre D. Corpuz, n.16, p.70.

be concentrated to families. Thus people wanted a change.

Before the martial law was imposed in the Philippines there existed freedom of the press. The media and press were outspoken in their comments. Media is an important source of mobilizing people for or against a government. But despite their maturity they sometimes "reacted over-hysterically to delicate political situations and created an adverse affect on the people."<sup>69</sup>

The church remained an important force in the Philippines. During the spanish rule, the church had been very powerful as (priests) were active participants in the decision-making process. But after the US occupation, "there occurred a separation of church and state and it became a well established principle of Philippine constitutional law."<sup>70</sup> The organization of the Catholic Political Party was not accepted very much by the people but "as majority of the people were catholics, the church did have a direct interest in the politics."<sup>71</sup>

The politics that emerged around 1964 was fractious and there was economic underdevelopment; rising in-equality in income; decaying political participation ; economic insecurity; and there occurred the breaking up of the traditional patron-client basis of politics.<sup>72</sup> Due to deterioration of the patron-

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69. Keith Lightfoot, n.22, p.138.

70. Onofre D. Corpuz, n.16, pp.115-117.

71. Ibid.

72. Loretta Sicat , The Political Attitudes of Young Filipinos : A Study in Political Socialization, (Quezon City, 1972), pp.79-80.

client relationship, and the inability of the parties to channel their resources in a proper way, gave way to "excessive patronage, corruption and exploitation of public offices."<sup>73</sup> This showed the weakness of the party system in the Philippines.

Bureaucracy became unorganized and the press sensationalist. When Marcos became President in 1965 the country was in a real badshape. He promised agricultural reforms and implementation of long deferred public works, like building roads, bridges, schools etc. "He inducted able technocrats and obtained an agreement in 1966 from the US to shorten the lease on 'US bases' and he proposed to change the 1935 constitution to be more responsive to the need of the people."<sup>74</sup> All these policies and programmes made the masses elect Marcos for a second time in 1969. But slowly Marcos shifted his policies towards self interest rather than towards the interest of the masses.

Thus, the "growing self interest, trade deficits, corruption, growing external public debt, favouritism, communist insurgency student strikes, poverty etc., become prominent features of Philippine polity."<sup>75</sup> Marcos took an advantage of

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73. Ibid.

74. David A. Rosenberg, "Conclusion : Premonitions of Martial Law" in Benedick J. Kerblut (ed.) Political Change in the Philippines, (Honolulu, 1974), pp.256-257.

75. Ibid

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the prevailing situation and proclaimed that martial law would enable the fulfillment of the promises of controlling lawlessness, restoration of democracy and to bring socio-economic progress."<sup>76</sup>

Marcos thus declared martial law on 23rd September 1972 and effective from 21st September 1972. Instead of providing the people any reprieve, the martial law aggravated the miseries of the people. Freedom of speech and expression was curbed.

The 'New Society Movement, Kilusang Bagong, Lipunan (KBL), which was launched by Marcos as a civilian party for seeking legitimacy virtually swept all referendums held since 1973. Elections were suspended and political parties abolished.

The process of elite recruitment, political debate and political competition, all so vital to the democratic spirit came to a halt. Certain parties that emerged in the first five or six years since the imposition of martial law remained regionalised. These parties took part in the 1980 local elections despite the fact that they were "handicapped in terms of national constituency, organised machinery and logistics."<sup>77</sup> In the 1981 plebiscite and presidential election, several leading opposition parties like "LABAN, Mindanao Alliance, UNIDO<sup>78</sup> demanded revamping of the COMELEC (Commission for election). The

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76. Ibid.

77. Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, n.11, p.100.

78. LABAN Stands for Lakas Ng. Bayan and UNIDO Stands for United Democratic Organisation.

left parties also developed as a main force co-ordinating various sectors of resistance to the Marcos dictatorship.<sup>79</sup> All the justifications given and promises made by Marcos since he declared martial law remained unrealized. Concentration of all powers in the hands of President Marcos led to blocking of all existing channels for redressal of mass grievances. However, it also blocked all channels of feedback. There was all-round dissatisfaction and disenchantment with the martial law, regime. The people were searching for a cause to work as a catalyst for uniting the opposition to fight against the oppressive regime.

The disillusionment of the masses grew as the economy declined and the society degenerated. There was growing unemployment, chronic deficits in balance of trade and balance of payments and continuing flight of capital. Simultaneously, there was growing international pressure due to increasing human rights offences. Several top ranking military officials also felt disenchanted with the Marcos regime. Fear seemed to grip the Filipino people.

The major contributing factor which worked as a catalytic agent in this process of all-round deterioration was the assassination of Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino, a liberal party leader and major political opponent of Marcos. This brought a host of political and economic problems which heightened dissent. Business activities took a nose dive. Political rallies became

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79. Ibid

endemic. The peso (the Philippine currency) was frequently devalued and there was a decrease in foreign investment, under pressure of public opinion, both at home and abroad, the authoritarian regime agreed to hold elections which took place in February 1986.

"The left wing parties and groups provided a radical opposition to the Marcos regime. They believed that no amount of participation in election and other political exercises would bring needed structural changes." <sup>80</sup> These parties while trying to provide an alternative, chose to go underground and engage themselves in revolutionary armed struggle. "The C.P.P. (Communist Party of the Philippines), its armed wing the N.P.A. (New Peoples Army), and the N.D.F. (National democratic Front) spearheaded the left-wing opposition. The M.N.L.F. (Moro National Liberation Front) in the Southern Philippines stepped up <sup>81</sup> its rebellious activities for a separate homeland."

As the election took place and the results started pouring in, there occurred the historic "Peoples' Power Revolution" and Madame Corazon Aquino, wife of Slain leader Benigno Aquino, came power promising the masses for restoring democracy and putting an end to the authoritarian polices of Marcos. With Marcos and his family having been forced to quit, a new era began in the Philippines.

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80. David A. Rosenberg (ed.), Marcos and Martial Law in the Philippines, (London, 1979), p.210

81. Ibid



The politics that emerged was characterised by a patron-client relationship due to the basic inherent weaknesses prevalent in the Filipino Polity. The Filipino Society, being under-developed, had a paternalistic form of societal structure and political life centered on relationship that were person to person, hierarchical and reciprocal.<sup>82</sup> The stability of a government in such a system depends largely on the nature and capacity of individual leaders.

Thus, the elite class which was powerful and rich and candidates who had been put up by them won the elections. There was a basic fragmentation, and defection was rampant. "The political parties depended upon the capacity of the individual elites to meet the needs of the people rather than being based on ideology, public interest and social reform."<sup>83</sup> The party system that evolved was more of a cadre based than being mass based.

### **Research Methodology**

To study the development of democracy in the Philippines and its progress, both traditional and modern approaches have been used to analyse democracy.

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82. Clark D. Neher, "The Political Clientalism and Instability in the Philippines". Asian Affairs - An American Review, Vol.12. No.3, Fall, 1985, pp.1-2.

83. David A. Rosenberg, n.80, p.130.

The historical approach has been used to show how democracy has developed in the Philippines by the method of selecting events and a time-period to find out how democracy came into being and where its stands. A study of politics through this method, shows how individual motives, political action, accomplishments, failures, and contingencies are a part of historical continuity and change.<sup>84</sup>

Importance has been given to the process of historical development in the country. Dialectism means the acceptance of two opposite forces interacting with one another leading to the advent of a new one. So in the case of Philippines, the Colonialists wanted to strengthen their hold on the country. The Second Force, 'nationalism', clashed with the colonialists force of the Americans. In the end, a new society came into force in the Philippines, a sovereign, democratic nation.

The scientific approaches used in the study, have been the sociological approach, made popular by David Easton, that social context is necessary for the understanding and explanation of political behaviour of the individuals. Here, it has been used to study how social factors have helped in the emergence of democracy. The structural-functional approach has been used to

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84. Louis Gottschalk, "A Professor of History in Quandary", in American Historical Review, Vol.5, (January 1954) p.279, cited in S.P. Varma, Modern Political Thought, (Delhi, 1975), p.8.

study how basic structures of Philippine political parties and system has helped in the development of democracy.

### **Relevance of the Study**

The concept of democracy is not new to the Philippines. It has always been considered the 'freest democracy' in South East Asia.

This study, is an attempt to show how democracy has developed in the Philippines, how political parties and the political system have changed with time and learnt from its mistakes. Since, democracy means social, economic and political equality, this study is of utmost relevance, because it analyses how Philippines has tried to bring about this equality which could influence the incoming generations. Moreover, an examination of the process of political modernisation of Philippines throws light into the various problems and prospects that developing nations where democratisation has been initiated, confront.

**CHAPTER - II**

**PHILIPPINE POLITY BEFORE  
AND  
DURING PRESIDENT MARCOS'S REGIME**

## Chapter II

Historically, Philippines had been regarded as an exceptional case in South East Asia, "although like other countries in the region, it had also been affected by Hindu and Confucian ideas"<sup>1</sup>. It never had a monarchy or any centralized state system. In the Spanish times, it had 'Datus'<sup>2</sup> who were heads of 'Barangay's.<sup>3</sup> These units were isolated and far flung and hence centralization and unification had been quite difficult. It was due to this very reason that colonialization of the Philippines became easy.

The Philippines had been colonialized by Spain, the US and the Japanese for three hundred and eighty one years, (from 1565-1946). Keeping in view different colonial experiences it had undergone, the Philippines inherited a society which was politically weak and fragmented. It has been pointed out by an eminent scholar, O.D. Corpuz, that the elite became powerful under the colonial regime of US and influenced the democracy. This is very clear from his statement. Political independence came to the indogenous elite without any struggle, violent or otherwise that had emerged under a paternalistic American colonial rule since the turn of the century.<sup>4</sup>

1. Onofre D. Corpuz, The Philippines, (New Jersey, 1965), p.40.
2. 'Datu' is a tagalog term meaning chief.
3. 'Barangay' is a Malay term meaning a boat. It represented a small kinship unit.
4. Onofre D. Corpuz, n-1, p.40

There had always existed a system in the Philippines in which relationships were always person to person. The stability of the regime depended on the capacity of individual rulers to meet the needs and expectations of their followers. The societal structure which emerged could be seen from the observations of a scholar who viewed that a paternalistic form of societal structure had emerged in the Philippines in which political life centered on relationships which were largely "person to person,<sup>5</sup> informal, hierarchial and reciprocal."

Since independence, there had existed freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of association and the country was governed by alternative political parties, alternately carrying the mandate of the people through periodic general elections. Despite this rosy picture, there existed the fact that the elite dominated the parties and used them to promote their own interests. The party system, as described by Maurice<sup>6</sup> Duverger, "was cadre based rather than being mass based. The parties did not have any formal membership procedures or task assignments. There was large scale defection as the leaders of the parties usually came from the same social group and understood each other's problems and their social interests were the same. All these factors, instead of strengthening,

5. Clark D. Neher, "Political clientalism and instability in the Philippines", Asian Affairs - An American Review, Vol.12, No.3, Fall 1985, p.3
6. Maurice Duverger, Political Parties (translated from French), (London, 1955), chapter II, p.30.

weakened the political system in the country. Further, each of the presidents, introduced new programmes and reforms especially in the field of land reforms for prosperity but most of these remained only on paper and were rarely implemented.

To understand the weaknesses of democracy, it is important to know the nature of the Philippine polity, the party system and the economic conditions in the Philippines, not only since independence but even before independence.

#### **Philippine polity before President Marcos's Regime**

Any government which is democratic or otherwise needs to fulfill three tasks in order to be successful.

They are (i) A stable government, (ii) Economic stability and prosperity. (iii), Maintenance of law and order.

#### **A Stable Government**

In a democratic system, which may be a one party or a multi-party system, a balanced electoral and a balanced party system are important for a stable government.

From the beginning of the US colonial rule, until independence in July 1946, there existed only one party, called the Nacionilista Party, (N.P). The Liberal Party (L.P.) came into existence in 1946 and from then on governmental power was held alternately by these parties till 1972.

Throughout the pre-war period (Before 1946), N.P. remained in firm control of the Filipino representation in the national government. According to an author, "The NP was chosen for representing this demand to the colonial government. But this demand could not be fulfilled as the US authorities kept the levers of power in their own hands."

The party structure in the country was elitist in nature. The basic structure of Filipino parties was determined by the social class of its members. These leaders had their own followers and "they owed their allegiance to the leader and not to the party as an organization". As already mentioned, the party scheme was cadre based rather than 'mass based'.

AS far as the elections were concerned, the pre-colonial government was based on rule and customs. Therefore elections were not felt necessary. During the Spanish rule, only the elite took part in elections for a few local government offices like the 'Gobernadorcillo'.(11) With the establishment of the US

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7. R.S Milne, The Filipino party system, in Jose V Abueva and Raul P de guzman (eds.), Foundations and Dynamics of Filipino Government and Politics, (Manila, 1 69), p.183.
  8. Ibid, p.90.
  9. Cadre based party is a party with no formal membership procedures, task assignments etc.
  10. Mass-based party is a party with formal rules and regulations of recruitment and admission etc.
  11. Gobernadorcillo is a Spanish term for the heads of towns. De Guzman and ASS. 'The administration of Electronics in the Philippines, Conference Paper no.16 presented at the EUROPA Regional Conference on comparative study on Electoral System in Asia and Africa. (Quezon City, Feb.24, 1986), p.2.



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colonial rule, elections became important as it paved the way for the formation of a representative democracy.

But the privilege of voting was restricted to the male members who were 23 years of age, to those who could speak and write in Spanish or English, and to those who owned property worth 500 peso, etc., thereby making the procedure of voting elitist in nature.<sup>12</sup>

Electoral campaigns were not mass appeals for voters nor were they platforms of social grievances but were largely dependent on relationships of its members with the elite group which were their support group. This could be understood from the following observation by Jean Grossholtz ; "The strength of N.P war largely dependent on a network of relationships that were based on patronage which its leaders and members established with local elites, similarly the victory of a candidate in an election was largely determined by the extent to which he had dispensed spoils and patronage to the electorate. Hence, the personalist conduct of elections"<sup>13</sup> The dominance of the N.P was due to many reasons like able leadership and US support, etc. On the other hand, tenant farmers, labourers, as well as the middle class were not important part of the party organisation. So, out of these, the middle class aligned itself to small opposition

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12. Onofre D. Corpuz, n.1, p.90.

13. Jean Grosshorlz, Politics in the Philippines; A Country Study, (London, 1979), p.139.

parties, like the 'Socialist Party', Communist Party",<sup>14</sup> as their grievances were neither articulated nor put forward by N.P. But these movements were not very powerful. "From the inauguration of the commonwealth government in 1935, upto 1946, the elite-based NP continued to be the dominant party in the Philippines".<sup>15</sup>

During the post-war period, a two-party system emerged in the Philippines. The ruling N.P under the leadership of Sergio Usmena was split into two factions. One of the two factions, became the Liberal Party (L.P) in 1946. Since then, N.P has shared powers with L.P which won the elections in 1946, 1949, 1961 and N.P had won elections in 1953 and 1957."<sup>16</sup>

Despite transferring sovereignty to the Philippines in 1946, the U.S was not inclined to give up its economic, military and political interests. Therefore, it supported Liberal Party, who in turn was "compelled to grant the Americans some rights like, equal rights to exploit Philippines natural resources, the right to maintain and retain the military bases under the

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14. Ibid.

15. Eva Duka Ventura, "The Nature of Philippine Political Party System and the role of political parties in Philippine government. Focussing on the May 1984 Parliamentary elections," Paper presented at the Europa Regional Conference on comparative study of electoral systems on Asia and the Pacific, (Quezon city, February 2-6, 1986), p.22.

16. Onofro D. Corpuz, no-1, p.93.

Military Bases Agreement (MBA), the Mutual Defense Treaty, that ensured the country's alliance with the US in times of war and the Bell Trade Act, that provided for free trade relations between the two countries for a period of at least eight years from 1946 to 1954.<sup>17</sup> The Liberal Party gave these rights to the US as it needed US support for its reconstruction and rehabilitation in the post war period. Hence, the democracy that emerged was abinito dependent on the US and from being "a colony of the US it became a new-colony."<sup>18</sup>

The US had withdrawn support for Quirino when he failed to handle the communist insurgency. Instead, they promoted Ramon Magsarsay. When, Carlos P. Garcia adopted the 'Filipino-First' policy, the US supported Diosdado Macapagal's candidature in 1961. Then they dumped him in favour of Marcos and the N.P.<sup>19</sup>

In 1965, Marcos a liberal party leader, contested the elections on the Nacionilista Party ticket<sup>20</sup> and defeated the liberal Macapal. He promised to launch many new programmes for the public like opening of health centers, building of bridges, etc. He also promised a stable government and economic reforms.

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17. Raul P. De. Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, Government and Politics of the Philippines, (Singapore, 1988), p.11

18. Hernando J Abaya, The Untold Philippine Story, (Oregon City, 1967), p.13.

19. Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, n.7, p.91.

20. When Marcos was denied an opportunity in his Liberal Party to contest for Presidentship, he defected from the party and joined the Nacionalista Party as Ramon Magsaysay had done in 1953 when he defected from L.P. and joined the N.P. Cited in Onofre D. Corpuz, n.1, p.102.

Due to his charisma and effective speeches, he was able to influence the masses. He was re-elected in 1969 as the president of the Philippines. "Thus post-independence parties mainly served as training grounds for the country's political leaders and it was doubtful if the party members truly represented the interest of the majority of the Filipino people".<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the fragile party structure and lack of solidarity in the political parties encouraged and 'defection'<sup>22</sup> which gradually hindered the growth and establishment of democratic structure and ideals in Philippines.

#### **Economic Stability and Prosperity**

In the pre-colonial times, each of the baragays was a self-sufficient entity. But with the coming of the Spanish, these barangays were united. The Spaniards established centralized authority.

The basic interest of spanish colonialism was commercial. It basically meant that they used the Philippine resources for their our interest and exploited the Filipinos completely. As a result, the economic condition of the Filipinos declined considerably. "The people went into debt as land prices soared, cash crops were grown instead of foodcrops, thus farmers had to buy foodstuffs from outside. The burden of taxation was shifted

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21. Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, n.17, p.92.

22. R.S. Milne, n.7, p.183.

to the poor."<sup>23</sup> All this widened the socio-economic gap between the elite and the ordinary people. The indigeneous industry was destroyed by the Spanish and the opening-up of Manila to foreign trade, the increasing penetration of the domestic market by western powers."<sup>24</sup> By this statement it can be understood that once Spanish opened up trade from outside other colonial regimes also came to exploit the Philippine resources.

Under the US, the economy did not improve much, because they too ignored the 'sensitive agrarian reform's'.<sup>25</sup> They allowed the traditional elite to maintain its long established social and economic activities<sup>26</sup> thereby further widening, the gap between the rich and the poor.

There were many other problems during the US rule in terms of economic development. They had introduced a free trade policy under which they could have free entry of their goods in the

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23. Jonathan Fast and Jim Richardson, Roots of Dependency: Political and Economic Revolution in the 19th Century Philippines, (Quezon City, 1978), p.97.

24. Ibid.

25. The Philippine economy is based on agriculture therefore land reforms, including proper distribution of land, tackling problems of tenancy, etc, played an important part in the psyche of the Filipino people. Cited in Micheal Cullinane in Norman Owen (ed), Compadre Colonialism : Philippines - American Relations 1896-1946, (Manila, 1972), p.26.

26. Ibid.

Philippines. This created 'economic dependence',<sup>27</sup> as the Filipinos were faced with the problem of buying US goods. The problems of tenancy remained as the US kept on supporting the elite who were the owners of land and had exploited the tenant farmers. Industrialization, was also not promoted, as the interests of the elite class would be hampered.<sup>28</sup> The other problems could be viewed as highlighted in the following observation : "Over-dependence on few exports, indebtedness, low productivity, corruption and inefficiency, miserable working conditions etc., were all symptoms of economic backwardness<sup>29</sup> present at the end of the American period.

The Japanese administration, on the other hand, was very strict in the sense that it imposed policies like establishing a 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' and did not pay attention to development of the economy. As a result, there were food shortages, inflation, unemployments etc."<sup>30</sup>

The economic condition had worsened and the country, despite being a sovereign, independent state, was heavily dependent on the US for its reconstruction after the Japanese atrocities.

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27. Economic Dependence means that Philippines was dependent on the US for foreign investments and aid.
  28. Norman Owen (ed), Compadre Colonialism : Philippines - American Relations, 1896-1946, (Manila, 1972), p.57.
  29. Ibid.
  30. Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, n.17, p.49.

:46:

There was a rising inequality in incomes to tackle, as the elite were very rich and the poor, very poor. Thus, the politicians were faced with increased pressure from the masses. They demanded job opportunities and economic security.

After 1946, each of the Presidents introduced a programme of reforms, especially land reforms, and other programmes to improve the economic conditions. But each faced his own problems in this sphere.

Under Manuel Roxas, the Bell Trade Act had been passed, giving free entry to US products for eight years. Due this fact, the US came to have control over the Filipinos in terms of trade as the US was more advanced and industrialised, and produced more goods for exports than the Philippines. Moreover, the US had control of the exchange rate of Peso (Philippine currency).

"The Philippines, grew more dependent on the US for its reconstruction programmes, foreign trade and national security." <sup>31</sup> Other problems which plagued the economy, was the rising population so much so that it became difficult even to provide enough food to the Filipinos. Due to inherent economic problems and the inability of the government to launch reforms, movements like the Huk Rebellion which supported the rural people, flourished. The Quirino government also faced economic

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31. Hernando J. Abaya, n.18, p.13.

problems like land reforms and unemployment. Thus, without concrete programmes, the economy suffered. The government faced problems like the slow recovery of exports and foreign exchange crisis.<sup>32</sup>

On assumption of Presidency, Ramon Magsaysay did embark on agricultural reforms as he had paid attention to people's grievances rather than of the elite. "He tried to lessen US control over Philippine economy by signing the Laurel-Langley Agreement, which emphasised the abolishing of US authority to control the exchange rate of the peso and parity rights and the US imports were to diminish rapidly."<sup>33</sup> Lessening of the US control, Magsaysay thought, would decrease US interference in the country and in turn the Philippine economic system would try to develop its indigenous industry. Unfortunately, however, his sudden death put an end to the programmes launched by him. Carlos Garcia on his part, had emphasised the 'Filipino First' Policy'<sup>34</sup> to show that Philippines development was an important issue but he could not make any headway with the land reforms and thus failed to bring any significant economic change for the masses.

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32. John H. Esterline and Mac H. Esterline, How Dominoes Fell, (Hamilton Press, 1985), p.341.

33. Ibid.

34. Louis Paul D. Benson, Political leadership through Riders : A new approach for Analysis of Filipino Provincial leadership Positions Ph.d Dissertation ( Honolulu, 1970), pp.139-50.



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Macapagal did introduce policies like "an agricultural leasehold system to replace share cropping, which also established a fixed rent and protected tenants from eviction.<sup>35</sup> This did appease the masses, but it was never implemented properly. He had also adopted an 'Open Door Policy'<sup>36</sup> for foreign investment, but used the money for his own benefit.

The other serious difficulties which faced the economy, were unlimited imports and heavy debts which caused the devaluation of the peso.<sup>37</sup> All this was due to inefficient economic planning. The effects of these problems could be clearly seen from the following statements: "Imports caused heavy drain on the country's foreign exchange reserves, due to this, the Manila Port was paralysed by a strike in 1963 leading to a loss of 100 million pesos."<sup>38</sup> In the two fiscal years 1963-65, the government was forced to cut the budgetary allocation for all government services, the industry lacked skill, the national economy could not keep pace with the population growth etc."<sup>39</sup>

"The policies of Macapagal led to the unihibited repatriation of profits through unlimited imports which depleted the government's foreign exchange reserve. The country was

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35. Ibid.

36. Bhagwan Das Arora, "Development Process in the Philippines", in Parimal Kumar Das (ed.) The Troubled Region, (New Delhi, 1987), p.250.

37. Ibid, pp. 131-132

38. Ibid.

39. Onofre D. Corpuz, n.1, p.131.

caught in a vicious circle of depletion of foreign exchange reserves due to borrowing from IMF loans thus causing depletion of reserves and devaluation of the peso etc."<sup>40</sup>

From these observations, it can be enumerated that the Filipino economy during this time was in a chaos and on the verge of a breakdown.

When Marcos came to power in 1965, he introduced long deferred public works like building roads, bridges, schools. He also encouraged scientific developments in the field of agriculture. He emphasised close economic ties with the US. Simultaneously however, he took advantage of the public outcries against the US bases by obtaining the US agreement in 1966 to shorten the 99 years lease to 25 years.<sup>41</sup> He also promised to redistribute wealth and reduce the gap between the rich and the poor. He encouraged industrialization.

All these programmes did help in his re-election in 1969. But as the years rolled by, these reform programmes were far from being implemented to the satisfaction of the people.

Towards the end of the 1960, economic growth had slackened as the reforms were not being implemented and also there were

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40. Bhagwan Das Arora, n.36, p.131.

41. David Rosenburg, Marcos and Martial Law in the Philippines, (London, 1979), p.13.

many problems, like lack of industrialization, devaluation of the peso,<sup>42</sup> depletion of foreign exchange reserves.

The economic condition of the Philippines, can be clearly seen from the following observation:

"trade deficits, increasing money supply, growing external public debt, declining foreign exchange reserves, rising consumer index and widening gaps in income distribution had become main features of the economy. During 1966 to 1970 the deficits incurred annually, averaged to 31.2 percent. The outstanding external debt had quadrupled from fiscal year 1960 to 1969. It had grown from \$ 177 million in 1960 to \$ 342 million in 1965 and to \$ 926 million in 1970."<sup>43</sup>

All these factors strengthened the Communist Party of the Philippines. 'Philippine Communist Party; Marxist-Leninist' (PKP-ML) was established in 1968 and its armed wing, the 'New Peoples Army' (N.P.A) was established in 1969.

Due to economic problems, the poverty increased. The poor had been exploited and the reforms promised had not been delivered. The levels of poverty to which the people fell could well be assessed from the observations of J.B. Laurel, the

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42. Devaluation of the peso had occurred even during Macapagal's time because the country did not have sufficient amount of capital and its foreign exchange reserve had depleted leading to increase in prices of goods, cited in David Rosenberg, n.41, p.16

43. Bhagwan Das Arora, n.36, p.252.

speaker of the Philippine House of Representatives :

"Barely 7 percent of our population enjoy a living income while 93 percent live on a hand to mouth existence with the vast majority doomed to a life of misery and want. No society can endure these conditions for long." 44

About land reforms programmes as on June 30, 1976, J.B, Laurel said "only 154 municipalities had been declared as land reform areas and very few tenants were converted into lease holders. From 1966 to 1969, only 708 hectares had been acquired by land authority and at this rate it would take 1300 years before the then tenants would be converted into land cultivators." 45

On the other hand, the US business men had entrenched themselves into the economy, as their investments in Philippines had increased due to the open door policy. For example, the US investments had grown to 'US \$ 836 million', constituting 73.4 percent of the total foreign investment. 46

### **Maintenance of Law and Order**

In the colonial regimes, there was basically an authoritarian rule, thus law and order was maintained by

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44. 'Magna Carta of Social Justice and Economic Freedom', Appendix 'A' in J.B. Laurel Jr., J.B. Laurel, then Speaker of the Philippine House of Representatives for Speaking on a Joint Resolution (under the title in the house on 3rd May, 1969), cited in Bhagwan Das Arora, n.36, p.128.

45. J.B. Laurel Jr., Report on National Economy, (Manila 1971), p.42.

46. David Rosenburg, n.41, p.122.

suppressing the masses. With the advent of the independence of Philippines in 1946, it became imperative for the various administrations to maintain law and order not through authoritarian means but through democratic norms. For example, in his term of Presidency, Roxas could not control 'graft and corruption',<sup>47</sup> and dishonesty in implementation of reforms. That is why, the Huks continued to increase their strength and create difficulties of maintaining law and order. During Quirino's time, as pointed out by some authors there was a lot of corruption and violence.<sup>48</sup>

As a result, there were growing incidents of mass unrest in the country and the Huks became powerful. During his tenure, Magsaysay launched an anti-Huk campaign and to some extent succeeded in the maintenance of law and order. Further on, by the time Marcos came to power in 1965, he found himself unable to carry out the necessary reforms. Naturally, there were instances of student and mass unrest, the Huks grew more strong and there were labour strikes too. To curb this, Marcos was impelled to initiate reforms.

But, by 1970's, as a manifestation of the mass discontent arising out of economic problems, there were student and labour

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47. Graft and Corruption is a term applied to the behaviour of individuals and groups acting in favour of personal and private interests, cited in Onofre D. Corpuz, n.1, p.79.

48. Keith Lightfoot, The Philippines, (London, 1973), p.179.

strikes against the government. The situation was still more complicated by natural disasters, inflation, and food shortages.

In the midst of social tensions thus generated, Marcos convened a constitutional convention, to draft a new constitution, which he thought, was catering to the needs of the people. It instead became another issue, in the intra-elite struggle that had already been going on.

Marcos could not run for third term due to constitutional provisions. Benigno Aquino, an opposition leader, was a likely candidate to succeed Marcos. As some authors have pointed out, that in order to continue in power, Marcos consulted his associates for preparing the grounds for martial law. William Overholt pointed out: "Marcos initiated a 2 year study of successful martial law regimes. Leftist intellectual, Adrian Cristobal and leftist leader, Blas Ople and others laboured over a study of regimes that had successfully used authoritarian methods to impose reforms. Rightist Chief, Juan Ponce Enrile even designed a detailed plan for martial law. This represented in a sense, an intellectual input into the preparations for imposing marital law in the country."<sup>49</sup>

To promote his ideas about the 'New Society', Marcos even started questioning US style of democracy in the Philippines,

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49. William H. Overholt, "The rise and fall of Ferdinand Marcos", Asian Survey, Vol.26, No.10, November 1986, p.1139.

because according to him, "US style of democracy was not catering to the needs of the people as it could not understand the problems of the Filipino masses".<sup>50</sup>

Mass protests increased and various opposition parties like the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) also joined in and students organisations such as the Kabutaang Maka Bayan and Samahang Democratic Ng Kabataan spread their influence in schools and colleges.<sup>51</sup>

On 21 August 1971, terrorist had bombed the final campaign meeting of the Liberal Party in Manila.<sup>52</sup> Marcos had then immediately suspended the writ of Habeous Corpus. In 1972, a whole set of problems had beset the government like financial problems, natural calamities, communist insurgency, etc., Taking advantage of the fast growing developments as discussed above, Marcos declared martial law on September 23rd 1972, and effective from September 21, 1972. The army closed down all radio and T.V. stations, newspaper offices and arrested prominent publishers, journalists etc. He suspended the congress, all political parties, political activities and placed the judiciary under his control. With the imposition of martial and the establishment

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50. Ibid.

51. M. Rajaratnam, (ed), Trends in the Philippines, (Proceedings and background paper), (Singapore, 1978), p.10.

52. Ibid.

of authoritarian regime, the Philippines reverted to one-party system which was non-competitive, where elections were generally manipulated in favour of the ruling party, the K.B.L - Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (New Society Movement).

With martial law in place throughout the country, there began a drastic transformation of the Philippine political system and its institutions. As mentioned earlier, Marcos had questioned the US style of democracy because he wanted people to accept his ideas of a new kind of society.

In order to understand the developments, it would be useful to have a brief analysis of the US policies here :

The US colonial rule and concept of commonwealth in the Philippines was one of the first attempts made by a colonial regime to establish democratic ideas in the occupied territory.<sup>53</sup> The US had sent a five men fact-finding commission headed by Cornell University's President, Schurman, in 1897 to study the prevailing conditions in the Philippines.<sup>54</sup> The American seriousness in promoting and establishing democratic ideals and institutions given by President William Mckinlay to the second commission headed by

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53. David Rosenberg, n.41, p.90.

54. George Mcturnan Kahin, (ed), Government and Politics of South East Asia, (Second edition), (London, 1964), p.687.



William Taft in 1901, is enumerated below :

"There are certain practical rules of the government which we have found to be essential to the preservation of the great principles of liberty and law, and these principles and rules of government must be established in these islands for the sake of liberty and happiness, however much they conflict with the customs of laws and procedure with which the Filipinos are familiar."(55).

These became the guiding principles for American colonial rule. Thus, the electoral system and public participation in government, became an integral part of the Philippine polity. As Corpuz pointed out, "the political vocabulary, electoral parties, system of party government, jurisprudence, doctrines of constitutionalism, and theories of administration management, all reflect American origin."<sup>56</sup>

Marcos sought to remove these very principles of the US colonial rule. He dissolved the congress, curtailed civic liberties and proposed the 'New Society' which would implement 'constitutional authoritarianism.'<sup>57</sup>

Quiet paradoxically, the US supported Marcos's authoritarian rule by increasing military aid to Philippines in the first years of martial law. The American member of commerce even sent a

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55. Dean Worcester, The Philippines, Past and Present, (Appendex III), (New York, 1930), p.200.

56. Onofre D. Corpuz, n.1, p.69.

57. Constitutional authoritarianism means a system of government in which constitutional guidelines would be provided under the authority to facilitate proper implementation of policies, cited in David Rosenburg, n.41, p.13.

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telegram to Marcos after imposition of martial law, wishing him,  
58  
"All success in his endeavour." Even the Reagan administration  
and the ex-president George Bush toasted Marcos by saying "We  
love you Sir, we love your adherence to democratic rights and  
59  
process."

In the calculations of the US, in order to increase their  
role in the Asia Pacific region, they had to support Marcos  
because the military installations at the Subic Bay Navel Base  
and Clark Air Field were placed very strategically. To them,  
strategic considerations were more important than Philippine  
democracy and they did not criticise the curtailment of civil  
60  
liberties in Philippines during this period.

Marcos very cleverly used factors like communist insurgency,  
Moro (Muslim) separatism, etc. as being threats to Philippines,  
and hence the necessity of imposing martial law. He commented :  
"The compelling necessity for martial law, arose out of threats  
to the Republic like rampant corruption Muslim secessionist  
movement, the communist rebellion, Rightist conspiracy, criminal-  
political syndicates, deteriorating economy and increasing social  
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injustice." He propagated that his regime was based on the

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58. Bello Walden, "Benigno Aquino, Between Dictatorship and  
Revolution in the Philippines", Third World Quarterly,  
Vol.6, no.2, April 1984, p.88.

59. Jasjit Singh, "US Military Bases in the Philippines :  
Shifting Patterns and Strategies", Strategic Analysis,  
(I.D.S.A, New Delhi), Vol.12, no.2, May 1980, p.167.

60. Ibid.

61. Ferdinand Marcos, Democratic Revolution in the Philippines,  
(New Jersey, 1977), p.184.

will of the people. He said, his martial law was unique "as it was based on the supremacy of civilian authority, submission to the decision of the Supreme Court and most important of all, the will of the people."<sup>62</sup>

Another reason which he considered unique in his martial law was that, it ensured "improvement in political institutions and provide a democratic government."<sup>63</sup> This basically meant that he would allow the formation of unions, federations, cooperatives etc., to prove that he was not hampering the development of political institutions. Therefore, the people were made to believe that the 'New Society' goals were concrete and helpful to the masses.

#### **Constitutionality and Validity of Martial Law**

The roots of constitutional validity of martial law had been stated in the 1935 constitution itself. Article VII of Section 10, Paragraph 2 of the 1935 Constitution stated :

"In case of invasion, insurrection or rebellion thereof, when public safety requires, he (the president) may suspend the privileges of Writ of Habeous Corpus or place the Philippines or any part thereof under martial law ." (64)

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62. Ibid.

63. Ferdinand Marcos, Today's Revolution : Democracy, (Manila, 1970), p.13.

64. The constitution of the Philippines made in 1935 as cited in Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, (ed), Government and Politics of the Philippines, (Singapore 1988), p.45.

This very article of the 1935 constitution, was used by Marcos to demonstrate the constitutional validity of his act of imposing martial law.

Marcos had undertaken the framing of a new constitution through a constitutional convention to present his ideas of a 'New Society' and paradoxically, the very constitution (of 1935) whose help he took to validate his martial law, he replaced by a decree in 1973.

When martial law was proclaimed, "the congress was in session, the Supreme Court and the inferior courts were open, and the Supreme Court of the Philippines validated imposition of martial law.<sup>65</sup>

**Development and Reforms  
under Martial Law :**

Marcos proposed a 'New Society', which he said would cater to the needs of the people. He laid down twin objectives of the 'New Society. One of these, was the restoration of law and order and the other was, the transformation of social, economic and political institutions from what he called 'Old Society' to the 'New Society. These objectives were laid down to bring stability and promote peace.<sup>66</sup>

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65. Ibid.

66. John H. Esterline and Mac H. Esterline, n.32, p.344.

Under the 'New Society' of Marcos, the programmes promised were: private armies were to be immediately disarmed; price controls were to be imposed on basic goods; a purge of corrupt and inefficient bureaucrats and judges to be undertaken; a sweeping national land reform programme to favour small farmers to be inaugurated; revamping of tax procedures, banking laws and commodity marketing organizations; to reduce crime and to remove corruption in public to improve the economy; and a seven-faceted 'Society' program to improve law and order, land tenure, education, labour, social service, politics and government"<sup>67</sup>

All these promises were made to appease the people and to make them believe in the usefulness of the 'New Society. A scholar pointed out that, "these reforms were carried out in order to curb the demand of the common people for a welfare state, democracy, socialism, etc., against adverse conditions of poverty, income inequality and lawlessness".<sup>68</sup>

On one hand, he promised reforms and on the other hand, Marcos's army cracked down on private armies. Military tribunals were created to process the martial law detainees.

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67. Ibid.

68. Jose Velso Abeuva, Filipino Politics Nationalism and Emerging Ideologies, (Manila 1972), p.40.

Presidential decrees, orders and instructions were issued to propagate the will of the President.<sup>69</sup>

On the constitutional level, the 1935 constitution was replaced by a new one in 1973. It was ratified by the so-called 'Citizen Assemblies', under which there would be a parliamentary government, in which, Marcos was to hold both posts of President and the Prime Minister. Thereafter, in the name of political 'normalization' for a 'shift from authoritarianism to liberalism', Marcos resorted to the politics of referendum, and plebiscite. Thereby, he managed to make amendments in the constitution in order to give a democratic look to his entirely one-man rule.

Marcos organised elections, both at national and local levels, and formed his political party, the Kilusang Bagong Lipuman (K.B.L. - 'New Society Movement'), in early 1978. Through elections on April 7, 1978, a quasi-independent assembly was instituted and it was dominated by supporters of K.B.L. In

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69. In 1976, the Filipino voters agreed to amend the constitution, to set aside their regular 'National Assembly in favour of an Interim Batasang Pambansa (Interim National Assembly)', under which the would be Parliament could not entertain a vote of no-confidence vote on the Prime Minister or repeal the President's Legislative Powers of issuing decrees cited in M. Rajaratnam, The Philippines in 1979 - Towards Political Change, (Singapore 1979), p.243.

local elections in 1980, K.B.L. won 90 percent of all seats.

The multi-party elections took place in 1978 to show Marcos's tolerance towards other parties but these were marred by violence, rigging, vote buying etc. The government had used block voting, (voting for one man only) and allocated parliamentary seats to the K.B.L.<sup>71</sup>

On the economic front, President Marcos faced many problems in achieving his goals of economic development like income inequality as the elite were growing rich and the poor, poorer. Also there were unemployment, growth of population, environmental hazards, price instability, etc. In order to solve these problems, Marcos in his programmes under the 'New Society', he promised :

- 1) Promotion of social development and social justice through the creation of productive employment opportunities, reduction of income disparities and improvement of living standard of the poor;
- 2) attainment of self-sufficiency in food and self reliance in energy;
- 3) attainment of high and sustained economic growth;

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70. Other elections were held in 1980 for Local Government Officials, in 1982 for Barangay Officials, in May 1984 for members of the National Assembly, etc, cited in Lorsino MacArther's, "Prospects for Normalization in the Philippines", South Asian Affairs, (Singapore, 1984) Vol.6, no.3, 1990, p.265.

71. Ibid.

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- 4) improvement in rural areas; and
- 5) maintenance of internal security and international relations.<sup>72</sup>

To show that, his concept of 'New Society' was mass based, Marcos organised labour and trade unions under the sponsorship of the government, for instance, the Trade Union congress of the Philippines (TUCP), and a youthful movement called 'Kabatang Barangay' with 8 million members under Marcos's daughter, were formed.<sup>73</sup>

#### **Financial and Land Reforms**

President Marcos also initiated far-reaching financial reforms to improve the economic conditions of the Filipino society. He reorganised the management of foreign investment rules to attract foreign investment, promotion of exports, improvement of laws on taxation, launching of programmes and projects that attracted strong support of the World Bank.<sup>74</sup>

In the other programmes launched by Marcos, to help farmers and labourers, he encouraged subsidies of farm inputs, medicare, hospitalization for government and business employees, man power

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72. This was the Five Year Development Plan (1978-1982) presented in favour of Marcos's concept of 'New Society', cited in Ferdinand Marcos's, Notes on the New Society of the Philippines, (Manila, 1978), p.10.

73. M. Rajaratnam, n.69, p.243.

74. Ibid.



training for agrarian reforms, improved collection of revenue for greater expenditure in rural areas, the growing of more food crops.<sup>75</sup> This was done to exhibit as to how much the government was trying to provide economic relief to the poor and raise the standard of living of the poor.

These programmes did have an impact on the people as encouragement of foreign investments brought in a lot of foreign exchange and many multinational corporations were established in the country. Increased revenues were used by the government for building of roads, etc. "From fiscal year 1964 to 1972, national government revenues were between 9 to 10 percent of the G.N.P. In 1972 the revenues totaled to peso(p) 5.3 billion. Between 1973 and 1976, the revenues rose by an annual average of 32.8 percent of the G.N.P. and stood at P 19.2 billion in 1976 on 14.6 percent of G.N.P. The government had aimed at dispersing resources of the government on a more regional basis. The result of this was that, staples like rice and sugar were sold at lower prices than the international markets, the international reserves grew from US \$ 200 million to \$ 1.7 billion in 1975."<sup>76</sup>

As regards land reforms, the President quickly implemented many reforms. By presidential decree no.2 issued a few days after the proclamation of martial law, the entire country was

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75. Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, n.17, p.97.

76. John H. Esterline and Mac H. Esterline, n.32; p.352.

made into a 'land reform area'. The Presidential decree No.27 issued on October 21,1972, promised ownership of land to the tillers and freedom from bondage. This included rice and corn growing land. Transfer certificates were issued to farmers. This resulted in the break up of vast estates of plantation owners.<sup>77</sup> But it was difficult to actually check whether these reports were correct.

Marcos faced another problem in his land reform programme and that was "a cooperative programme known as samahang Nayan - credit for the farmer". To solve this problem, he strengthened the rural banking system. He propagated programmes like rural electrification, scientific methods of irrigation, subsidized credit for farmers etc.<sup>78</sup> All these programmes led to a boom in the rural sector, and near self-sufficiency in the rice production by 1976. But all these policies never saw the light of the day.

### **Press and Media**

The Philippines had always enjoyed freedom of speech and expression. Media ownership was usually in the hands of the politically powerful families like the "Lopez family which controlled a large broadcasting system of TV stations, 20 radio stations and 2 TV relay stations."<sup>79</sup>

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77. Ibid.

78. David Rosenberg, n.41, p.150.

79. Onofre D. Corpuz, n.1, p.75

Marcos tried to inhibit criticism of his administration. Despite the fact that, Freedom of the press was a fundamental civil right, Marcos's sought to curtail all newspapers and other media of information. This enabled him to curtail all criticism of his regime. There was only one newspaper "The Philippines Daily Express, one TV Station - Kauloan Broadcasting System channel and one government owned radio station called 'voice of the Philippines'. Thus Marcos "used the media and press as exclusive instruments of propaganda for the goals of the 'New Society'.

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#### **Military: Marcos's Power base**

Although a civilian himself, President Marcos headed the martial law regime. Naturally, the military came to play a prominent and strategic role as the President's power base and as the prime agent of the law enforcement, in checking civilian opposition, while pursuing developmental activities of the regime.

Under the martial law, the secretary of National Defence and the top leaders worked in direct connection with the president. The armed forces of the Philippines (AFP) which numbered 50,000 in 1972 rose to 200,000 in 1983 and was equipped with the latest weaponry. Their expenditure and salaries increased

considerably"<sup>81</sup> as a result, the military gained the access into the political arena of the country.

Basically, militarization took two forms. "One was the integration of civilian-military organizations such as the Civilian Defense Force (CHDF) and nation wide organizations of barangay (Village) brigades. The second assumed the form of the military take-over of civilian functions of bureaucracy and the business sectors"<sup>82</sup>. This helped Marcos in establishing his complete control over the administrative affairs of the country.

Marcos even got military, involved in the decision-making process so as to appease the military. However, the military started to emerge "as an independent interest group in the Philippines where members of the armed forces and some civilian technocrats exercised authority as cabinet members"<sup>83</sup>.

Thus, military played an integral role in Marcos's martial law regime. The importance of the military can be understood by the following observation by Robert B. Stauffer: "The military share an ideology of modernization, a belief in free enterprise system, and a need for government planning etc. All these

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81. Mizamur Rehman Khan, "The Philippines: An Anatomy of Marcos's 'New Society' BIISS Journal, (Dacca) Vol.5, no.2, April 1984, p.211.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid.

interests were provided for by the administration."(84)

### **Marcos and the Americans**

The US was a strong support base of Marcos's regime. As earlier mentioned, even Reagan had supported martial law. The US provided the Philippines with a good amount of foreign exchange through investments. However, in order to continue having trade they supported the regime and were pro-regime rather than pro-people. The other reason why they supported Marcos was to protect their military bases. Marcos in turn supported them for financial benefit. Various US presidents had various reasons for supporting Marcos. Like, Johnson supported Marcos because he wanted the Philippine military participation in the Vietnam war in the form of two Engineer Battalions. Richard Nixon, wanted the Philippines and other Asian nations to assume defence responsibilities in tackling internal security. Gerald Ford's priority was to enhance security assistance for America's pacific allies. Carter wanted to retain the US bases and project American military power in the Indian ocean to protect Israel and to guard the west's oil supply line from the Middle East. Reagan's fear of expansionist policy of Soviet Union, made him support Marcos so as to retain the strategic bases".<sup>85</sup>

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84. Robert B. Stauffer, Philippines Authoritarianism Framework for peripheral Development (Honolulu, 1976), p.8.

85. Richard J. Kessler, "Marcos and the Americans", Foreign Policy, Vol.63, no.2, p.44.

Thus, the US policies were aimed at their own interest and they did not care about the economic and political problems created by the Marcos regime. As pointed out by Kessler, the US policy from Lyndon Johnson to Reagan was profoundly misguided and contributed to authoritarian and oppressive regime in Philippines.<sup>86</sup>

Only after Benigno Aquino, an opposition leader's assassination, that domestic pressure increased and the threat of communist take over loomed large, that US changed its stance on Philippines.<sup>87</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Thus, one could see that the fiscal and land reforms did generate a hope of development but it proved ineffective in the long run. The land reforms were opposed by landlords who saw it as a threat to their power base. The farmers and the peasants did not get the benefits of reform. In the later stage of Marcos's authoritarian rule, Marcos started to protect his own interests rather than of the people. He took up complete control of the administration and did not implement the policies and programmes he had promised. This resulted in an increase in poverty, foreign debt, and corruption. There was stagnation of economy as programmes for development of the country were not being implemented.

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86. Ibid.

87. Roland G. Simbulans, The Basis of our Security, (Manila, 1983), pp.1-2.

The disturbing situation in the Philippines therefore, could be traced to certain factors operating in the policy since independence. In spite of the regular elections between 1946 and 1969, the political parties continued to be characterised with sharing common platforms without any specific ideas or programmes. Reinforced by personalized politics, the party system lacked discipline, commitment and there were frequent defections. In spite of the prevalence of adult franchise, the political system remained elite dominated.

The political parties continued to operate in the framework of family based patronage. Thus, the masses were ignored and disenchantment with the leadership existed.

The martial law promised a change towards a better political system, but the characteristics of polity like inefficiency of government, graft and corruption, non-participation of the people in the political process, underdevelopment, economic mismanagement, increased crime etc., remained the same. All these pointed to the fact that the Philippine polity was basically fragmented and cadre based. Thus the democratic norms which required freedom and ability of its citizens to participate were lacking and democracy was yet to set its roots properly into the Philippine polity.

**CHAPTER - III**

**RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY  
UNDER  
CORAZON AQUINIO**



### Chapter III

In a telling commentary on the situation created by Marcos's martial law regime **The Far Eastern Economic Review** observed in 1977 : "Politics in the Philippines begins and ends with Marcos. There is no parliament, only a rubberstamp assembly. There is no judicial body to review Presidential decrees, the only<sup>1</sup> legislation under martial law." This statement clearly shows the essence of martial law of President Marcos. It also highlights the authoritarian rule of Marcos.

During the martial law, the rule of the elite, was replaced by the rule of Marcos and his cronies. His policies and projects needed a lot of money to be implemented and the huge foreign borrowings usually landed in his or his cronies, bank account. As can be seen from the observation by William Overholt - "Marcos thus substituted a ruthless elite for a merely inefficient<sup>2</sup> one" . It gave rise to crony capitalism.

On the economic front, besides "lack of proper planning, unlimited borrowing, 'unrealistic interest rate policy',<sup>3</sup> a serious problem lay in the fact that the government was

1. Far Eastern Economic Review, Vol. 95, 1977, p.20.
2. William H. Overholt, "Rise and Fall of Ferdinand Marcos", Asian Survey, Vol.26, no.11, November 1986, p.1143.
3. An unrealistic interest rate policy is a policy which places ceilings on rates and serves to encourage the administration in terms of use of funds, cited in Time, (New York), September 5th, 1983, p.8.

encouraging 'capital intensive investment',<sup>4</sup> "rather than 'labour intensive investment',<sup>5</sup> and Marcos could not bring highly professional technocrats who had the knowledge of the socio-economic fabric of the country to chart out sound economic strategy".<sup>6</sup> The continuing downward spiril in the economy, growing unemployment, rising cost of living, accumulating debt, declining foreign exchange reserves all contributed to the erosion in the legitimacy of the leadership and its policies. Besides reflecting on the vulnerability of the dependent development pursued in the Philippines, it demonstrated the utter uselessness of it in so far as the welfare of the masses and modernization of the economy and society were concerned.<sup>7</sup>

Former senator Jose W. Diokno, one of Marcos's strongest critics, who had been arrested along with Benigno Aquino upon the declaration of martial law in September 1972, described the situation in the country in the turbulent years following Aquino's assassination." The economy is in shambles. Marcos's handling of the Aquino assassination destroyed his (Marcos's)

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4. Capital Intensive Investment means investment requiring huge sums of money and less labour like steel industry etc., cited in Ibid.
  5. Labour Intensive Investment means investment requiring less capital and more labour like farming etc., cited in Ibid.
  6. Far Eastern Economic Review, Vol.140, no.30, December 15, 1983, p.15.
  7. Bhagwan Dass Arora, "Development Process in the Philippines", in Parimal Kumar Das, (ed.), The Troubled Region, (New Delhi, 1987), p.260.

credibility. Local capital fled the country. Foreign investments stopped. He had installed a rigid system of internal like control leading to inflation. Thus the masses are frustrated and angry."

These were definitely very damaging comments on the 'results' from Marcos's policy. One of the major factors which gave rise to mass discontent was the assassination of Benigno Aquino in August 1983. His death, brought with it, a host of political and economic problems which heightened popular dissent and hostility towards the Marcos's regime. The assassination of Aquino was in a way a turning point in the Philippine politics. "It awakened a renewed determination among opposition groups to dislodge Marcos from power and establish a regime which was more in tune with the sentiments, of the Filipinos."

Marcos had dismantled the oligarchic 'fiefdoms' and took over their resources through state monopolies and transferred

8. Jose Diokno, "The Present Crisis", in R.J. May and Nemenzo, (ed.), The Philippines after Marcos, (London, 1985), p.11.
9. Benigno Aquino had been an important leader of the Opposition Liberal Party and a strong contender for the Presidentship back in 1973 election. When Marcos proclaim Martial Law in September, 1972 and arrested Aquino, Aquino continued to influence politics. When Aquino was coming back from the US in 1983 he was still considered a threat and therefore was assassinated, see William H. Overholt, "The Rise and Fall of Ferdinand Marcos", Asian Survey, Vol.26, no.11, November, 1986 p.1144.
10. Nilofar Chaudhary, " 'People Power' in the Philippines: Quest for Democracy", Bliss Journal (Dacca) Vol.8, no.2, April 1986, p.210.
11. Fiefdoms means land holding by force.

economic power in the hand of government and in small factions loyal to the president. Therefore, the clientelist nature of the Filipino Society continued under Marcos.<sup>12</sup>

There was a wave, of indignation among the opposition ranks. They made an attempt of filing impeachment proceeding, the first one was in August 1985.

The opposition petition accused President Marcos of flagrant violation of the 1973 constitution. This was, in reference to the appointment of Marcos's brother-in-law as Ambassador to the US while still holding the post of Governor of Leyte province. The numerical superiority of Marcos's ruling party, Kilusang Bagong Lipunan - KBL (New Society Movement) in the parliament,<sup>13</sup> however succeeded in defeating the impeachment petition.

It was tension arising from this highly disturbed situation that precipitated the call for 'Snap' presidential election in November 1985. Marcos even announced decision to have snap elections in an interview to ABC TV's host, David Brinkley, on American TV.<sup>14</sup> The opposition groups were reluctant to take

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12. The clientelist nature of the Philippine society had been most obvious in the President's grant of monopoly privileges to selected followers specially in the coconut industry. Edward Conjuango one of the President's friend was given virtually every part of the coconut industry, cited in Fred Poole and Max Vancli, Revolution in the Philippine, (New York, 1984), pp.112-113.

13. Belinda Olivares Cunanan, "The Opposition Snap into Attention", Mr. & Mrs. Magazine, November 8, 1985, pp.14-15.

14. Ibid.

part in the elections because they thought that the elections would be rigged.

On the other hand, pressures which were both domestic (in the form of severe socio-economic crisis) and international (coming from the US), compelled Marcos to hold elections, first to the National assembly and later to the Presidency.

The US which had once supported Marcos's martial law had to withdraw their support because of violation of human rights in the Philippines as Marcos's dictatorial regime had been exploiting the masses and thus violating human rights.

"The US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs sub-committee, headed by representative Stephan Solarz, produced testimony to substantiate the charges that Marcos and his wife had invested millions of dollars in the US"<sup>15</sup>. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman, G.Dugar, led an official US delegation to observe the February 1986 presidential elections. The US also made it very clear that containment of insurgency and security of US military bases were their main concern. As one US official said "If Mrs. Aquino Wins, things may get worse but they may also improve. If Marcos stays, we 'know it cannot get better.'<sup>16</sup> It clearly meant that Marcos was losing the active support of the US.

15. Newsweek, Vol.4, No.3, February 3, 1986, p.8.

16. International Herald Tribune, (Paris), February 8-9, 1986.

By 1985, the Marcos government was confronted with a severe challenge to its rule. It emanated from the interlocking social, political and economic problems that had been shaping over the years. Also, due to the failure of the fiscal and agrarian reforms, the conditions had worsened with the result of huge debts, growing unemployment, increasing poverty and higher prices.

**Corazon Cojuangco Aquino :  
The Popular Mandate**

For Corazon Aquino, the wife of the slain leader, Ninoy Aquino, it was a daunting task to stand up against the authoritarian regime. She was motivated by the challenge and prospect of unseating Marcos. The then splintered opposition groups decided to coalesce and put up Corazon Aquino as their Presidential candidate against Marcos with another opposition leader Salvador S. Laurel as the Vice-Presidential candidate. As it happened, the church came out openly in support of Corazon Aquino who emerged as the consensus leader and candidate with mass appeal and even a sympathy wave. The church was eager to resist electoral cheating and intimidation. Cardinal Jaime Sin, through his appeals to the people gave a veiled endorsement of Aquino's candidature".<sup>17</sup> In Cory Aquino, the people found a clear unchallenged focal point of popular support. The people found in her, the presence of a credible and extremely popular

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17. International Herald Tribune, January 30th, 1986.

civilian leader. In a country, with a large number of Catholics, the voice of Cardinal Sin, had a profound effect. It thus contributed, substantially in promoting anti-Marcos sentiments among the masses.

In order to continue civil protest against the authoritarian set-up of Marcos, Cory Aquino adopted a strategy of mobilizing the people through 'prayer rallies' and later by 'strikes'. These were initially strated at one or two places and then expanded and "attempted by degree to bring the corrupt government and the economy to a halt."<sup>18</sup> For this purpose, she had growing loyalties of vast number of people who finally voted for her. She had a strong commitment to non-violence and spoke for a broad democratic movement. She brought with her, "a high degree of sincerity and a moral force that most Filipinos found refreshing after about 14 years of Marcos's "authoritarian rule".<sup>19</sup>

Elections for the President and vice president took place on overwhelming February 11, 1986. In the elections there was a spontaneous and support given to Cory Aquino by the people who showed up in good numbers in all rallies called by the new leader. The electoral process was marred by cheating, vote buying and other election irregularities as Marcos had

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18. Nilofar Chaudhary, n.10, p.210.

19. Ibid.

manipulated the election results in his favour.<sup>20</sup> The Marcos government was also losing the support of the military, as he had replaced key posts in the army as with his own men, who were not necessarily the most able of the officers. This had led to disenchantment of the army with Marcos.

By 1985, some of the officers belonging to the "Reform Army Movement (R.A.M.), even talked of assassinating Marcos and distinguished pre-martial law generals, and organized a group called Senior Cavalier's Reform Army Movement (SCRAM), to consult<sup>21</sup> on how to serve the country and the dignity of the military."

The communist guerilla movement had also begun spreading its influence. The people supported this movement because of their frustration with Marcos's regime and its policies. Even the opposition starting launching demonstrations against the authoritarian rule of Marcos. But the opposition was factious. Nevertheless, the people were disenchanted with the regime, and also so the military, which had been Marcos's main support base.

As mentioned earlier, the church had been opposing the martial law of Marcos and also gave their support to the people against Marcos's authoritarian rule. When on February 22, 1986,

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20. Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, Government and Politics in the Philippines, (Singapore, 1988), p.105.

21. Ibid.



Marcos's Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Vice Chief of Armed Forces Lt. General Fidel Ramos denounced the Marcos regime, Cardinal Sin gave a call to the people to extend their support to the military leaders. In time, the people responded and gathered at "a place in Manila called E.D.S.A - Epifania Delos Santos Avenue. This event marked the launching of the Historic <sup>22</sup> 'People Power' Revolution."

Marcos tried to curb the activities of the Defence Minister and the Vice-Chief of Armed forces. But he could not succeed, as people were on the side of these defence personnel and they saved them from being attacked by pro-Marcos leaders from the Armed Forces. As a scholar pointed out, "The people saw the Enrile-Ramos Mutiny, as an integral part of Cory Aquino's civil <sup>23</sup> disobedience campaign." This basically showed how nearly all sections of the people were against Marcos and how they welcomed the military support against his authoritarian regime.

Being a 'People Power Revolution', it was a mass-based revolution and not limited to just a group of people. It was a non-violent struggle against suppression and subjugation, for freedom and dignity. In this revolution, people did not use arms. It arose from people's effort to release themselves from the clutches of authoritarianism and shift for democracy.

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22. Ibid, p.122.

23. Ibid, p.43.

There were several interpretations of the events of February 1986 elections, such as the 'People's Revolution' or 'People Power Revolution' led by corazon Aquino as given by certain persons knowledgeable about the situation in the country.

(1) One such opinion considered this Phenomenan as the people's desire to protect "their democratic electoral system" from the continuing manipulation by Marcos's dictatorship and restore it as a "more representative system."<sup>24</sup> This observation clearly pointed to the level of consciousness which had come about in the Filipinos, who showed open reluctance towards martial law. They now wanted a democratic system of government.

(2) The events that shook the feelings of the people in these events were remarkable in the sense that the revolution brought among the masses, a "voice against the oppressive regime of Marcos"<sup>25</sup> and the way for 'people power' in the Philippines, the first step towards democracy.

(3) David Randolph went to the extent of saying that "people power was a morally righteous revolution, which was

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24. David S. Randolph, "Revolution without Tears", (From a Paper Presented at Third World Press Meeting Organised by the Third World Network), April 3rd, 1986, New Delhi, p.11.

25. Leslie Edwin J. Ruiz, "Philippine Politics as a People's Quest for Authentic Subjecthood", Alternatives, Vol.11, n.4, October 1986, p. 60.

against the immoral and undemocratic state".<sup>26</sup> This, highlighted the fact, that Marcos's regime was totally authoritarian and devoid of any democratic norms and the 'peoples revolution' which demanded the restoration of democracy was a just revolution.

(4) This revolution is identified as a phenomenon, which provided the opportunity for the common people to express their "concern regarding further deterioration of the social and economic life under the Marcos regime".<sup>27</sup> The economic condition under Marcos's regime had been worsened. Marcos and his cronies had become rich and the common people were getting poorer. They had not been given the benefit of any of the promised reforms.

(5) According to A. Elapitan, 'The military supported the 'people power' "because", according to them, "Marcos must go if the country was to survive the increasing pressure of the democratic left, the communist party of the Philippines and its military wing, the New Peoples Army (N.P.A.)".<sup>28</sup>

These explanations about 'People's Power Revolution' clearly show, that it contained in itself, a new wave and a new form of struggle, which had been virtually new in recent history and the fact that it was a bloodless revolution and the first of its kind.

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26. David S. Randolph, n.24, p.15.

27. A. Elapitan, "The Redemocratisation of the Philippines", Asian Profile, Vol.17, no.3, June 1989, p.23.

28. Ibid.

Due to the 'People Power Revolution', Marcos and his family had to leave the country and they did so on "February 26, 1986."<sup>29</sup> With the departure of Marcos, Corazon Aquino was proclaimed the new President. With it, began a new era in the Philippine politics, marking a shift from authoritarianism to democracy.

### **Aquino's Populist Government**

Aquino's triumphant rise to power based on 'People Power Revolution' was a momentous event in the recent history of the Philippines. With democracy restored, most people found in Aquino, a sincere person imbued with a moral force. It was the dawn of a new era, free from the authoritarian rule of Marcos.

Although Aquino came to power through extra-parliamentary means with the help of the some military leaders and through a populist movement, the rectification of constitution through a plebiscite in February 1986 provided the Aquino government with a democratic seal. The new constitution provided for the establishment of a full constitutional democracy. "The constitutional committee commission", has opted for a presidential form of government with a bi-cameral legislature. The country would have a multi party system.

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29. On February 1986, Marcos and his family were whisked away from Malacanang Palace enroute to Clark Air Base in Angeles then to Guam and then to Hawaii, cited in Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, n.20, p.67.

The House of Representatives shall not only be composed of members elected from legislative districts and sectoral parties but also from other organizations during the first three consecutive terms. These members were to be elected, drawn by from the labour sector, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, as well as from women, the youth and other sectors, except the religious sector.<sup>30</sup> By this, she gave representation to every sector of the society, irrespective of their position and status. Obviously, there was the lessening of elite-oriented politics based on patron-client relationship and increase in mass participation. This constitution provided Aquino, a six year term in office, and bestowed on her the task of leading the country in its march towards democracy.

Before examining the reforms carried out and the hurdles faced by Aquino government, it would be useful to explain and examine the nature of Philippine polity under Corazon Aquino after the February Revolution.

(1) First, the most striking feature of her polity was the "dependence on massive popular mobilization or 'People's Power'".<sup>31</sup> Though, the elite groups tried to influence Aquino,

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30. Proposed Philippine Constitution, 1986, Article VI, Section-V, cited in Mata Nestor, Cory Of A Thousand Days, (Manila, 1989), p.20.

31. Bello Walden, "Aquino's Elite Populism : Initial Reflections", Third World Quarterly, Vol.8, no.3, July 1980, p.1028.

she remained steadfast in the interests of the masses. 'People Power', was her main support upon which she had to rely upon to build a new Philippines free from authoritarianism and emerging from almost 14 years of harsh repression. Her government exhibited a spirit of "revolutionary puritanism i.e., one who is precise and pure in morals."<sup>32</sup>

(2) Another feature of the polity was an unstable coalition of sharply competing factions. The coalition had also included the army. Thus, she had to keep this coalition from breaking up as it would harm the stability of her government and hence people's faith in it.

(3) Another critical feature of Aquino's administration was 'a confused stand on Philippine - US relations'.<sup>(33)</sup> In order to appease the people on whose support she had come into power, she had to remove the US military bases. On the other hand, Aquino faced the problems of coup attempts against her government and the US help in this regard could not be ignored by her.

#### **The Problems And Challenges for Aquino Government.**

Some of her challenges were to improve the basic "healthcare facilities, introduce land reforms, improve education, to have a balanced budget and to get rid of the inequalities in the

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32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

society." <sup>34</sup> All these problems had not been looked into during the Marcos's regime.

The country continued to face the problems of under-development. As mentioned earlier, the country was in heavy debt, as excessive foreign exchange reserves had declined by borrowing of funds on the domestic front. Marcos and his loyalists had over-exploited the people and used the money for their own interests. He had favoured the traditional patron-client relationship by in which the elite prospered and poor were rendered very poor. Thus, the economy was in shambles.

Attention had to be paid to land reforms and new scientific developments had to be sought out to improve agricultural production to fulfill the needs of the people. Industry was backward and was to be developed for the progress of the country.

a categorization has been attempted below :

**(I) Faltering Economy**

The Philippines functioned mainly on a subsistence basis with a few cash crops for export. The US dominated the external

For a better understanding of the state of Filipino society during this period, and the challenges to the Aquino government,

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34. International Herald Tribune June 20, 1986.

trade getting 80 percent of the Philippine exports and supplying  
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most of its manufactured imports.

Investment was inadequate and domestic industry was weak. Due to lack of funds, there was difficulty in implementing policies for development. During Marcos's regime, governmental intervention in basic industries such as food grains, coconut, sugar, etc. was proving arbitrary and inefficient and downright  
36  
corrupt. Trade with outside world remained adverse.

Negative growth rates were haunting the economy. The share of debt service in the national budget had increased to 23 percent in 1985, significant cuts in public expenditure were made which drastically reduced both government consumption and investment spending, leading to a contraction in domestic demand. Total investments declined from 36 percent in 1984 to 21 percent  
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in 1985.

Industry had been hit by the contraction of the domestic market. Therefore, demand was less and manufacturers faced losses. The Foreign Exchange shortage led to substantial cuts in

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35. Gary Humes, "US support for Marcos Administration and Pressure that made Change", Contemporary South-East Asia, Vol.8, no.1, June 1980, p.27.

36. Jose Diokno, "Present Crisis", in R.J. May and Nemenzo (ed.), The Philippines After Marcos, (London, 1985), p.6.

37. National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), Five Year Development Plan, 1978 - 82, (Manila, September 1977), p.15.



raw material imports. Unemployment swelled to 12.5%. Neglect in the area of agriculture contributed to decline in growth. Population growth was a rapid 2.5 percent a year. Continuing, dependent economy and devaluation of currency occurred. Due to this the economic development was being hampered.

Thus Corazon Aquino was faced with inequality of the social system and the malfunctioning of its economy, which together bred poverty, injustice and a massive discontent among the depressed.

## II Communist Insurgency

The communist insurgency was one of the major problems which Aquino faced. The communists had been able to mobilize people way back in 1940's and early 1950's in the form of the **Huk balahap** movement. Marcos's faulty policies were responsible for the growing strength and mass appeal of the communist party. These movements always use the disenchantment of the masses as a source of mobilizing people against the prevalent rule. Marcos always tried to curb the communist insurgency. But Aquino from the very beginning, initiated a policy of "reconciliation with the left aimed at integrating it into the democratic mainstream." she did this because she wanted to bring the

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38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Nilofar Chaudhary, n.10, p.220.

communists into the government. But the communists did not respond positively to her gestures, as they were not sure whether they would actually be accepted in the government.

### III Governmental Coalition

Corazon Aquino had come to power with the people's support and that of various political parties, to overthrow Marcos. With the establishment of the revolutionary government in 1986, the one party system crumbled. The new government was a coalition of civilian and military forces on one hand, and of opposition parties on the other.<sup>41</sup> Initially, her candidacy was backed by several political parties led by PDP-LABAN (Philippino Democratic Party and Lakas Ng. Bayan), but later joined the united democratic organization (UNIDO) headed by Salvador Laurel due to its enlarged national base. UNIDO was formed of L.P, LABAN, Mindano Alliance, cause-oriented groups, like the People Movement For Independence Nationalism and Democracy (MIND), and<sup>42</sup> the National Union for Liberation (NUL).

As a result, no single party had prominence. Then, there was the UNIDO-PDP LABAN Power struggle and there have been

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41. Ibid.

42. Ventura, Eva, Duka, "The nature and Philippine political system and the role of political parties in Philippines political government, focusing on the May 1984, Parliamentary Conference on comparative study of Electoral Systems in Asia and the Pacific, Oregon city, 2-3 February, 1986, pp. 69-70.

serious defections resulting in intense power struggle. It caused conflicts among the coalition partners which led to a high degree of destabilisation in the political strength of the Aquino administration.

This infighting within the Aquino's administration, brought a valuable opportunity to the opposition 'Grand Alliance for Democracy' (G.A.D.), led by Juan ponce Enrite, former Defence Secretary. "The deepening chasm and power play among Aquino's associates had ultimately led to a dangerous stalemate."<sup>43</sup>

Aquino, on her coming to power had advocated a multi-party system. In this connection, a scholar came out with a pertinent observation as to, what people expect of her. "The enhanced ideological quality of party competition should hopefully elevate party politics from the age old personalism, elitism and patronage that it has been consigned to since the introduction of elections in the Philippines. The stage is set for the emergence of a competitive multi-party system."<sup>44</sup>

#### IV Divided Military

Still another challenge that Aquino faced from the rifts within the 250,000 strong Armed Forces of the Philippines, was

43. Asiaweek, March 8, 1987, p.17.

44. Carl H. Lande, "The Political Crisis", in John Brusnan, Crisis in the Philippines, : The Marcos Era and Beyond, (New Jersey, 1986), p.40.

the divided military. The 14 years of military backed dictatorship had raised a wall of suspicion between the civilians and soldiers and the factionalism and divisiveness within the army proved to be a serious problem for the administration. The factionalism is highlighted by General Fidel Ramos's observation : "We cannot afford to have armed forces within armed forces. If it happens, there would be anarchy."<sup>45</sup> The result of the interfactional quarrels led to frequent coup attempts in the country.

#### V Land Reforms

This has been a perennial problem in the Philippines. It has always been considered as being a scale for judging the success and failure of the government. Marcos had promised to lessen the gap between the peasants and the elite and had envisaged reforms like "family size plots to tenants, to grow more food crops rather than cash crops, to develop methods to grow better rice and corn etc."<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, every policy was late in implementation. The elite held all the riches and the gap between the rich and the poor widened. Thus, Marcos left the Aquino government with a daunting task of implementing land reforms to the satisfaction of those people who had been exploited by authoritarian rule of Marcos.

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45. William H. Overholt, "The Rise and Fall of Ferdinand Marcos", Asian Survey, Vol.26, n.11, November 1986, p.1161.

46. David Rosenburg, Marcos and Marital Law in the Philippines, (London, 1979), p.101.

## **VI US Military Bases**

The US bases were of paramount importance to US because of their strategic location. Keeping these bases in the Philippines served this purpose. As the US had been the major creditor to the Philippines and hence had a lot of influence in the country's politics, the American's were able to get a lease for keeping their bases for 99 years. In the initial days of martial law, the US had supported it, but later on due to violations of human rights and atrocities committed on the people, it had withdrawn its support. A change in the US attitude towards Marcos's authoritarian rule could also be ascribed to the international pressures in this connection.

The Aquino government had promised to remove these bases but could not do so. There were reasons for its inaction in the matter. First, the lease was for 99 years; secondly, it was due to danger of coup attempts; and thirdly, these bases provided jobs to many people. Thus, the removal of US bases became a difficult task for Aquino.

### **Goals and Reforms**

The legacy of colonial exploitation coupled with corruption and maladministration of the post-independence democratic administrations and especially Marcos's regime, left innumerable problems for the Aquino government after her becoming President. Not only were the problems serious but were also deep-seated in

the polity. Aquino was an honest and unpretentious person, leading a simple life but her moral values alone could not bring the country out of the morass of backwardness and take it towards progress. She had to delivered the goods with concrete policies for development with a positive outlook. Their in lies real challenge to her regime. Aquino had to formulate long-term goals and policies in order to bring back the country from stagnation. There was a dire need for improving the socio-economic condition of the country to ensure the people, a better standard of living.

The goals and reforms envisaged by Aquino to the challenges discussed in this chapter are as follows :

- 1) consolidation; of power;
- 2) institutionalisation of the democratic process and constitutional politics;
- 3) revitalization of the economy;
- 4) reorganising the military;
- 5) emphasizing economic development and raising of standard of living of the Filipino people and assuring social justice;
- 6) aiming at ethnic unity;
- 7) promoting administrative integrity and efficiency; and lastly,
- 8) decentralization as a means of attaining the government's development goals and objectives.

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47. J. Edgardo Angara, "Aquino's Revolutionary Government", Bulletin Today, v.8, n.2, 1986, pp.5-6.

A constitutional commission set up by the President met in the plenary session from June to October 1986 and proposed a draft constitution. "It was subsequently ratified by an overwhelming majority of voters (76.3 percent) in a plebiscite held for the purpose on February 2, 1987"<sup>48</sup>. President Aquino then proclaimed the constitution ratified. Thus was established the new democratic system in the Philippines.

"The ratified constitution provided a presidential form of government based on the principle of separation of powers and its corollary, the system of checks and balances; power of the government was equally divided between the three branches of government-executive, legislature and judiciary, which ensured fundamental freedom in the 1935 constitution."<sup>49</sup> Emphasizing on these provisions would prevent concentration of power for any further authoritarian rule. It was these provisions that helped in restoring representative form of government.

Democracy was undoubtedly a goal achieved when it was restored. The problem, however, was that it could not be consolidated unless there was economic development that was self-reliant and equitable. Thus, the Aquino government embarked on arresting the decline of staggering economy by introducing fiscal reforms. "The Aquino government quickly removed the vestiges of

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48. Ibid.

49. A. Elapitan, n.27, p.239.

the monopolies that had been set up by Marcos and his Cronies to control sugar and coconut industries." <sup>50</sup> This was done as part of Aquino's programme package to get the country out of the economic mess. Responding to domestic political pressures, the Aquino government adjusted the fiscal and monetary policies <sup>51</sup> to pursue its goals enhancing agriculture and labour costs." Tariffs, currency rates, budget allocations for subsidies and labour laws were all part of Aquino's goals, to reduce what were apparently inefficient government interference with the free operations of the market. <sup>52</sup> Marcos and his cronies had always interfered in operation of the market.

The Aquino government also took initiatives to check and control, if not eliminate, the internal conflicts in the country and stop the abuse of human rights. Political prisoners were released and a committee for human rights was set up. "Peace talks were resumed with the communist party of the Philippines and N.P.A for a cease-fire agreement." <sup>53</sup> But after charges of violations and counter charges of continued abuses committed by security and para-military forces, the initial atmosphere of confidence broke down. In the aftermath of the February 1986 cease-fire, the Philippines government declared an all out anti-

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50. Gary Hawes, "Aquino's Administration : A View from the Countryside", Pacific Affairs, v.62, no.1, Spring 1989, p.10.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Edmundo Garcia, "Conflict Resolution in the Philippines", Bulletin of Peace Proposals, Vol.20, no.1, 1989, p.10.



communist drive while the N.P.A./P.K.P.M (New People's Army of the Communist Party of the Philippines) escalated their offensive and also extended their operations into the urban centres.

Similarly, Aquino initiated the policy to free the press from the checks imposed by the authoritarian regime of Marcos. In a democracy, it is the right of the people to get information about the working of the government, and this was not possible under Marcos's rule. Thus, a free flow of information was restored by the Aquino regime which in turn restored the people's faith in the democracy. "Aquino was not afraid of criticism, and nor did she instill any fear in the mind of reporters as Marcos had done."<sup>54</sup> A scholar pointed out that the "press recovered<sup>55</sup> its former which it had lost in Marcos's time."

The judiciary, which had become redundant was revitalised by Aquino. The Aquino administration brought about a transformation of judiciary by restoring the independence and autonomy of the Supreme Court, thus, making it an active upholder of individual liberty.

To encourage and enhance the growth of grass root democracy, Aquino brought out changes in local

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54. Gerald Sussman, "Politics and the Press; Philippines Since Marocs", Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, Vol.22, no.1, 1990, p.502.

55. Ibid.

administration, which 'Enhanced Decentralisation,<sup>56</sup> and helped in developing a self-reliant community and strengthened the grass root decision-making, units, which were vital for a healthy functioning of democracy.<sup>57</sup>

The proposed charter of 1986 had drastically clipped the powers of the President, particularly those relating to the declaration of martial law and the suspension of the privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus. The President's powers could be seen from the following : The President as the Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces of the Philippines may, in case of invasion or rebellion or when safety requires it, suspend the privilege of Writ of Habeas Corpus or place the Philippines or any part thereof under martial law, but only for a period of 60 days. Further, the President is required to report in person or in writing to Congress within 48 hours of the proclamation of suspension. Congress voting jointly by a majority of all its members in regular or a special session, may revoke such a proclamation.<sup>58</sup>

So far as the Civil Service procedures for the accountability of public officials are concerned, these are

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56. J. Edgardo Angara, "Discussion on Government" , The Fookien Times, Philippine Year Book, (Manila, 1986), pp.28-29.

57. Ibid, p.31.

58. Ibid

provided for in the draft charter. This was done to make the Civil Service responsible and accountable to the people so that graft and corruption is curtailed as these Civil Services were not accountable to the people during Marcos's regime as the power was held in his hands or of his cronies.

Thus, Aquino had a host of problems to solve and tasks to achieve and policies to implement in order to create a political and social equilibrium in the country.

Thus, there was the need for democratization of the society as a whole. The other inherent aspect was the patron-client relationship which had to be taken care of as it was deep rooted in the Filipino psyche. It was on the part of Aquino to be committed to the ideals of democracy and representative government. She had to develop a public policy that would promote redistribution of wealth and political power in such a manner as to maintain the democratic system in the country. As the euphoria of the revolution had lessened, the fact remained that moral values brought socio-economic progress. Therefore there was a need to improve the social conditions of the masses. Therein lay the hope for the survival of democracy in the Philippines.

## **CHAPTER - IV**

# **MANAGING THE CHALLENGES OF INTERNAL CONSOLIDATION**

#### Chapter IV

The new government came to power through "an extraordinary set of circumstances a military rebellion reinforced and strengthened by the physical support of no less than a million people in Metro Manila, otherwise known 'people power'."<sup>1</sup> Thus, she came to power through a populist movement.

This revolution was a bloodless revolution and first of its kind. In the case of Philippines, as a scholar has observed, "Innate in any revolution is the exhilarating sense of power, of being able to influence the course of events, of changing people at will, of withdrawing or granting authority. And when that power had been undermined for fourteen years, no wonder it<sup>2</sup> exploded when given the opportunity." All the hopes, expectations and euphoria associated with the revolution had to be fulfilled. Thus, Corazon Aquino, who emerged as the symbol of liberty and freedom during the revolution, had the onerous task of keeping the hopes alive and free the Filipinos from the bondage of authoritarian rule. Aquino promised that she would adhere to the principles of democracy and dedication to human rights, individual freedom and maintainence of law and order.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Mata Nestor, "Cory of a thousand days ;(Manila, 1989), p.7.
  2. Ibid, p.2.
  3. Ibid.

Keeping the goals of the people power Revolution in view, President Aquino, soon after coming to power, decided to change the existing constitution which was nurtured by Marcos. The ratification of the new constitution in February 1986 through a plebiscite provided the Aquino government with a democratic seal. The new constitution had provided for the re-establishment of a fully constitutional democracy. "It provided for a bicameral legislature and a presidential form of government with a multi-party system. Under the new constitution, members of the House of Representatives would also be selected from sectors like labour, urban poor etc."<sup>4</sup> These sectors of people were encouraged to form their own organisations with a concrete set of ideas, so that these would develop into goal-oriented organizations.

Aquino's movement was a mass movement. Hence there was a "general erosion of elite-oriented politics with the growing<sup>5</sup> grassroot politicisation sparked by mass movement." The polity established during President Marcos's regime was elite-oriented where the power and wealth remained concentrated in few hands thereby causing widening rift between the rich and the poor. The centralised polity during this period also had stunted the growth of grassroot democracy. The mass moved thus, had aimed and

4. Proposed Philippine Constitution, 1986, Article VI. Section V, cited in Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, "Government and Politics of the Philippines", (Singapore, 1988), p.279.
5. Bello Walden, "Aquino's elite populism : Initial reflection" Third World Quarterly, Vol.8, No.3, July 1980, p.1028.

political participation at all levels of polity. This constitution provided Aquino, a six year term in office. During her term she had to restore the socio-economic and political condition of the country so as to establish a stable democracy.

The 1986 draft charter provided for a presidential form of government. The three branches of the government executive, legislative and judiciary, share the powers of government and these are precisely defined and clearly distributed among separate and co-equal branches. Judiciary was reorganised in order to brighten the prospect of effecting a system of checks and balances insuring accountability and integrity in the government. Thus the system of checks and balances was to be restored, local government autonomy to be recognized, public officers to be accountable to the people. The proposed charter<sup>6</sup> even clipped the powers of the President.

President Aquino entered office in February 1986 committed to the cause of meaningful and authentic decentralization of local government. Local governments were provided with more effective powers, greater responsibilities and more sources of revenue to ensure fullest development of these local bodies self-reliant communities.

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6. Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, n.3, p.281.

Thus, the redemocratisation of the entire political system and the rebuilding of the democratic institutions of the government that had deteriorated because of graft and corruption of the last regime had to be done only through the constitutional reforms. In doing so, Aquino faced many challenges and she tried to tackle these in a democratic way in order to restore democracy, as promised.

The Aquino government had her power base emanating from the masses, because it were they who had supported her and brought her to power through a revolution called 'People Power Revolution'. They did this because they had faith in that she would restore democracy in the Philippines and also pursue policies which would improve their economic and social conditions. Therein lay the challenges that faced her at every step. In the views of a Filipino scholar, who aptly summerises the conditions existed during Marcos's time in the following words: "Internally, politics continued to be based upon traditional feudalistic milieu".<sup>7</sup> Politically the country had, had the misfortune of being totally denied the freedom of speech and expression as Marcos's regime was authoritarian in character. Aquino had picked up the thread from a democracy which was shattered by a regime which had thrived on the fears of its

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7. Carolina G. Hernandez, "Philippines in 1987, challenges of Redemocratization", Asian Survey, Vol.28, No.2, February, 1988, p.28.



people. It exploited the people and had stifled their voice. Economically, there were problems of "debt, underdevelopment, unemployment, and non implementation of land reforms, which had accounted for the deterioration of the Philippine economy and devalued the Peso. In the light of the above, President Aquino had to bring about socio-economic equality and growth by internally consolidating the nation and paving way for a better future for the nation.

Her first task on becoming the president of the country, was to prepare a comprehensive programme for the reconstruction of the Filipino polity and society. Some of her programmes in this endeavour are enumerated below :

- 1) To reduce poverty and redress social inequity by improving the standard living of more than three million Filipinos;
- 2) to reconstruct a moribound economy, and maintaining positive growth;
- 3) to energize the bureaucracy and make it accountable to the people;
- 4) to blaze paths of peace and to guarantee public order and to resolve conflicts and thereby reducing crime rate, the number and duration of strikes and the strength of the insurgency, the secessionist movement and the ultra rightists' coup attempts;

- 5) to contribute, to global cooperation, harmony and progress through Philippines initiative and diplomacy;
- 6) to recast the outlook of the Filipino people from deep-seated disbelief into forward looking optimism which would impel them to design and pursue their own future, choose their own identity and to strive to be the best;
- 7) to help the masses chart out their own destiny using their efforts, time, talent, tenacity, and a selfless will to rebuild and protect democracy;
- 8) to bring peace in all sections of the society;
- 9) to inculcate confidence in the people with regards to democratic institutions and processes, especially in preserving and protecting the sanctity of the ballot and integrity in national and local elections; and
- 10) to enhance competitiveness vis-a-vis other ASEAN nations to fully avail Philippines of the opportunities which ASEAN offers.

Through these programmes, Aquino aimed at bringing about an overall improvement of the country in all fields towards acquiring economic recovery, securing social justice for all sections of the people and not limited to a few persons. Thus, "she had to recognize individual freedoms without sacrificing national stability, because individual interest should not

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8. From the State of the Nation, A Report to the Filipino People, July 22, 1991.

override national interests. In order to preserve the restored democracy in the Philipines, Aquino realised that she must protect the interests, rights and freedoms of all citizens of the country, and simultaneously implements the promised reforms.

In this connection, on March 25, 1986, President Aquino issued "proclamation No.3 declaring a national policy to implement reforms, to give the people basic rights, adopting a provisional constitution, providing for an orderly transition to a government under new constitution and to give freedom of speech and expression."<sup>10</sup>

In the formulation of the new policies, the Department of Justice played a key role. Aside from drafting of a 'Freedom Constitution',<sup>11</sup> the department of justice submitted, "draft executive orders, meant to harmonize existing laws, rules and regulations with the policies of the new government which aim at socio-economic and political equality."<sup>12</sup> The department likewise, came out with recommandations for the repeal of the 'repressive decrees and laws' which had led to the abolition of the presidential decrees which had been aimed at giving authoritarian power to Marcos. This action by the Department of

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9. Carolina G. Hernandez, n.7, p.29.

10. David F Kamberton, "Future Prospects for the Philippines", Department of State, Bulletin (Washington, D.C.), Vol.89, No.2146, May 1989, pp.43-44.

11. Mata Nestor, n.1, p.10

12. David F. Kamberton, n.10, p.49.

Justice had far reaching significance in the future course of the country in the process of restoring democracy.

At the same time, the President had to co-ordinate the various factions in her coalition government so as to give stability to it. In doing so, she faced several problems. The challenges which she faced could be divided into the following:

#### **I Governmental Coalition**

Corazon Aquino had come to power with the support of the people and through the "support of various political parties led by P.D.P-LABAN (Filipino Democratic Party and Lakas Ng. Bayan)<sup>13</sup> but later joined by UNIDO (United Democratic Organization)<sup>14</sup> headed by Salvador Laurel.

Thus, no single party large dominated the political arena. A scholar observed that "From the very onset, the Aquino government has had the challenge of co-ordinating among the

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13. PDP - LABAN (Pilipino Democratic Party and Lakas Ng. Bayan - Party for Philippine Democracy-Fight).

14. UNIDO was formed of Nacionlista Party Laurel - Wing, L.P., LABAN, Mindonao Alliance, Bicol Saro, cause oriented groups like the Peoples Movement for Independence, Nationalism and Democracy (MIND) and National Union for Liberation (NUL). cited in Ventura, Eva, Duka, "The nature and Philippine political system and the role of political parties in Philippine political government, focusing on the May 1984, Parliamentary election", Paper presented at the EUROPA Regional Confernece on comparative study of Electoral Systems in Asia and the Pacific, Oregon city, 2-3 February, 1986, pp. 69-70.

various political parties who formed the coalition.<sup>15</sup> This was indeed a difficult task because each of the parties had their own ideological and differences of opinion. The parties were divided along ideological fixations lines rather than according to personal ties. This was a new trend which had emerged, because earlier the parties used to be cadre based rather than mass based.<sup>16</sup>

From the very beginning, the alliance between the UNIDO and PDB-LABAN was feeble in nature. The leaders of both these parties felt "uneasy about forging an alliance to bring about a semblance of unity among opposition parties against the Marcos dictatorship".<sup>17</sup> This alliance did not last long because both the parties wanted a bigger share in the government, specially within the cabinet. To add to the problems, there had been frequent defections. "The intense power struggle caused conflicts among the coalition partners and this resulted in a high degree destabilisation in the political strength of the Aquino administration, which in turn brought a golden opportunity to the opposition, Grand Alliance for Democracy (G.A.D.) to come to the forefront."<sup>18</sup>

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15. Carl H.Lande and Richard Hoolay, "Aquino takes charge" Foreign Affairs (New York), Vol.4, No.5, Summer 1986, pp. 1087-1088.

16. Ibid, p.1090.

17. Ibid, p.1091.

18. Carl H.Lande, "The Political Crisis", in John Brusnan, Crisis in the Philippines : The Marcos Era and Beyond, (New Jersey, 1986), p.84.

Cory Aquino had to create and promote an equilibrium within the coalition. Each of the members of the coalition tried their best to bring her to their own way of thinking, but Aquino took the middle path. She had talks with the coalition members on various issues and formulated the policies and programmes which would best serve the people in the Philippines and channel their energies towards development.

## II. Communist Insurgency

Communist insurgency had been one of the major problems not only for Cory Aquino, but had existed way back in 1940's and early 1950's. One of the well-known communist rebellions had been the Hukbalahap movement. The communists usually derived their power from the discontent of the people against a particular regime. In the case of the Philippines, specially during the martial law period, there was an increased momentum to these movements. This was because of the excesses committed on the people by the Marcos's authoritarian regime. "Economic hardships, military repression and the weakened and demoralised democratic forces strengthened the radical left. The communist supported National Democratic Front (N.D.F.), acquired support from students, large segments of the middle class, human rights groups, teachers and deposed clergy men. These groups mobilised the people against the regime. The Communist Party of the

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19. Belinda Aquino, "Philippine Martial Law Voices from the Underground", Human Rights Internet Special Paper 2, (Washington, D.C, January 1982, pp.2-4.

Philippines (CPP), its military arm, New people's Army (N.P.A.) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), served as left-wing opposition. In 1972, the C.P.P. had formed the National Democratic Front (N.D.F.), which had tried to "include some elements of the church into the mass movement so that the church could be a speaker for them and mobilize people." <sup>20</sup> The N.P.A. which was confined to two or three places only, spread its influence to large number of areas like "Cagayan, Samar, Ssouthern Leyte, Bataan, Laguna, Bico Panay, Southern Negros <sup>21</sup> Oriental, Western Pangasyam and five provinces of Mindanao."

On her becoming President, Aquino tried to negotiate with the left. She did not use force to curb insurgency but advocated reconciliation through peace talks, so that there could be a peaceful solution of this problem. She called for a ceasefire and was ready to talk to the communist rebels, "the offer of talks enabled her double advantage, one, there would be an end to the killings, and second, even a brief respite from war would <sup>22</sup> enforce the warring parties to speculate about negotiations."

Now, " 'insurgency', which is born out of disenchantment and frustration is normally caused by regional imbalances and denial of opportunity to one section of people which are available to

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20. Ibid

21. William H. Overholt. "Rise and Fall of Ferdinand Marcos" Asian Survey, Vol.26, No.11, November 1986, p.1143.

22. Belinda Aquino, n.19, pp.2-4.

the others. The lasting solution lies in attacking the root-<sup>23</sup> cause of social unrest." For this very purpose, the Aquino government some steps, - First, it made clear that human rights would be preserved and democracy would adhere to the principle of socio-economic and political equality. "To accomplish this objective, a three-faceted system consisting of a Volunteer Force, Territorial Force and Mobile Force were created. The A.F.P. (Armed Forces of the Philippines). Counter insurgency<sup>24</sup> plan was made." These forces were created to counter any move made by the insurgents.

The next task the President did was to achieve reconciliation with the insurgents through peace talks. The first attempt was negotiations with the CPP/NPA/NDF in 1986 following the release of some of the key leaders from prisons and awarding them amnesty. "The government launched a National Reconciliation and Development-Programme (NRDP), on December 24, 1986 to focus government action on the root causes of insurgency. Insurgents were offered the option to peacefully surrender to law. Secondly, they were offered cash in lieu of surrender.

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23. Carolina G. Hernandez, "Military in Transitional Regimes' The Case of Philippines under the Aquino Government " Journal of Asiatic Studies , (Seoul), Vol. 31, No.1, 1988, pp.25-26.
  24. Justus M. Vander Kroef, "Aquino's Philippines : The Deepening Security Crisis", Conflict Studies, (London), Vol.I, No.2, 1988, pp.31-32.



Thirdly, they were given other resources also." <sup>25</sup> The government opened centres all over the country to process applications for amnesty. Aquino tried to get even the MNLF involved in the peace talks but failed to do so. As a results of these talks, there was considerable decrease in the CPP/NPA <sup>26</sup> strength and there was a reduction even in fire arms.

The third task was to involve the insurgents towards development programmes. They were to get help from the Department of National Defense (DND). The objective was to stop insurgency and to start upliftment of masses. For this purpose a comprehensive organisation was founded under the leadership of the President herself. For implementation of the programmes launched by this foundation, each agency involved in the process was assigned a clear cut charter of duties :

1. It participates in policy discussions on development through the joint cabinet - NEDA board meetings;
2. interactions at lower levels to assure that security and development concerned were harmonised;
3. it directly aims to provide conditons of peace and orders to allow development projects to proceed unhampered; and lastly
4. it is consulted on the security implications of certain <sup>27</sup> development projects.

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25. Renato S. De Villa (he had been the Secretary of Department of National Defence under the Aquino Government), "U.P. Public Lectures on the Aquino administration and the post-EDSA Government (1986-1992)." Vol. I, p.93.

26. See. Appendix II and III. pp.176-177

27. Renato S. De. Villa, n.25, pp. 91-92.

### III The Divided Military

Still another challenge that Aquino faced arose from the rift within the armed forces. There existed four different factions among the military. These were, Pro-Aquino Forces, Yellow Army, Fidel Ramos's supported Marcos Loyalists and the Activist Reformist Officers of the Armed Forces (R.A.M.).<sup>28</sup>

All these factions like the political parties had their own set of ideas and plans of action which were usually very different. As a scholar has observed "one of the reasons why these organisations differed in their ideologies was that they used to represent different sections of society and were formed in different places."<sup>29</sup>

Due to the inherent factionalism in the Philippine polity, there had occurred seven coup attempts in the Philippines during Aquino's presidency. These coups, however, were unsuccessful because she had support in certain section of the Armed Forces. The people were still suspicious of the army after 14 years of dictatorship. One of Aquino's first tasks was to remove this suspicion and to make the people less wary of the army. "She tried to orient the army towards national interest rather than for the personal interest of a dictator."<sup>(30)</sup> She tried to develop a mutual trust among the masses, the government and the military. One of first measures, the Aquino administration

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28. Courtesy, Asiaweek, Vol.1, No.1, March 8, 1987, p.17.

29. Carolina G. Hernandez, n.23, p.42-43.

30. Ibid.

adopted in this regard was to "involve the military itself, in trust-building. This she did by the disaster relief under the military because they had the resources to do the task. Army Engineers were sent to various areas to help the people during time of their need and in the event of natural calamities."<sup>31</sup> This positive role of the military enabled it to influence the thinking of the people about it. Thus Aquino was able to make the military more responsive towards the people's interests.

There existed favouritism in promotion, corruption and preferences being given to personal loyalty over service loyalty. The result was, "erosion of professionalism and discipline, the very base on which army is generally structured."<sup>32</sup> To put an end to all these problems, Aquino made it a point to give promotions according to merit and defaulture were punished. She promised the military that her government would trust them to bring about change and improvement in the armed forces as they thought fit but they had to keep the trust of the government."<sup>33</sup>

#### **IV. Justice and Human Rights**

Another challenge that Aquino faced was concerning the protection of Human Rights and restoration of justice.

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31. Ibid

32. Justus M. Vander Kroef, n.24, pp.31-32.

33. Ibid.

"In the proclamation No.1 which president Aquino made at her inauguration on February 25, 1986, she laid down her commitments to human rights, truth, justice, morality in government, freedom and democracy. In this proclamation, the president declared,"

"I pledge to do justice to the numerous victims of human rights violations. Consistent with the demands of the sovereign people, we pledge a government, dedicated to uphold truth and justice, morality and decency in government, freedom and democracy.  
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On March 2, 1986 the President, issued proclamation No.2, to lift the suspension of the privilege of the writ of Habeas Corpus. On March 18, 1986 President Corazon Aquino issued executive order No.8 creating the Presidential Committee on Human Rights pursuant to her government's commitment to uphold and respect the people's civil and human rights. The committee was headed by former senator Jose W. Diokno and former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, Jose B.L. Reyes as Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively.  
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The protection of human rights gained ground as soon as the Aquino administration took over. The President had issued a proclamation granting amnesty to all political prisoners and

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34. Silvestra H. Bello III, (held the position of Secretary of the Department of Justice from July 1991 to February 1992), cited in n.25, p. 117.

35. Ibid.

formed a committee which formulated the guidelines for the grant of pardon to political prisoners.

Despite all these promises, however it was a difficult task for the Aquino government to fully implement all the policies to promote human rights. The Amnesty International (A.I) covering the period of Aquino administration, indicated that, "the security agencies such as the military and police carried out a large number of executions in order to curtail insurgency and no law court prosecuted any person belonging to these organisation.<sup>36</sup> However, the report failed to highlight the fact that incidence of extra-judicial killings continued to get reduced during Aquino's time proving the efficiency of the department of justice. The AI report even failed to report the government's move to protect human rights in the archipelago.

The government took such steps as educating the military and police personnel on the concepts of human rights. In fact, the government made it mandatory no promotion will be given to officers who had human rights violation cases pending against them. It took some positive steps to protect human rights. They were as follows :-

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35. Ibid.

36. James Putzel, "Philippines : President Aquino's Four Challenges", World Today, Vol.44, No.8-9, August-September, 1988, pp.155-56.

- 1) Strengthen human rights education and training of armed forces and police as well as the general public;
- 2) immediate disbanding of armed vigilante groups and disarming of all military and police officers who exhibit abusive behaviour and attitudes; and
- 3) to establish closer and stronger cooperation among the various government agencies involved in investigating prosecution monitoring and promotion of human rights.<sup>37</sup>

The department of justice supported the social, economic and political goals of the administration and encouraged the people's active participation in government. Thus the process of justice and protection of human rights upheld the promise of democracy in the Philippines.<sup>38</sup>

#### **V. Agrarian Reforms**

Land reforms have had a long history in the Philippines. All heads of state had tried to implement laws which gave balanced benefits to landowners and tillers but due to inherent 'patron-client relationship', the land usually remained with the elite class and the poor were exploited. A keen observation on policies implemented and failures registered during the

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37. Renato S. De Villa, n.25, p.130.

38. Milato Salazar, "Towards Philippines Development", Solidarity, Manila, Vol.1, No.11, March-April, 1989, pp.179-80.

administration of various Presidents, is given below :

"President Quezon had passed the 'Rice share Tenancy Act' which provided for 50-50 share arrangement between land owners and tenants. But implementation of these reforms required an official petition by the municipal council. This proved to be an obstacle as the councils were dominated by the landowners. Under President Magsaysay the National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration (NARRA) sought to influence the rebels to surrender by offering them farms in Southern Philippines, but the beneficiaries were very few. Magsaysay even passed the Agricultural Tenancy Act. This law provided tenants, security of tenure and allowed them to shift from share tenancy to leasehold where they paid the landowner a fixed rental but this could not be implemented. President Macapagal advocated abolition of share tenancy but clever landowners found a way to avoid this. President Marcos passed twin-land reforms pertaining to share tenancy but failed to take any concrete steps and after martial law, the President did place the entire country under land reform but never implemented any land reform programme for the masses." (39)

Under the Aquino government, the constitutional commission of 1986 suggested that the state shall, promote a comprehensive Rural Development and Agrarian Reform. For this purpose, the government "created a Cabinet Action Committee to draft the CARP and a number of executives orders were issued in order to :

- a) create and provide funds upto P.50 million for carrying out the reforms;
- 2) Executive Order, (EO) No.229 provided administrative procedures for land registration and to provide land acquisition land compensation procedure to landowners;

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39. Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, n.4, pp.75-76.and also see Benjamin T. Leong (served in the position of the Secretary in the Department of Agrarian Reforms in June 1990, in the Aquino Government.), n.25, pp.303-304.

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- 3) EO - 228 tdeclared assurance of full land ownership to qualified farmer beneficiaries; and
- 4) EO - 129 A streamlined the structure and operation of DAR (Department of Agrarian Reforms)."<sup>40</sup>

All these programmes were aimed at providing the long deferred land reforms to the people.

But Aquino could not fully implement her land reform programmes because she had to tackle with frequent natural calamities which had a disastrous impact on the Philippine economy. This led to a diversion of funds which could otherwise have been utilised for constructive programmes. Another reason which hindered her land reforms was the inherent patron-client nature of the Philippines polity. in which the landed oligarchy were not ready to give up their well established status. The oligarchy still enjoyed a lot of influence in the Philippine polity.

Aquino thus tried to face the challenges of internal consolidation to the best of her abilities. There is lot yet left to be done but an effort has been made in the right direction.

#### **Role of Opposition Groups**

The political parties of the right led by K.B.L.-Kilusang

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40. Benjamin T. Leong (served in the position of the Secretary in the Department of Agrarian Reforms in June 1990, in the Aquino Government.),n.25, p.305.



Bagong Lipunan (New Society Movement) represented the forces, ideas and doctrines of the Marcos's era and had a lot of influence on the people, although it was all through pressure. This was because, the people had suffered from the arbitrary policies of Marcos for almost 14 years under the KBL. They were influenced by the nature of polity by its authoritarian set up. It could not offer the socio-economic and political equality which was the basic need of democracy.

The more progressive parties of the centre and left-of-centre like PDP-LABAN and the emerging Lakas Ng Bayan, carried the burden of sustaining the gains of the 'people power revolution' that installed the Aquino government into power. An open Left Party such as the PNB on the other hand, was to help in orienting the programmes towards being mass-based. These parties always had a goal of mass based development plans and therefore had a positive influence on the people and Philippine polity.

In regard to military, there had always been suspicion among the people about what course it would take. In 14 years of Marcos's regime the military had become a tool of Marcos and was used by Marcos as his power base. When Aquino came to power, she put a stop to the exploitative policies of Marcos and made the military more responsive to the needs of the people.

Thus, inspite of the positive influence of the political parties on the people of Philippines during the Aquino Presidency, they suffered from basic inherent weaknesses. The party system was based on a patron-client relationship which hindered mass contact. These parties lacked motivation and were devoid of moral values.

## **CHAPTER - V**

# **ECONOMIC AND FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES**

## Chapter - V

On assumption of Presidency, Corazon Aquino faced the biggest task of rebuilding the nation. The most serious Marcos legacy, to President Aquino, was a country besieged with a state of depression and turmoil in the aftermath of the assassination of Ninay Aquino. As "The roots of these problems, which the country was beset with could be traced to structural weakness in the foundations of the economy, errors in economic management and abuse of power by the previous regime"<sup>1</sup>.

It is imperative here to enumerate in brief about the existing economic conditions in the Philippines before President Aquino embarked on changing the sagging economy. The economic reforms envisaged by Marcos in his 'New Society' framework, took a nosedive in the long run. After 1975, the reforms stagnated and even reversed. The land reforms which was a significant part of the reforms package envisaged by Marcos got bogged down as a result of corruption and red-tapism. Marcos had already destroyed the old landed oligarchy and replaced it with a "New Oligarchy composed to gigantic business conglomerates. It came to be run by the President's Croies. Instead of promoting, employment by focussing investment on labour intensive industries

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1. Franscio Nemenzo and R.J. May (eds.) The Philippines After Marcos, (New York, 1985), p.,67

industries, the Marcos regime focussed on the eleven major industrial projects which were justified by the rhetoric of nationalism and dependency theory; that Marcos would relieve oppressed people from European dependence".<sup>2</sup> The huge projects were utterly unsuited for the nation's skills, the people had. His policies permitted huge foreign borrowings and much of the foreign exchange earnings were siphoned to personal bank accounts. "Marcos had thus substituted a ruthlessness elite for merely an inefficient one."<sup>3</sup>

Using leftist slogans about avoiding dependence on exploitative multinational corporations the regime created vast monopolies that squeezed the Philippines poor to the physical limits and destroyed the system of independent entrepreneurship.<sup>4</sup> Despite impressive paper revisions of the foreign investment laws, red tape and corruption continued to hamper foreign investment in the country.

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Infrastructural expenditure during Marcos's era decreased from 50.2 percent of capital outlays in 1970's to 36.3 percent in 1981. In 1965, social services accounted for 44.2 percent of the budget whereas in 1982, the share had fallen to 23.3 percent.<sup>5</sup>

2. William Overholt, "Rise and Fall of Ferdinand Marcos", Asian Survey, Vol. 26, No.11, 1986, p.1143
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. An analysis of the Philippine Economic Crisis : A Workshop Report, Unpublished Document, June 1984, p.40.

From 1970 onwards, the growth rate of the Philippines had risen by 6.4 percent while during 1978-82, the average rate of G.N.P. had declined to 4.6 percent only.<sup>6</sup> The mismanagement of the economy during Marcos's rule, manifested in the decline the industrial and agricultural production, falling wages and increasing unemployment, the flight of capital, high inflation, malnutrition, widening gap between rich and the poor, urban and rural imbalance and a negative economic rate.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Plans, Policies and Reforms undertaken by Aquino Administration**

In the light of the state of the Filipino economy which Marcos left, the Aquino administration embarked on revitalizing the same by targetting primarily the following areas :-

1. Alleviation of poverty;
2. generation of more productive employment;
3. promotion of equity and social justice; and
4. attainment of sustainable economic growth.<sup>8</sup>

To improve the economic plight of the poor, the Aquino administration introduced policies and programmes to bring about equity, efficiency and social justice as incorporated in the Medium Term Philippine Development Plans (MTPDP). The

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6. Ibid.

7. G.V.C. Naidu, " From Marcos to Mrs. Aquino", Strategic Analysis (New Delhi, IDSA) Vol.11, No.11, 1987, p.1280

8. Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, The Government and Politics of the Philippines, (Singapore, 1988), p.49.

eradication of poverty and the attainment of better standard of living for every Filipino became the ultimate aim of the MTPDP. It recognized and addressed poverty and income inequality, high rate of unemployment, underemployment and urban and rural disparities. The Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP), recognised that these objectives would only be realised if economic growth was sustained side by side with a decrease in population growth.

The significant improvement in the Philippine economy was brought about by the restoration of business and consumer confidence as well as the implementation of important structural reforms. More so, the standby agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other donor assistance agencies as well as the orientation of the government towards minimum market intervention and the re-establishment of a competitive market environment for the private sector, aided stabilization and adjustment of the economy.

To attain economic recovery and sustain economic growth, a two-way approach was adopted. This consisted of, the revitalization of private entrepreneurship on the one hand and the improved management of public resources on the other.

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9. Cayetano W. Paderang was the Secretary of Planning and Director General of the National Economic and Development Authority, (NEDA) under the Aquino Government, cited in public lectures on the Aquino Administration and Post-EDSA Government. Record and Legacy (1986-1992)," (Quezon City, 1992), pp.25-26.

The government immediately addressed the problem of overregulation in agriculture. It dismantled the sugar, coconut, meat and fertilizer monopolies and lifted the ban on coconut export. It lifted price controls on rice and corn. It opened up wheat and soyabean imports to the private sector. The deregulation measures brought lower prices for farmers. Reforms in the energy sector were implemented through regulation subsidy and pricing. The Energy Regulation Board (ERB) was the sole regulatory authority of the entire power sector. Private sector was encouraged to participate in power generation and other infrastructural projects. To be able to attract more foreign investment, incentives and reforms were instituted.<sup>10</sup>

The Omnibus Investment code was passed and the Board of Investments (BOI) rationalized to give more emphasis to investment promotion. The Foreign Investment Act (FIA) was enacted to increase the legal provision of foreign equity participation in non-priority investment areas. Trade and industrial policies were liberalized to promote efficiency and competition. Duty exemption and drawback system were introduced to boost export. The Central Bank also liberalised foreign exchange transactions to improve the allocative efficiency of the domestic economy.<sup>11</sup>

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10. Cayetano W. Paderanga Jr., n.9, p.29.

11. Manwel F. Montes, "The Critique of Aquino Government Economic Program, And Proposed for An Alternative Development Strategy", Asian Studies, Vol.1, no.25-26, 1986-87, p.11.



To strengthen the economy's financial structure, the government launched a savings mobilization program. It improved the system of supervision and regulation and enhanced the program for depositor protection. Efforts were also made to improve the central bank's ability to implement fiscal and monetary policies to complement financial reforms. To improve the rural credit market, rehabilitation programmes like capital build-up and conversion were initiated to strengthen the rural banking system. Structural adjustments in the public sectors were instituted to improve fiscal position of the National government, reduce public sector intervention in the economy and improve the administrative machinery towards full implementation of public investment programmes. A comprehensive tax reform program was undertaken in 1986 and 1990 to make the tax system more progressive and equitable and generate more revenues. To eliminate barriers to the growth of private sector, the financial sector was rationalised and the government owned or controlled corporations were privatised. "A vibrant private sector is an important element of the mixed, transition economy".<sup>12</sup>

To provide for more basic infrastructural facilities as a necessary requirement of economic growth, the Aquino administration embarked on the Five-year Medium Term Public Investment Programme MTPIP, for 1987-1992. This contained

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12. Ibid, pp.7-9.

specific programmes and projects determined through a process of screening, review and perioritization taking into account, not only economic, financial and social desirability but also the government's absorptive and institutional capabilities for implementation.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Performance**

All the plans, policies and reforms discussed above resulted in positive development as far as immediate economic revitalization of the country was concerned. The economy was gradually "characterised by a consumption - led to an investment - led growth".<sup>14</sup> The change of government in 1986 resulted in a 4.2 percent real G.N.P. growth in 1986, peaking to 7.2 percent in 1988 before decreasing to negative .5 percent in 1991.<sup>15</sup> The instant economic growth was manifested in, growth in agricultural production, stability of currency, fall in the rate of unemployment, rapid growth in investment critical to sustaining the economic recovery, rise in capital formation, growth in Foreign Direct Investment (F.D.I), increase in exports,<sup>16</sup> rise in Foreign Exchange reserves among other changes. The economy grew approximately about 5.5 percent in 1989, down from 6.7 percent in 1986, due mainly to a decline in government

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13. Cayetana W. Paderanga, n.10, p.33.

14. David G. Timberman, "The Philippines 1989, A good year turns sour", Asian Survey, Vol.30, no.2, February 1990, 1992.

15. Ibid.

16. Asian Wall Street Journal, November, 26, 1990, p.19.

consumption. Manufacturing and construction continued to be the leading sectors as they grew up 7 percent and 14 percent respectively and agricultural production rebounded to increase by more than 3.5 percent in 1989. Unemployment declined slightly to<sup>17</sup> about 9 percent and underemployment was close to 32 percent.

Investment, critical to sustaining the economic recovery, continued to grow rapidly during the first half of 1989. Capital formation rose at a rate of 27.4 percent, exceeding the 25 percent growth requirement to sustain G.N.P. growth of 6 percent. Approved Foreign investment rose by 130 percent over that of 1988 totaling about \$550 million. Businesses from Taiwan, Japan and Hongkong were the largest foreign investors. Exports increased by a healthy 13 percent to almost \$ 8 billion. The Aquino<sup>18</sup> Government claimed that the economy faced a 'financing gap'<sup>18</sup> in 1989 and 1990 variously calculated to a total between \$ 1.4 and \$ 1.9 billion. Throughout this year, the government sought to fill the gap by securing new foreign loans, investment and economic assistance. The IMF agreed in principle to provide \$1.23 billion in new credits in conjunction with a three year programme<sup>19</sup> of economic reforms.

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17. David G. Timberman, N.14, p.172.

18. The financing gap is the difference between the net expected inflow of foreign fund and the amount of external financing needed to maintain an adequate level of Foreign exchange reserves and to sustain a certain level of economic growth.

19. See. Rober S.Dohner, "Philippine External Debt : Burdens, possibilities and prospects, "Asian Update, October, 1989, The Asia Society.

But all the euphoria created with the initial spurt in the economy of the Philippines in the first few years of the Aquino regime, began to disappear in 1990, when the Filipino economy showed signs of decline and stagnation. The Philippines economy in 1990 was battered by the combined effects of the coup attempts that hurt investment, natural disasters, negative external events and poor or inadequate policies. "There was a serious drought during the first half of 1990; several severe typhoons including the mid-November storm that tore through the Visayas, killing more than 335 people and causing around \$300 million in damage to Cebu and Negros - occidental; and an earthquake in July registering 7.7 on the Richter Scale."<sup>20</sup>

The rise in world oil prices and the slowing down of global economy combined to make servicing of the foreign debt increasingly slim. The situation was made worse by the absence of an effective energy policy and a ballooning public sector deficit, and a general lack of leadership and consensus in the economic arena.<sup>21</sup>

The first and second quarter indicator in 1990 revealed that economic growth was slowing, inflation was increasing and the government and current account deficits were growing at alarming

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20. David G. Timberman, "The Philippines in 1990, Asian Survey :  
on Shaky Ground, Vol.31, No.2, February 1991 p.158.  
21. Ibid.

rates. Then came the unanticipated blow of the July 16 earthquake, which according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), killed or injured more than 5,000 people, left nearly homeless and caused \$550 million in damage in Northern region.<sup>22</sup> The earthquake further damaged tourism and caused domestic and foreign funds to be diverted into relief and reconstruction. After the quake, Jaime Cardinal Sim called for selective debt discharge saying it was "morally wrong" to continue to service the country's foreign debt "in the face of such widespread lack of basic amenities among the people."<sup>23</sup>

The Iraqi trade invasion of Kuwait in August 1970 had disastrous consequences all over the world. For the Philippines, it was all the more so because of its declining economy. The rapid rise in oil prices that followed, exposed the country's vulnerabilities. Although, the country's dependence on oil imports had been reduced from 97 percent of total energy needs in 1973 to about 50 percent in 1985 it had climbed back to 62 percent by 1989.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, some 39000 Filipino workers in Iraq and Kuwait were displaced, reducing remittance and eventually adding to unemployed which grew for the first time

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22. Asian Wall Street Journal Weekly, November, 26, 1990, p.19.  
23. The Economist, Sept. 8, 1990, p.38, By mid 1996, the consolidated public sector deficit) The combined deficit of government and government owned financial institutions and corporatins, had grown up to 5percent of GNP instead of declining to 2.9percent as targetted.  
24. Far Easter Economic Review (FEER) Vol No.10, 1990, p.37

since 1986 to over 9 percent, while underemployment remained 30 percent. According to the Makati Business Club, real wages had increased slightly more than 2percent since 1980.<sup>25</sup> Exports grew only about 5percent while imports grew almost 30 percent. The result was a decline in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from 6.1 percent in 1989 to 2.6 percent in 1990. By 1991, GDP posted a negative growth rate of 1.2 percent.<sup>26</sup>

By the year 1992, the Filipino economy had shrunk by 1 percent. Former Budget Under Secretary, Benjamin Diokno described it as an "economy in a state of stagnation and inflation, the GDP growth rate for the year 1991 was zero, or even negative, while the inflation rate averaged 18 percent."<sup>27</sup>

Besides the economic slump in 1990 due to the various reasons as discussed above, Short-sighted economic policies also resulted in a no-gain position for the poorest of the poor Aquino in her state of the nation address in July, 1989, admitted that "the economic recovery has restored old fortunes far more significantly than it has touched the lives of the vast majority of our people."<sup>28</sup>

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25. MBC Economic paper, the Makati Business Club, May 1990, p.6. Cited in Davig G. Timberman, No.14, p.160.

26. Cayetano W. Paderanga, Director General (NEDA21) n.9, p.26.

27. Alex B. Brillantes, Jr., "The Philippines in 1991 - Disasters and decisions". Asian Survey, Vol.32, No.2, February 1992, p.145.

28. Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report East Asia, July 24, 1989, p.60.

**Efforts to stabilize the economy  
and contain the crisis**

The Aquino government could not prevent the country's natural disasters or control the international price of oil, but it could attempt to affect economic conditions in areas in which it had some control. The stabilization program adopted by the Philippine administration in 1991 was aimed at reducing the high inflation rate, fiscal deficit and trade gap. The government implemented a more pragmatic fiscal reforms program. Revenue measures were adopted to minimize budget deficit. Liquidity expansion was limited to check inflation. By the end of 1991, the stabilization measures had produced favourable results. However, the real G.N.P. posted negative 1.2 percent growth by the end of 1991.<sup>29</sup>

Like her predecessor, President Aquino was also confronted with the problems posed by the feudal tendencies which passively stunted economic growth by hindering any long term economic development. In the Philippines, "Feudalism plays more than a passive role in relation to capitalism : it reproduces the conditions of under-development. Feudal processes have dominated the evolution of industrial sector, what has been created instead is a severely oligopolised domestic industrial sector with little dynamics for growth and innovation."<sup>30</sup>

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29. Cayteano W. Paderanga, n.9, pp.26-27.

30. Manuer F. Montas, overcoming Philippines' underdevelopment; an alternative programme". Third World Quarterly (London), vol-2, No.3, July 1989, p.109.

Feudalism in the country operates within the country's fragmented internal economy. "In spite of apparent modernisation Philippine labour and product markets remain internally unintegrated or to use the term more commonly used in Neo-classical discourse; dualistic".(31)

Part of the reason for the poor economic performance is that corruption continued as a hallmark of the Aquino government. A Presidential Commission of Good Government (PCGG) was formed dedicated to seizing assets of those presumed to have been close allies of Marcos. One result was that, scores of companies including banks had their managers effectively replaced with incompetant and often greedy political appointments. Indeed the corruption of the Aquino administration involving members of the President's own family became so widespread that "there was little to distinguish them from the previous government. Economic polcies suffered from a curious lack of understanding or committment to clear-cut goals".(32)

#### **Foreign Policy - under Aquino Administration**

Philippine foreign policy means, "the decisions and courses of action that the Philippines pursues in its relations with other states to attain national objectives and advance

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31. O.J.C. Solon, "Changes in the structure in Philippines," Quezon City, : Philippine Centre for Policy Studies, University of Philippines, Sept 2, 1987, p.46

32. Roger N. Fontana "Philippines after Aquini", Asian Affairs Vol.6, No.2, 1992, p.174.



Philippines national interests" <sup>33</sup> The country's national interests are found in its fundamental law, in its political values and culture and in its ideology. "It is in consideration, of these criteria of security and well-being, supposedly in a rational manner, together with the nation's capabilities vis-a-vis the threats and opportunities in the international milieu, <sup>34</sup> that Philippine foreign policy comes into being."

The Philippine foreign policy since independence has been subjected to two powerful approaches . First, there was a choice between a sense of national pride and a feeling of gratitude to the U.S. This resulted in the Filipino effort to correct the inequalities of the rising economic and security agreement with the US. Secondly, "there was a question between ideology and geography which has compelled Philippines to undertake the difficult task of reconciling the western cultural heritage with their status an <sup>35</sup> Asia-Pacific Nation" while the foreign policy of President Roxas in 1946 recognised the importance of suporting the United Nations and the need to develop friendly relations with Asia and the rest of the world; it was infact obsessively oriented towards the U.S. This line was followed by all the successive Presidents.

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33. Benjamin B. Domingo, The Making of Philippine Foreign Policy (Manila : Foreign Service Institute, 1983), p.196.

34. Raul P.De Guzman and Mela A Reforma, n.8, p.241.

35. Renato Constantino, The Making of Filipino, (Quezon City 1967), p.151.

When President Aquino came to power in 1986, she faced the unpleasant dilemma of reconciling between evolving an independent foreign policy for the country and not antagonising the U.S. at the same time. It is said that a nation's foreign policy is both a reflection and an instrument of domestic policy. Thus the new era that began with the 1986 political developments called for a re-orientation of the existing foreign policy. President Aquino was faced with a daunting task of attending the problems of socio-economic recovery and internal security of the Philippines vis-a-vis its relations with the rest of the world.

In a speech delivered by Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs S. Salvador H. Laurel on 10 April 1986 before the Philippine Council of Foreign Relations, echoed the foreign policy of President Aquino in categorical terms :

"Today, the Philippines is moving quickly and resolutely to recover the democratic heritage it had lost during the years of Marcos dictatorship. While the Philippines is bound by the term of existing military agreements with the United States, including American use of two military bases on its soil, it is committed to a policy of genuine independence in foreign affairs. Such a course is indicated not only by the growth of nationalist sentiment among the Filipinos, but by the need to maintain world peace and security at the level of national, regional and international action.

... The limited efficacy of the efforts of these organisations (International organisations like UN, ASEAN, NAM and others) is well-known and cannot be denied. Yet, them the risk of nuclear war and universal annihilation would become infinitely greater than it is right now.

... Improved political relations should lead to better economic relations and vice-versa. Our objective, therefore, shall be to enhance them concurrently with all our partners while keeping the old ones.

... The Philippines shall strongly support the objectives of peace and progress of mankind which would be effectitvely advanced by measure to increase the flow into these developing countries of relevant technology and economic assistance without political strings." (36)

The speech of Foreign Minister Laurel also underlines the basic concerns the Aquino Foreign policy which is enumerated as below :

1. A policy of genuine independence in foreign affairs;
2. support of alternative arrangements for keeping peace; the United Nations and its agencies, ASEAN, the group of Non-Aligned States and others;
3. Observance of the rule of prudence in the conduct of its foreign relations;
4. to enhance political relations and economic relations;
5. special attention on relations with two principal economic partners : The US and Japan;
6. a similar review of Philippine relations with other countries of Asia and the Pacific, with Australia, Canada and New Zealand, Western Europe and Scandinavian countries, Latin American and African and the socialist states; and lastly.

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36. Salvador H.Laurel; "New Directions in Philippine Foreign Policy", Fookien Times Philippines Year book 1985-86 (Manila: The Fookien Times Yearbook Publishing company, 1986), p.47.

7. strengthening of links with developing countries of the  
third world.<sup>37</sup>

The new foreign policy was aimed at independently pursuing the objectives of preserving, developing and strengthening the newly restored democracy. According to Raul S Manglapaces, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs under Aquino, Government termed the new foreign policy as 'Development Diplomacy'<sup>38</sup> which aims at the political and economic reconstruction of the Philippine republic. The first step in this endeavour was holding of the International Conference of Newly Restored Democracies in Manila 1988 which was opposed by the US and most of the European countries. The meeting still was attended by thirteen countries including Philippines and Nicaragua (then still under the sandinistas). The next step with regard to evolving an independent attitude in the foreign policy was its recognition of the State of Palestine against the recommendations of many of its Western friends.<sup>39</sup>

The Aquino administration had to "recognise the 'quadrangular balance of power' in the region between the US the Soviet Union, China and Japan, while evolving a foreign policy towards these countries. The Philippines' 'China Policy' was started vigorously with the visit of president Aquino to Beijing and with the forceful setting forth of the Philippines position

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37. Ibid, pp. 47-48.

38. Raul S. Manglapus, cited n.9, p.105.

39. Ibid.

regarding Taiwan in the Two China controversy.

A change in the Philippine-American relations emanated from the emerging balance of power in Asia and the Pacific as well as by the Philippine foreign orientation towards Asia. The principal issue in Philippine - American relations, since independence had been concerned about the status of American Military Bases. Negotiations to clarify or modify the terms of the Military Bases Agreement (MBA) of 1947 were sought by every Philippine President since Magsaysay. The Military Bases Negotiations in 1990 unleashed political a storm in the Philippino-US relationship under Aquino. This was particularly so, when in her visit to the US, President Aquino requested American military assistance against the rebels attempting to overthrow her government. "The American intervention prompted criticism from both the Left which had long been at hostile to the 'Aquino-US regime' and the Right which stood to benefit from a successful coup. This culminated in the heated negotiations<sup>41</sup> over the future of US military bases. The debate in Manila was increasingly focussed not on whether the bases would be removed, but rather on the timing and conditions of their removal. Aquino favoured a continued American military presence in the Philippines to (especially after the December 1989 Coup). She insisted on keeping her options open. Washington, seeking

40. Salvador P. Lopez, "The Foreign Policy of Republic of the Philippines", cited in Raul P. De Guzman and Mila A. Reforma, n.34, p.258.

41. David G. Timberman, n.14, p.175.

an early resolution of the issue did not challenge the Philippine interpretation of the MBA expiration date (September 1991), but rather was reported to seek a 15-20 years 'transition' period and seemed prepared to accept joint use of Clark Air Base.<sup>42</sup> The eruption of Mount Pinatubo Volcano in 1991 resulted in the immediate withdrawal of American troops from Clark Air Base before the scheduled time. Moreover, on September 16, 1991, the Philippine Senate rejected by a vote of 12 to 11, a new Military Base Treaty with the united states entitled "treaty of friendship, cooperation and security".<sup>43</sup> The action ended nearly ninety nine years of American presence in the country and over four centuries of foreign military presence in the Philippines.<sup>44</sup> It was a defeat for President Aquino, who even had to lead a pro-US bases Aquino's foreign policy was also distinguished by closer ties forged with India, Vietnam and Mynmar. Prior to Aquino, India had been 'a minor figure' in the Philippine foreign policy. "It had not been in focus, as it were; it was taken for granted."<sup>45</sup> The Aquino administration thought that it was time to correct the fault. As a result, the Philippine Foreign Secretary went to India on a formal visit. The cooperation between India and Philippines in dealing with the Gulf proved this point. Similarly the Aquino administration

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42. New York Times, October 20, 1989, p.46.

43. Alex B.Brillantes Jr., "The Philippines in 1991: Disasters and Decisions", Asian Survey, Vol.32, No.2, February 1991, p.141.

44. Ibid. :

45. Raul S. Manglapus, cited in n.9, p.106.

established relationship with Vietnam during which the Vietnamese expressed, perhaps for the first time, about joining ASEAN. Subsequent developments in this regard, culminated in the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation by Vietnam in July 1992 at Manila on way to becoming an observer in ASEAN, which could pave the way for a full membership in future.<sup>46</sup> Fulfilling its commitment for regional amity and cooperation as embodied in Aquino's foreign policy, Philippines made very clear the position of ASEAN that while it was not in favour of sanctions on Myanmar, it was in favour of 'Constructive Engagement'<sup>47</sup> which would help Myanmar carry out its announced objective of returning the country to democracy as early as possible.

As regards relations with West Asia, the Aquino administration decided about new openings in West Asia by opening more missions in , Qatar and Bahrain, where there were thousands of Filipino workers. It also re-opened its embassies in Ankara, in Turkey, in Morocco and Dakar in Senegal.

**Economic Diplomacy** - The most significant aspect of the Filipino foreign policy under President Aquino was its underlying emphasis on economic gains through international relations, particularly in the quest for additional external financing in the form of new aid, investment and debt relief. One of the diplomatic accomplishments in this regard was the official

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46. Ibid, p. 106.

47. Ibid, pp.106-107

commencement of the 'Multilateral Assistance Initiative' (MAI) or "Philippine Assistance Plan" (PAP)<sup>48</sup> as it is known in the Philippines. Nineteen countries and seven international financial institutions met in Tokyo in early July 1989, to review the Philippines program for economic development and to pledge economic assistance.<sup>49</sup> A total of \$3.5 billion were pledged.

In connection with the region, Philippines could be proud of its initiatives in ASEAN. A few initiatives taken over the years by the Aquino administration to make ASEAN economically vibrant, had been accepted by ASEAN and were considered the key stones of the ASEAN reality. The first started with the Philippine proposal for the drafting and approval of an economic treaty for ASEAN, on the principle that, as in Europe, all ambitions for regional integration cannot succeed without starting an economic treaty. However, the proposals were accepted by ASEAN, although with an initial reluctance and was incorporated in the communique of the summit in Singapore in Jan 1991. The framework agreement became a basis for further steps that were to be taken by ASEAN towards a potential tariff agreement and finally an ASEAN Free Trade Area.

For effective debt management, the Aquino Government called for the formulation of an international commission in the general

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48. David G. Timberman, n.14, p.174.

49. Ibid.



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Assembly of the UN twice in 1989 and in 1990. This proposal received the full support of the group of 77.

To sum up the foreign policy of President Aquino, it could be stated that Aquino succeeded in projecting a new image of the Philippines in international politics. The Philippines dared to evolve an independent foreign policy and advocated progressive ideas to promote international and regional peace. Although she received a setback when proposal for renewing the 'Treaty for Friendship' with American was defeated by the Philippine senate, eventually terminating the US-military presence in the Philippines, she succeeded in achieving vital economic gains for her country.

It is pertinent here to mention that a stable economy and an independent and self-sufficient foreign policy is a certain prerequisite democratic ideals and ethos vice-versa, in any socio-political fabric and it is no different in the case of Philippines. The transition of democratic norms of government in the Philippines heralded the need for a sound economic system and the Aquino government tried to bring about economic stability.

**CHAPTER - VI**

**CONCLUSION**

### CONCLUSION

The Fall of Ferdinand Marcos from power and the rise of Corazon Aquino and her peaceful 'People power' movement, epitomised a shift from authoritarianism to democracy in Philippines. This change could be treated as a significant change in the Philippine polity in recent years. Its significance lay in demonstrating the fact that democracy, irrespective of its imperfections, has deeper roots in the hearts and minds of the Filipino people. That, the authoritarian regime tended to pursue policies which sought to perpetuate its leader, President Marcos, and not those which were relevant to the needs, urges and aspirations of the people. There is no doubt that without the help of some among the military tops brass, restoration of democracy would have been extremely difficult. Nevertheless, the systemic change in favour of democracy, was based on 'People power' and quite interestingly, through non-violent struggle of the masses. Aquino and her 'People power' movement, was aimed at reforming democracy in the Philippines, democracy that had been battered and corrupted by Marco's penchant for martial law, ballot fraud and crony capitalism.

The degradation, fragmentation and decay of the socio-economic and political fabric of Philippines during the authoritarian regime of Marcos, gave impetus to the resentment

and essentially to a mass uprising to the insurgence of a movement for democracy.

Marcos had proclaimed martial law in the Philippines on September 22, 1972, in order, as he claimed, to protect the country from internal disturbances and external threat and to achieve meaningful reforms. It is relevant here to state that, the failure of the authoritarian system and the demand for change in favour of democracy could be attributed to the characteristics of the Filipino people that evolved before and during the long three hundred and eighty years of colonialism.

The pre-colonial Philippine society was made up of the autonomous kinship based on 'Barangays', the small isolated units with no central authority, little communication and no unity. Absence of any sort of centralisation of power and authority resulted in a weak country composed of separate entities. This enabled the colonial powers, especially the Spaniards to occupy the islands without any meaningful resistance from the people. The Spanish colonialism brought in Christianity, central administration and public administration. However, it was not until the arrival of the Americans that the institutions and principles of democracy, were introduced in Philippines.

It was during the American colonialism that through the

introduction of the public school system with English language as the medium of instruction, the ground was laid for training the Filipinos in the art of self-government and functioning of democratic institutions. The period of American colonialism in Philippines immensely contributed in introducing the concepts of individual freedom, public participation, Filipinization of public services, self-government, centralised government, political parties, elections, so on and so forth. But during the course of American Colonialism, the Philippines also became dependent on the U.S. in the field of economic development and national security. Even democracy assumed the colour of Oligarchic rule. So much so that independence in July 1946, represented primarily a political and institutional process which failed to evolve socio-economic policies necessary to restructure the economic and social power frame which in its essential characteristics remained Oligarchic in nature.

The Philippines political system is based on the principle that power emanates from the people and sovereignty resides in the people who exercise it through their representatives. But party system which evolved in Philippines after independence was cadre based and personality based. The parties were attuned more towards self-aggrandizement than towards the welfare of the masses. Large scale defections also weakened the party system. Marcos himself had changed from Liberal party, just as Ramon

Magsaysay had done earlier in 1953. The fragile party system brought in disequilibrium, while non-implementation of promised reforms proved conducive to the emergency of authoritarian rule in Philippines.

The implementation of Martial rule by Marcos enabled him to resume all state powers. In spite of the fact that the 1935 constitution barred any Filipino from becoming President for the third term, Marcos assumed all powers, imposed martial law under some provisions in the same constitution and continued to use all means to legalise his authoritarian regime. The President became strong in his decisive role in the apparatus of the all powerful military and bureaucracy. The political system was undoubtedly presidential in substance with a parliamentary form during the incumbency of President Marcos.

On assuming power, he dismantled the superstructure of constitutional government. He curtailed civil liberties, replaced the 1935 constitution, thus heralding the dawn of a 'New Society' and a new style of government under the garb of 'constitutional authoritarianism'. He made changes in the legislative, executive and judicial fields to suit his own needs. In tune with his own thinking, he then used the media for propaganda purposes and curtailed the freedom of the press and used the army extensively for the enforcement of various laws

under martial law. In the course of time, the military became the power base of Marcos's authoritarian regime, with numerous military leaders holding important civilian administrative posts.

In order to legitimise his marital law, Marcos had brought in programme of reforms and reconstruction of the political institutions. While explaining his 'New Society Goals' Marcos launched a tirade against democratic institutions and their functions. For him, parties and elections became just hurdles in the path of national building. For him, multi-party elections were costly, devisive and destabilising. In referendum, he chose a new method of ascertaining the will of the people. That is why he held several referendums during the period of martial law. The legal basis of the legislature created during marital law and after were either presidential decrees ratified by the people in referendum or constitutional ammendment proposed by the President. The Butasang Bayan(a legislative body) and the Prime Minister in practice were accountable only to the President. The domination of a single party (The Kilntang Bangong Lipunan (K.B.L.), tended to weaken the legislature, vis-a-vis the Prime Minister and his Cabinet, and checks and balances between the President and the Congress got eroded. Thus, a manipulated constitution and equally manipulated referendums made the legislature, a rubber stamp institution.

Marcos replaced the 1935 Constitution by a new one in 1973 which according to him, would be more responsive to the needs of the people. But in practice Marcos used all provisions to vest in him all powers of the prime minister and the president unlike the 1935 constitution.

The judiciary lost a part of its autonomy to the president, who could appoint and remove judges and other officials. Decisions by military tribunals became final on the president's approval. In the light of this, the inability of the judiciary to solve the perennial problems of delays, cumbersome and expensive procedures, incompetence and corruption. Thus, there occurred an erosion of the principle of 'rule of law' in Philippines with Marcos at the top and his family and the cronies getting all immunity from the laws. They were above law.

The martial law, drastically eroded the spirit of decentralisation. The trend towards greater centralisation, hindered the autonomy of the local government units.

Thus, the martial regime of President Marcos, with its authoritarian and totalitarian rule, throttled the democratic values and curtailed the freedom of the people. This had resulted in mass resentment due to frustration and helplessness of the general mass.



The mass resentment and uprising against president Marcos's authoritarian regime culminated, in 1986 in the form of watershed in the history of Philippines, as it herald a transition from authoritarianism to democracy. It all started with the assassination of the popular opposition leader Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino in August, 1983. This acted as a catalyst in the process of this resurgence, by uniting all opposition parties to fight for democracy. In this fight, Corazon Aquino became a symbol of freedom, liberty and democracy against authoritarianism, tyranny and corruption. The Roman Catholic Church also gave helping hand to the cause by mobilising the people against the authoritarian rule. Unfortunately for Marcos, the US had changed its stance on Philippines by this time. The military which constituted the power base of Marcos since 1972, was in the process of diluting its pro-Marcos stance for fear of uncontrollable public uprising. It was in this volatile situation that elections took place in February 1986. At this, the 'people power' rose to crescendo of protest and Marcos had to quit the country.

Corazon Aquino took office with a vision. the immediate task before her government was to restore political democracy and to clean-up the mess left by Marcos-especially the corruption, the insurgency and economic stagnation.

The redemocratisation had the vision of restoring the best ideas of the past and combining them with the ideas of the

present and making a stable government. It also meant to have a constitution and to give the constitution a modicum of stability and due respect as a true instrument of constitutional process. Shortly, after her assumption of power, the first item in president's agenda was the dismantling of institutions used by her predecessor to govern the country under the 1973 constitution. In lieu of the public policy making system in which the president formulates and designs policy proposals for a Uni-Cameral Parliament, a new constitution changed the legislation process by vesting the responsibility to a Bi-Cameral legislative body consisting of a House of Representatives (members elected from single-member constituencies) and Senate (member elected by the nation as a whole).

The Filipino economy was to be reviewed and revitalised and to this end, President Aquino aimed at removing poverty, generating employment, promotion of equity and social justice and achieving sustainable economic growth. The Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) was formulated to bring about equality, efficiency and social justice. The private sector was revitalised and the regulations on the agricultural sector were eased. The Omnibus Investment code was passed to promote investment.

The role and importance of the army in the Filipino polity could not be ignored by President Aquino at any point of time.

was the army which had played a major role in helping her to the 1986 elections. Moreover, Fourteen years of military-ised dictatorship had raised a wall of suspicion among civilians and soldiers. There was a need to change the image of the army. The army was put to service for social works and was made to appear as the agent of social change. She thus, gave the military, a positive role in the development process of the country.

There was a need to adopt a policy of transparency in administration and restore the Freedom of speech and expression. In this regard, she lifted the ban on the 'Writ of Habeas Corpus'. She also encouraged the privatisation of media, thus bringing the point that the freedom of the press was one of the sacred pillars of a true democracy. There had been nationwide information campaigns under Philippine Informations Agency (PIA).

To weaken the traditional patronage system, Aquino had to work on devolution of power. In this endeavour, she transferred powers and responsibilities to local government units (LGU) to transform local communities into self-reliant units, and decision making powers and have a firm hold on their destiny.

In terms of foreign affairs, president Aquino had to establish an identity for Philippines in the region and leave as mark in international politics. Moreover, she had to evolve an independent course in this regard in order to preserve, develop and strengthen democracy. The stand taken by Philippines with regard to contentious issues like the Palestine problem, sanction on Mynmar, setting up of an International Debt Commission, much to the dislike of the big powers. She saw possibility of achieving economic gains through foreign policy and she was successful to some extent in achieving her mission in this regard. Aquino could also be credited for being instrumental in making ASEAN a potent organisation.

The Aquino administration had to bring about an equilibrium and stability in the political process and to keep the coalition government stable. She was successful in striking a balance in the coalition without hurting the feelings of any of the groups, be it rightist or the military. Simultaneously however, she kept the controls in her hands. Thus, the President gave them freedom and also made them work towards the service of the country.

All the efforts made by President Corazon Aquino in reviving the Filipino society from political decay and economic stagnation resulted in instant success in the first few years of her rule. The restoration of political democracy - usually meaning

institutional rule through honest elections with freedom of expression, was widely welcomed by Filipinos who had regularly participated in free competitive elections since 1907 - except during world war II and the martial law era. The society was free from the shackles of the Draconian authoritarian laws of Marcos. The revival of multi-party system marked the onset of a healthy political process which was difficult to imagine during the martial law regime.

The marital regime had left very few scope for individual liberty and freedom. It had also imposed constraints on the Freedom of Speech and Expression. But with the lifting of the ban on the Writ of Habeas Corpus, releasing of all political prisoners, liberalisation of the media and the regard of the basic human rights, President Aquino proved a point in justifying the transition of the polity from authoritarianism to democracy.

The economic reforms initiated by President Aquino, resulted in a sudden spurt in economic activity and growth. This was reflected by marked improvement in International Foreign Trade, exports, investments in industry, in comparison to the economy which existed prior to 1986. For example exports rose from 4.9 per cent in 1980-85 to 7.5 per cent in 1989-91. During these years industry rose from 3.7 per cent to 3.43 per cent and domestic trade from 1.84 per cent to 3.41 per cent.

The Foreign Policy of President Aquino was meant to carve out a niche for the country in International Politics and she was successful to some extent in her endeavour. That, Philippines could take a rationale stand in contentious issues like the independence of Palestine and Namibia, International Debt Management, Human Right Violations in Myanmar etc., proves the point for President Aquino as far as the evolution of an independent foreign policy for Philippines was concerned. Her aim of using foreign policy as an instrument of economic gain for Philippines, also met with some success.

But all the euphoria generated with the 'People Power Revolution', initial buoyancy in economy, and the political stability began to disappear or show signs of stagnation at the middle of President Aquino's rule. The weakness of the civilian government and its inability to curb insurgency and bring equilibrium in the coalition established a weak and fragmented polity. This fragility of polity under Aquino also led to as many as seven coup attempts on the Aquino government. Economy showed signs of decline, rising criminality manifested in an increased incidence of anti social activities. The rebellions of the left (the Communists), of the right (disgruntled military leaders) and of the Muslims in the South became the major source of instability of the Aquino Administration. The leaders of the Military Mutiny that proclaimed her as the winner of the historic

'People Power Revolution' gradually withdrew support and even called for her resignation. The political parties that grew like mushrooms and coalesed around her also broke loose. Civic and religious leaders who rallied behind her were forthright when they began to doubt her ability to eradicate bureaucratic corruption and nepotism. Even the liberal media, which portrayed her as the heroine of 'People power', the 'courageous widow of Ninoy Aquino' and the symbol of democratic opposition ceased to be generous in their praise.

The failure on the part of President Aquino to efficiently cope with the change may be attributed greatly to the inherent weakness in the Filipino society and partly to the ineffectiveness, mismanagement and short sightedness of the Aquino regime.

The nature of the Philippines political system contributed to a great extent to the failure of Aquino government to deliver. The structure was democratic but the substance was not. Philippines democracy is a classic example of structure over substance, as a consequence of which political change' could never be translated into meaningful and genuine social change. The problems of the nation have not been addressed adequately by any of the other Philippine leaders who have come to power in Philippines, thereby leaving a divided Philippine society since

American rule, with a large gap between the rich and the poor. The ruling elite of landlords and Compradors, whom Americans used as a base on which to build democratic institutions in the absence of a strong middle class, continued to dominate the political system democratised by the Aquino regime.

Mrs. Aquino's electoral support in February 1986 was based more on her charisma and on disgust with Marcos's reliability on patron-client networks. The linkage between patron and clients is the mechanism by which wealth is transformed for power, sustaining an elite which Marcos himself called Oligarchy. In fact, the wealthiest of the oligarchs resumed control of some of their pre-martial law corporations with the help of the Aquino administration.

One of the reasons for the poor economic performance of the Aquino regime which took a nosedive in the second half of her tenure, is that corruption continued as a hallmark of the Aquino government. A Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) was formed dedicated to seizing assets of those presumed to have been close allies of Marcos. The result being, scores of companies including banks had their managers replaced with incompetent and often greedy political appointees. The search for the alleged missing wealth of the Marcos family yielded no positive results due to a lack of commitment on the part of Aquino administration.



As leaders come and go, bureaucracy continues to carry out the implementation of the policies of the ancient regime while waiting for the orders and instructions of the new political masses. The change of government in 1986 however did not bring about any change in the bureaucratic behaviour and it also failed to eradicate graft and corruption as the scourge of the civil service system. Corruption continued unabated and became a way of Filipino life, so much so that, Cardinal Jaime Sin, a staunch advocate of Corazon Aquino during the 'People Power Revolution' had to come very harshly on the AQUINO administration.

Alongwith corruption, was the patronage system of staffing the government. All the presidents of Philippines had found patronage useful in building a team of non-career political executives to toe their line for their policies and programmes. Aquino's administration was no different. Notwithstanding its virtues, the patronage system is anathema to the values of efficiency and economy of classical public administration.

Thus, economic policy especially suffered from a curious lack of understanding or a commitment to clear-cut goals. Added to these, the Aquino administration had the misfortune of being rocked by natural calamities, one after another, to devastating effect during her regime. These, further ruined the already dilapidated economy of Philippines.

A reason for the failure of Corazon Aquino to deliver the goods was partly because of her inability to get the support of the coalition when the chips were down. They were like birds of different feathers which flocked together only because of their opposition to authoritarian rule. Moreover, Aquino maintained her distance and showed no interest in affiliating even with the party headed by her late husband. Nor was she interested in forming a party of her own.

Unfortunately for Corazon Aquino, restoring democratic institutions turned out to be much easier than repairing the damages to the society caused by Marcos's misrule. Aquino's inexperience and ineptness as a political leader rendered her as no match for the challenges of democratic governance.

Still, Mrs. Aquino's accomplishments should not be ignored in the above discussion about the performance of her administration. Foremost among them, Aquino laid the foundation for the re-democratisation of the Filipino polity. She served as a rallying point in the efforts that successfully overthrew the incredibly corrupt Marcos dictatorship and restored the structures and processes of democracy that enabled increased citizen participation. The very fact that she completed her six-year term in the office despite seven un-precedented coup attempts and even managing to turn power over to an elected

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successor, justified the transition from authoritarianism to democracy in 1986 through the 'people power revolution. It also symbolised a triumph of democracy. More than her failure to match the level of people's expectation during her tenure history will remember Corazon Aquino as a transition President who helped topple the Marcos dictatorship and restore the formal structures and processes for democratic governance.

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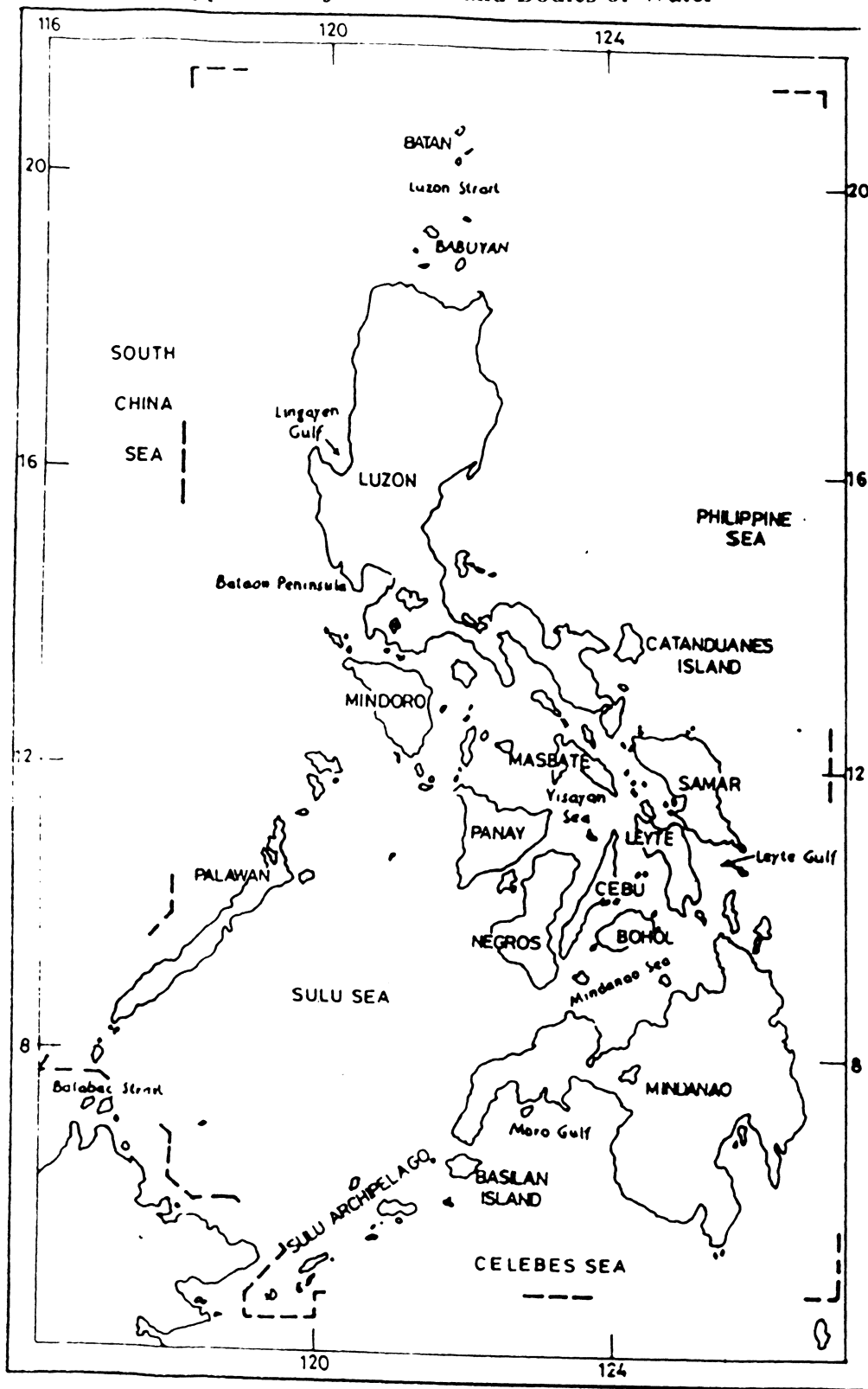
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## **APPENDICES**

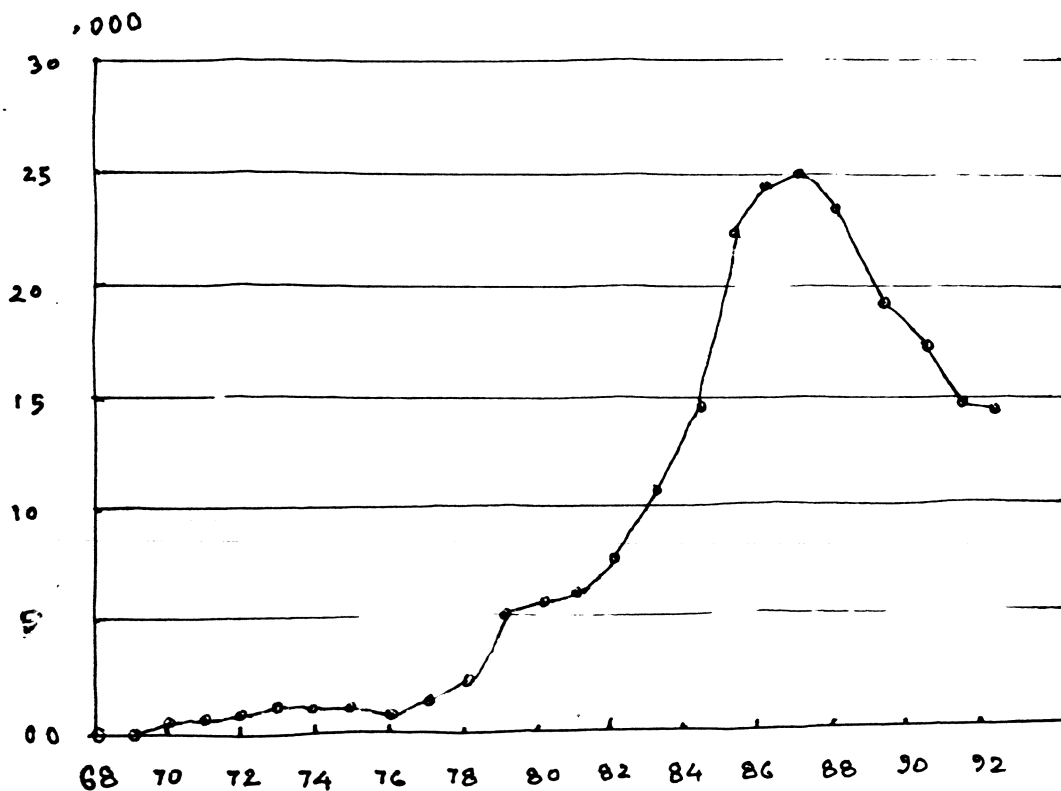
APPENDIX - I

Philippines, Major Islands and Bodies of Water



APPENDIX - II

Annual CPP/NPA Strength

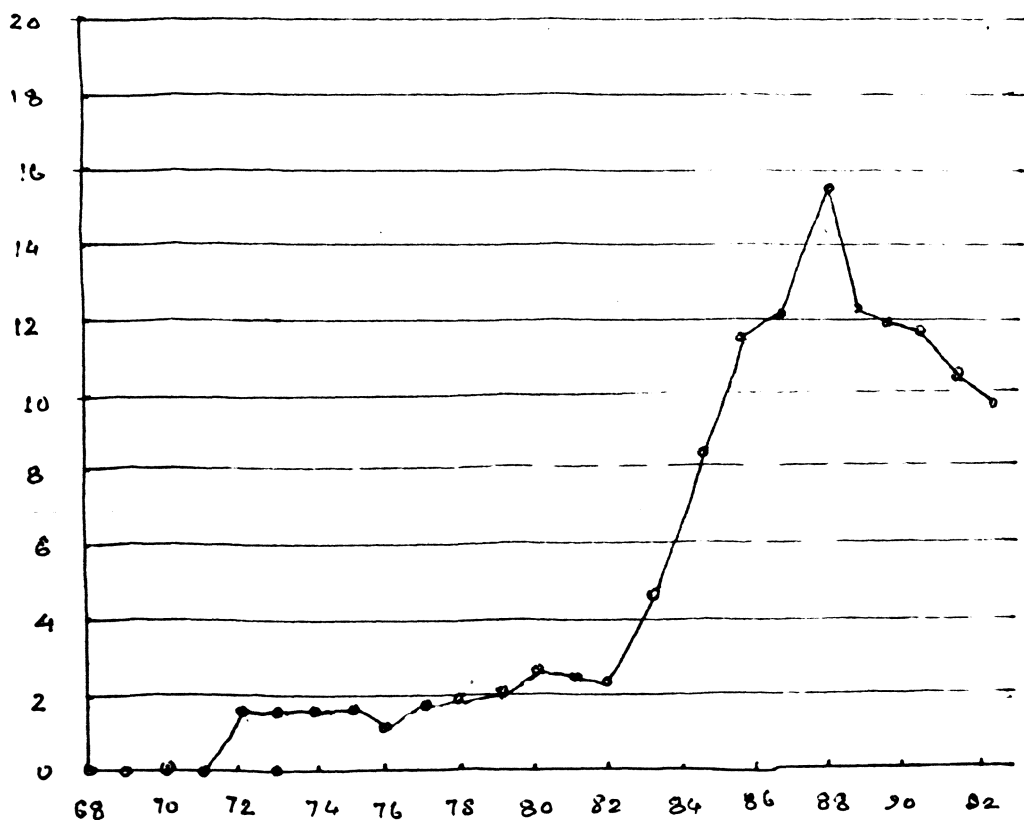


CPP - Communist Party of the Philippines  
NPA - New Peoples Army

Courtesy - U.p. Public Lectures on the Aquino Administration and the Post-EDSA Government (1986-1992), Volume 1, The Aquino Administration - Record and Legacy(1986-1992) (Quezon City), 1992, p.92.

APPENDIX - III

Annual CPP/NPA Firearms



CPP - Communist Party of the Philippines  
NPA - New Peoples Army

Courtesy - U.P. Public Lectures on the Aquino Administration and the Post-EDSA Government (1986-1992), Volume 1, The Aquino Administration - Record and Legacy (1986-1992) (Quezon City), 1992, p.93.



APPENDIX - IV

FILIPINO HEADS OF STATE SINCE INDEPENDENCE

LEADERS	YEARS
MANUEL ROXAS	1946-1948
EPLPIDIO QUIRINO	1948-1953
RAMON MAGASAYSAY	1953-1957
CARLOS P. GARCIS	1957-1961
DIOSADADO MACAPAGAL	1961-1965
FERDINAND E. MARCOS	1965-1986
CORAZON AQUINO	1986-1992
FIDEL RAMOS	1992 - PRESENT

Courtesy - Roger W. Fontaine, "The Philippines: After Aquino",  
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