

**From Authoritarianism to Democracy: A Comparative Study of
Marcos's Martial Law Regime and Corazon Aquino's
Administration in the Philippines**

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled "FROM AUTHORITARIANISM TO DEMOCRACY : A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MARCOS'S MARTIAL LAW REGIME AND CORAZON AQUINO'S ADMINISTRATION IN THE PHILIPPINES" submitted by MISS SHELLY SONI in partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) of this University is her original work and may be placed before the examiners for evaluation. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this University or any other University to the best of our knowledge.


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PREFACE

The decade between the mid -1970's and mid-1980's witnessed a significant turn of events for a world which had been increasingly becoming authoritarian. During this period several countries were successful in reversing the course of authoritarian rules in their governments by establishing or re-establishing the democratic system. This process also occurred in the Philippines. The proposed study is devoted to the analysis of the various circumstances under which the authoritarian rule was ushered and then democracy was restored. It also deals with the strategies pursued by the political leadership, be it Marcos or Aquino, to maintain stability of their respective governments.

The study is divided into Five chapters, each dealing with a specific aspect and the prevailing factors and that forces which ultimately led to the shift from authoritarianism to democracy.

Besides studying the theoretical explanations about the theme in the introduction, Chapter I presents the socio-cultural and historical foundations of the Philippine government and politics. It discusses the impact of the colonial regimes: The Spanish, the US and the Japanese and unique social and political impact of their ideas and policies on the Filipino people as a nation. How such experiences influenced the leaders of independent Philippines in the direction of national development and what were their

failures, which eventually led to the coming of an ambitious leader with authoritarian streaks into the politics of Philippines.

The Chapter II deals with Ferdinand E. Marcos and further on examines the decline of constitutional democracy and the rise of authoritarian government in the country under his martial law administration. It examines the significance of transition to authoritarian government and developments during the regime and its consequences for the democratic system as well as the society.

The Chapter III deals with the changes in the minds of the people from initial degree of acceptance to disappointment and disillusionment towards the martial law regime. Want of individual freedom of speech and other democratic liberties started pinching as the failures of the regime became manifest. Various other factors which led the people to express themselves against the regime, including the oppressive and suppressive policies as also the general decline in economy and politics have also been examined.

The Chapter IV describes the events which finally culminated in the historic, bloodless 'People's Revolution' and brought a new leader on the political scene in the Philippines, Corazon Aquino who was the wife of the assassinated opposition leader Benigno Aquino. Aquino had quite difficult tasks facing her. Being the President of a

country which had witnessed a downward trend, politically, socially and economically, she had to put in a reasonably good effort in all these fields. She had to bring about political and socio-economic change for the people who brought her into power.

The Last Chapter gives the major findings of this research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At a time when the world is in the grip of a democratization process, transition from authoritarianism to democracy, represents an interesting subject for study. The Philippines epitomises one of such transitions. The events that shook the Philippines in February 1986 symbolise the triumph of "people's power" and the "democratic process: and the demise of authoritarianism. All these developments impelled me to undertake a serious examination of the failure and triumph of democracy in the Philippines.

In the course of this study, I immensely benefited from the words of inspiration, encouragement and sound advice from my supervisor Dr. B.D. Arora. I am beholden to him for his help and suggestions.

Further, I am grateful to several friends and colleagues who have rendered necessary help in the time of need and stood by me.

In the course of this work I have been assisted by the staff members of the libraries of J.N.U. I.D.S.A. and American Centre, who made this work a broadening experience. I take this opportunity to record my thanks to them.

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(SHELLY SONI)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

History can be regarded as a recorded struggle of the people for ever increasing freedom and for realization of their best self. But the struggle is a collective one and as such involves the mass of human beings who are therefore the motivators of change and of history.¹ It is not merely a chronology of events, nor is it the story of heroes and great men. Essentially, history consists of people's effort to attain a better life. The common people possess the capacity to make history.

Historic struggles provide the people with lessons in their upward march and give form and strength to the constantly changing society and for a better civil life. In studying these struggles, a true people's history discovers the laws of social development, delineates the continuities and discontinuities in a moving society, records the behaviour of classes and uncovers the myths which had distorted the facts.²

In the case of the Philippines, it is an under developed country in which there is a paternalistic form of societal structure and where political life centres on relationships that are largely person to person, hierarchial

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1. Renato Constantino, The Philippines: A Past revisited (Quezon City, 1975), p.3.
 2. ibid., p.4.

and reciprocal.³ The stability of a governmental system in such a state depends by and large on the nature and capacity of individual leaders - be it President Marcos in the framework of 'Martial Law' or Corazon Aquino who restored the democratic system to meet the needs and expectations of their followers, while adopting means to legitimize their authority. The period between 1972 and 1986 witnessed momentous changes in the Philippine polity ever since the transfer of sovereignty on July 4, 1946. The starting year of this study is year 1972 and, represents a major landmark because it witnessed the abandonment of what was generally known as the 'freest democracy in the East' and its replacement with a dictatorial regime in the framework of martial law.

These developments point to the fact that democracy in the Philippines did not have strong foundations. The weakness of the democratic system could be attributed to several reasons, one of them being fractionalism in politics. As a result, the political parties were more personality based rather than cadre based; Traditionally, kinship ties were more important than principles. Besides, the programmes were on paper rather than being implemented. The geographical isolation inherent in the archipelagic nature of

3. 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.

the country also tended rather to reinforce the political factors.

Still another factor that caused problems for democracy to establish its firm roots was, that within the framework of a recognizeably Western political structure, processes that take place are unmistakably of local nature and aspirations. Nowhere in the world had the 'defection' been so frequent as in the Philippines. President Ramon Magsaysay (1953-1957) had defected from the liberal to the Nationalist Party. Similar was the case with President Marcos, who defected from the Liberal Party to join the Nationalist Party to contest and win the elections in 1965. Four years earlier wholesale defection had transformed the Liberal minority in the congressional elections of 1961 into Legislative majority in the new session⁴. Lack of discipline in the parties meant that Filipino electoral opinion was not organized into recognizable alternatives of political philosophy or programmes. The campaigns had been combined with disparate elements of deadly serious feuds among political families, there was a dislocation of economic planning and politics was a major road to status and material success.⁵ There was a lack of new avenues being opened for social mobility and all this lead to graft and corruption.

4. Onefre D. Corpuz, Philippines (New Jersey, 1965), p.14.

5. ibid., p.15.

All these factors weakened the democratic roots and how this came about, will be discussed historically and in continuation with the theme in this chapter.

Like other peoples of South East Asia before their conquest by western imperialists, the Filipino's had developed an indigenous system as follows.

Free village communities, tilling their own land, governing themselves according to their own customs and traditions, fighting each other, and combining in loose confederation under the always precarious suzerainty of feudal princes. For Filipinos freedom - Kalayaam or merdeka⁶ is neither an imported word nor an imported thing".⁷

When the Spaniards came to the Philippines in 1521 they discovered that the country had a great number of small barangays⁸ in which a datu⁹ governed. These barangays were widely scattered and inter-communication was difficult. Interperson or social relations were informal and government was based on kinship and custom rather than on enacted law and administrative regulation. Throughout the period of 333

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6. Kalayaam or merdeka means freedom.
 7. De La Costa, Readings in Philippine history (Makati Rizu, Philippines, 1965), p.25.
 8. Barangay is a term in taga long language meaning a small political unit.
 9. The term 'datu' in tagalong language means ruler.

years of their colonial occupation from 1565 to 1598, The Spanish preserved the barangay intact as a basic unit.¹⁰ This helped the Spanish in easily bringing the Filipinos under their subjugation.

When in 1564 Muguél Lopez de Lagaspi arrived, the Filipinos acknowledged subordination. but "Moros" as the Spanish called the Malay Muslims, resisted in the Sulu islands and in Mindanao. The imperialist ideology of Spain sought to promote her power and influence by spreading catholicism and gaining from merchantism using Manila as base and maintained the colony as an "oriental outpost of the Spanish empire".¹¹

The Spanish lay firm grounds for christianity and stopped the expansion of Islam from the South. As a result they obtained a central base for colonizing Philippines and integrating non-Muslim Filipinos under one administration.¹²

The spanish aim was to create a Christian rather than a Filipino citizen and to this affect the Spaniards established a centralized authority and territorial boundaries, in which the Filipinos had no direct participation or representation even in the municipal government. The local administration

10. Ouofre. D. Corpuz, n.4, pp.22-23.

11. Ranu P. DeGurzman ana Mila A Reforma, The Government and Politics of the Philippines, Oxford University Press, 1988), p.26.

12. Renato Constantino, The History of the Philippines (New York, 1975), p.111.

was oligarchic rather than democratic in nature. It acted as a source of revenue collection. There was no social mobility upwards. Avenues of politics were not available to them and education was rudimentary.

The native magistrates knowns as 'principales' who sided the Spanish and exploited the masses, gained prestige and influence. On the other hand, the Chinese were considered indispensable and in order to assimilate them intermarriages were permitted between Chinese and native women. This resulted overtime in the emergence of a new class of people known as "mestizos". It ws these "mestizos" -- the sons and daughters of Spanish or Chinese fathers and Malay mothers - who came to have education and thus entered into lower echelons of administration as the opportunities opened up.

Another factor was the theocratic natures of the Spanish rule which was based on the Union of Church and State giving the friars (priests) active participation in colonial administration.

The governmental policies saying were totally devoid of any incentive for education and economic entrepreneurship. This made the Filipinos stagnate in this field. It created a situation in which only the Chinese benefitted by monopolizing trade. Commenting on the impact of Spanish colonial policies, Onofre D. Corpuz concluded: "Colonial order froze the Filipino masses to permanent impotence."¹³

Finally when higher education reached the Philippines it was available only to the few leading families known as the "ilustrados". Ignorance that resulted from the denial of education reinforced the sense of moral damnation inherent in religious value system. This rendered the Filipinos easy victims of colonial exploitation. Religion as such was also used as a technique of subjugation and exploitation of masses.

Simultaneously, however, the Spanish rule laid some of the bases for Filipino nationhood and democratic self rule. In course of more than three centuries the far flung islands and barangays remained under a single colonial power under a centralized administration. The single centralized authority (something which was lacking in the pre-spanish period of Philippine history) and Roman Catholicism to which the Filipinos were converted, created among the people common bonds of a single national identity and christian and human beliefs.

There also emerged new ideas of political centralization, centralized ideas, public administration and a new system of public revenues and public expenditure. Another profound colonial impact on the Filipino people was the change of the concept of land ownership, a shift from

13. Onofre D. Corpuz, n.4, p.28.

communal ownership by the barangay to the "notion of land ownership as opposed to land use, in which individual could own land (on the basis) that land itself was a source of wealth".¹⁴ The economic policies of Spaniards increased. Also, Filipinos' participation in world markets was ensured through the Spanish policy of concentrating on cash (export) crops.

However, the indigenous industry, for example, the weaving industry, was destroyed, increasing dependence on import textiles. Use of too much inequitable tariffs shifted burden of taxation on the poor. Too much growing of cash crops led farmers to buy foodstuffs they had traditionally been producing, increasing land prices. This led farmers to go deeply into debt and then bankruptcy, and loss of land. The courts threatened small landowners, while commercial agriculture and modern legal concepts widened the socio-economic gap between the elite and the ordinary people, while friars acquired too much land. Too much expansion of Spanish navy and army added to people's suffering and discontent. All these factors added to the discontent among the people. In the 18th century individual and group resistance took the form of revolts against colonial injustice and oppression. The more notable instances of protest were beginning to assume a political character but most were local. The 19th

14. John Teddy Phelan, The Hispanization of the Philippines (University of Wisconsin, 1959), p.117.

century ended with a revolution.¹⁵ Many leaders who organized the propaganda movement, notably Jose Rizal, were those who had imbibed liberal ideas of enlightenment. Interestingly, these were the ideas which had formed the basis of the French and American revolutions.

As part of the process towards revolution, Banifacio and others lower middle class Filipinos had simultaneously organized the "katipunan", a secret society. This organization expressed the people's demands for freedom from oppression of Spanish colonialism and abuses of the friars. It aroused the people's participation, espoused the cause of revolution and national independence and the idea to help each other.

"The Katipunan ideology was the articulation of a people who had just become a nation and discovered themselves. It was a call for struggle and demand for democracy".¹⁶

The movement spread and on 23 August 1896, the Katipunan started hostilities against Spanish colonialism. This started a chain reaction. As if the long oppressed and suppressed people were just waiting for such an opportunity, many of them in various provinces rose in revolt and joined

15. Onofro D. Corpuz, n.4, p.56.

16. Renato Constantino, The Philippines: The Continuing Past (Quezon city, 1978), p.170.

the ranks of Katipunan. The Spanish authorities immediately took strong retaliatory measures and sought to crush the revolt with a heavy hand. They also executed Jose Rizal, the one who had never raised the call for freedom and independence. In the meantime, in a leadership struggle, Emilia Aquinaldo took over the reins of leadership of the Philippine revolution from Bonifacio and got him executed. At the helm of affairs, Aquinaldo called upon the katipuneros to start a guerilla warfare. In the face of heavy Spanish actions, however, when the going became tough, he showed signs of weakness in revolutionary spirit and negotiated a compromise known as "Biak-na-Bate" pact. Some Filipino historians have described it as "betrayal" of the Filipino revolution. Unlike the resistance in the first two centuries of Spanish colonialism, the revolution in 1896-1897 was inspired by a realization by all for a common cause, a goal of a national life free of subjugation to foreign rule.¹⁷

Just about this time, a new power emerged on the scene. Taking advantage of a Spanish ship bombarding its battleship "Maine" in Havana Bay, the U.S. administration ordered Commodore Dewey based in Hong Kong to sail with his naval force to Manila Bay. To seek Filipino leaders' help, the American Commodore contacted Agninaldo (who had accepted exile in Hong Kong following Biao-na-Bals Pact in 1897), and

17. Onofre D. Corpuz, n.4, p.56.

on assurance of independence to the Philippines got him along. In April 1898 he destroyed the Spanish navy and with the active help of Katipunan led by Aguinaldo, captured Manila, the citadel of the Spanish colonial empire. Since then the Americans ignored Aguinaldo altogether and also the assurances of independence given earlier. This became evident when, in December 1898, the U.S. and Spain signed a treaty whereby the latter agreed to transfer sovereignty of the Philippine islands to the U.S. It was highly insulting to the Filipino leadership and to the spirit of the newly emerged Philippine nationalism. Thus began hostilities between the Aguinaldo led Filipino forces and the Americans. A new war of independence was on. It continued until 1901, when the Americans captured Aguinaldo, thus ending the organized guerilla resistance.

The American occupation and rule that began in 1898-1899 came to be considered as a compromise between US imperialism and ideals of Filipino nationalism. However, the Filipinos waged a long drawn war (1899-1902)¹⁸ against a new and more fruitful U.S. colonialism and for independence. Since 1901-02, however, the U.S. colonial administration pursued a policy of moderation and accommodation towards the Philippines. Those belonging to the Mestizos and ilustrado

18. The Americans called it 'Philippine insurrection', and the Filipinos tended to look at it as "Philippine-American war."

families got important positions in the administration because of their experience and knowledge of English. Harmonious interaction between the colonial government and business interests helped in employment opportunities, which eventually led to the emergence of a Filipino middle class. These elements took advantage of the American-sponsored public school system for lower posts in colonial bureaucracy. The local colonial administration energetically embarked a constructive projects in the field of education, health and sanitation, public works, communications, transportation, resources development, legal and judicial reforms and technological innovation. This resulted in socio-economic progress without producing any social disorganization or dislocation.

It was these American policies which helped in moderating Filipino nationalism, abandoned the revolutionary path and became evolutionary in nature.

The first phase of American rule (1900-1913) could be described as one of developing the mechanisms for self-government and land reforms. This was based on the proposals laid down by William Taft. The Organic Act of July 1902 guaranteed civil liberties, provided for a future national legislature and a Supreme Court with a Filipino chief justice. Also, a public health service was instituted.

The second phase of the American rule began from (1913-1921). The colonial administration had also introduced an important feature of democracy, the establishment of political parties and holding elections. The earliest political parties that were established were (1) Federalista Party and (2) Nacionalist Party. The first aimed at making the Philippines one of the states of the United States. The major plank of the Second was to gain independence. Both the parties fought the first ever elections held in the Philippines in 1907 and it was the Nacionalist Party that won. Whatever the faults and there were many, in the democratic system thus introduced, the US could get the credit of at least introducing democracy in their colony at that early stage. Anyway by accepting Nacionalist party demand for eventual independence after a period of training in the art of self government, the Americans had succeeded in co-opting the Nacionalist leaders into the colonial policy frame work. The colonial administration pursued a policy in which there was the adoption of accelerated. 'Futipinization' of bureaucracy. The Jones Act of 1916 reiterated the intention of the U.S. to recognize Philippines as an independent state. Thus the colonial legacy included "self government, continued inequity, economic dependency, centralization and oligarchy."¹⁹

19. Raul P.D. Guzman, n.11, p.43.

Under the U.S. ideology of capitalism and free enterprise, the agricultural export sector improved. Foreign trade grew faster. Similarly, in the field of politics; the colonial administration introduced institutions for a functional democratic system on the American model. As a result of all these policies, a nascent form of democracy was established and serious efforts to Filipinize the bureaucracy were made. This reduced the necessity of import of American administrators and simultaneously the U.S. earned the goodwill of the Filipino people.²⁰

The third phase began. With the establishment of commonwealth in the Philippines, a phase characterized by a higher degree of self-government, where most of the powers of the state were vested in the Filipino leaders themselves. The Filipinos had their own executive, legislature and judiciary. Of course, the ultimate powers remained in the hands of the elected Chief Executive of the U.S., the President in the White House in Washington. In fact, at the time of inauguration of the Commonwealth in November 1935, the U.S. had agreed to grant independence after a decade.

As the process of the Philippine tutelage under the U.S. was on, the Japanese struck and occupied the country along with rest of South East Asia as part of their policy of establishing a greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere.

20. Renato Constantino, n.1, p.320.

During the period of Japanese occupation (1942-1945), all the democratic innovations introduced in the Philippines were smashed. These included, among others, a new republican constitution (of the commonwealth) which had in it a bill of rights. One would say that in order to subserve their own imperial objectives, the Japanese struck at the just developing practice in the country. But since the Japanese came they launched policies which imposed on the Filipino people and the country untold sufferings, physical ruin and economic dislocation. The Japanese wanted to reform the Filipino society by purging it of American influences and reorienting it towards Japan and its concept of greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere.

The Japanese policy towards the Filipino leaders was to alienate them from the U.S. This led them to pursue a programme which included both carrot and stick.²¹ They succeeded in their efforts only to a limited extent. According to the general policies of South East Asia, they proclaimed a new republic of the Philippines with Jose P. Laurel as the President. The large part of the elite and the Filipino people remained loyal to the U.S. The people were repelled by Japanese atrocities. They supported the exiled commonwealth government and the guerillas in the resistance movement. The Hukbalahap movement (Anti Japanese army) came

21. Theodone Friend, Between Two Empires, p.40.

upon a strong resistor. As the end of the Japanese rule came in the Philippines, the takeover was as swift as the capture. On February 23, 1945, the U.S. forces decaptured the Philippines and restored the commonwealth with Sergio Osmena as President.

The Japanese left the Philippines totally destroyed and Filipino society dislocated. In order to fulfill their pledge in 1934-35 to grant independence in a decade, the U.S. endeavoured to restart the democratic process damaged by the Japanese following a split in the Nacionalista party on the issue of leadership a new party called Liberal party emerged under the leadership of Manuel Roxas. In the elections in April 1946 Roxas defeated Osemena and was installed as the first President of the Republic on independence on July 4, 1946. On the eve of independence the Belltrade act was passed giving free entry to U.S. products for an eight year transition period. Also included was the U.S. control of exchange rate of the Peso. In 1944 the U.S. Congress passed a joint resolution to retain military and naval bases on a 99 year lease. The Philippines was dependent on the U.S. "for its reconstruction, foreign trade and national security".²² Thus the democracy that was restored was basically dependent and from being a colony of the U.S. the Philippines became a neo-colony.

22. Hernando J. Abaya, The Untold Philippine Story (Oregon city, 1967), p.13.

High hopes of political independence, "by itself.. could not immediately eliminate obstacles to progress such as inefficient food production for expanding population, bureaucratic inefficiencies, ethnic disharmonies, the persistence of economies based on raw materials, and the continuing influence of pre-war colonial institutional framework.²³

Roxas died on April 1948 and Ouirino became President and embarked reform efforts but accomplished little before 1949 elections. He was narrowly nominated by his own party to run against Nacionlista candidate Laurel. The political contest was waged during a military campaign against Turks and marked by open violence and broad employment government funds to support Ouirino who won by a small margin. He faced problems like slow recovery of exports and the cessation of special U.S. post dollars transfer had produced foreign exchange crisis.²⁴ The Huks could become strong and the army was demoralized and the Filipinos lost faith in the integrity of the government, only 3 years after independence.²⁵

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23. David Joel Steinberg, In search of South East Asia (New York: 1971), p.338.
24. John El Esterline and Mac M Esterline, How Dominoes fell (California, 1985), p.339.
25. ibid.

A drift towards complete governmental collapse was reversed in 1950. The government made an appeal for American assistance and appointed Ramon Magsaysay a former guerilla leader as defense secretary to deal with the security situation. In his campaign against Huks he slept with troops and went on trips with them. The army made progress and by October 1950 the government curbed the communist insurgency. He set to restore people's faith in the democracy and used army equipment to clear land area in Mindanao for landless peasants. He ensured honesty in that senatorial and provincial elections in 1951 with the help of army, a private organization, the national movement for free elections to police the polls.²⁶ He thus became a popular candidate for presidential elections and became the President under the ticket of Nacionalista party. Magsaysay encompassed the people rather than the social class thus lessening the hold of the elite, embarked on serious agricultural reform but the elite tried to delay the implementation of these and the President's penchant solving problems himself was proving costly and inefficient. He negotiated a revised US-Philippine trade (Laurel-Langley) agreement that abolished U.S. authority to control the exchange rates of Peso and parity rights. Reciprocal duty preferences for U.S. imports into Philippines were to diminish more rapidly.²⁷ He also

26. ibid., p.341.

27. ibid., p.342.

developed closer security relations with U.S. In 1951 the Mutual Defense Treaty was signed. But in 1957 he died and left a void in the political scene.

Between his death and the advent of Marcos, the period reflected an increasing detachment from U.S. and a growing involvement in South East Asian Affairs. Vice President Carlos P. Garcia succeeded Magsaysay and operated within Magsaysay's shadow. He emphasised a nationalism based on "Filipino first" and "attainment of respectable independence".²⁸ The government adopted tough policies towards overstaying Chinese. But settlement with US on most issues relating to 1947 military agreements proved infeasible and could not make much headway with land reforms and also could not give the promised reform for socio-economic progress.

Macapagal won the elections in 1961. He campaigned to alleviate the conditions of the common man and inaugurated an agricultural leasehold system to replace share-cropping and which also established a fixed rent and protected tenants from eviction. But only 72000 acres out of one million acres had become leasehold. He also encouraged expansive nationalist spirit and shifted the Independence Day from July 4 to June 12 (when Aguinaldo had proclaimed independence in

28. Louis Paul D. Benson, Political Leadership through Political Riders: A New Approach for Analysis of Philippine Provincial Leadership Positions, Ph.D. dissertation (Honolulu, 1970), pp.139-50.

1898) and laid Philippine claim to the British colony of Sabah. But he was faced with a series of incidents involving jurisdiction of U.S. serviceman serving Clark air and Subic naval base. The old problems of corruption and non-implementation of land reforms and unachieved economic reforms impelled the electorate to vote for change.

The politics that emerged was fractious as before and local and national election became expensive and elite backed candidates usually won. In some places the traditional patron-client basis broke down and personal loyalties were giving way to reliance on jobs.²⁹ This deterioration of patron-client relation led to inability of parties and machines to channel political action or provide economic security to citizens and thus corruption and exploitation of public offices became rampant. All this served to weaken the democracy.

By the time Marcos became President in 1965, increased dependence on U.S. had led to underdevelopment, unrest, student activism. The economic gap between have and have nots increased, the citizen in the provinces remained poorly integrated into functioning of parties and the bureaucracy was unorganized. The press had become sensational and unbalanced in its coverage of events.

29. ibid.

Therefore when Marcos became President in 1965, the country was in a bad shape. He had personal charisma. He promised agricultural reforms and massive public works. He inducted able technocrats and also obtained an agreement in 1966 from the U.S. to shorten "bases" lease to 25 years. All these factors helped him to win 1969 elections. He also proposed to change 1935 constitution to make it responsive to the needs of the people, but the conditions worsened rather than showing any improvement. There were student strikes, communist insurgency, corruption and graft and corruption, inflation and devaluation of peso and to top that on August 21, 1972, two bomb explosions rocked a liberal party rally and Marcos blamed it on communists and all this chaos was used by Marcos to proclaim martial law on September 22, 1972.

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CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPMENTS DURING MARTIAL LAW

Historically Philippines had been regarded as an exceptional case in South East Asia. It had been affected by Hindu and Confucian ideas. It never had a monarchy or any centralized state-system. It was colonized by Spain, the U.S., Japan and again the U.S., altogether for four hundred and twenty one years. Political independence came to the indigenous elite without any struggle, violent or otherwise that had emerged under a paternalistic American colonial rule since the turn of the twentieth century.

Keeping in view the different colonial experiences it had undergone, the Philippines inherited a society which was politically weak and fragmented. Due to this a paternalistic form of societal structure emerged in the Philippines in which political life centred on relationships which were largely person to person, informal and hierarchial and reciprocal.¹ Obviously, the stability of the regime depended greatly on the capacity of individual rulers to meet the needs and expectations of the followers.

The Philippines was once known popularly as the "show case of democracy in the orient" and its political process was also described by some scholars as "an amiable, profitable and socially undistruptive competition for office among the gentry", chiefly characterized by "smooth,

1. Clark D. Neher, "Political Clientalism and instability in the Philippines", Asian Affairs - An American Review, vol.12, no.3, Fall, 1985, p.8.

interpersonal bargaining".² The people were used quite aggressively to assert the rights of freedom of speech, press and association. The country was governed by alternative political parties carrying the mandate of the people ascertained through periodic general elections.

Despite this rosy picture, there existed in the Philippines and in Filipino politics and parties an inherent characteristic that structurally they were based on social class. The party scheme as described by M. Duverger was "cadre based" as distinguished from "mass party".³ There were no formal membership procedures or task assignments; there was large scale defection and the elite dominated the parties and used them to promote their own interests. Therefore frequent elections demonstrated the weakness of democracy. Each of the Presidents introduced new programmes for prosperity and also reforms, especially in the field of land reforms. Most of these were, however, only on paper, rather than implemented.

Besides, there were numerous difficulties - natural and man-made that various administrations faced. For instance, these were frequent rice shortages.

2. David A. Rosenberg, Marcos and Martial Law in the Philippines (London, 1979), p.13.

3. Maurice Duverger, Political Parties (translated from French, (London, 1955), Chapter II, p.30.

Rice imports thus caused serious drain on the country's scarce, foreign exchange reserves, smuggling reached alarming proportions, the Manila Port was paralysed by strike in 1963 leading to loss of 100 million pesos, in the two fiscal years 1963-1965, the government was forced to cut the legislated budgetary allocations for all government services, industry lacked skills, lack of honesty prevailed, national economy could not keep pace with population growth, and so on.⁴

Also the policies of President Macapagal were uninhibited repatriation of profits on a unlimited imports which rapidly depleted the government's foreign exchange reserves. The country was caught in a vicious circle of depletion of foreign exchange reserves and applying for the I.M.F./World Bank Loans, depletion of reserves, devaluation of peso and heavy American and other foreign exchange remittances, etc. Macapagal's 'open door' policy for foreign investment, increased American investments but far less than the profits remitted back home. Peso was devalued by almost 100 per cent.⁵

Thus, the problems of economy and the prevalent corruption in the system impelled the people to vote for a

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4. Onofre D. Corpuz, The Philippines (New Jersey, 1965), p.131.
 5. B.D. Arora, "Development Process in the Philippines" in Parimal Kumar Das, ed., The Troubled Region (New Delhi, 1987), p.250.

change. In 1965 Ferdinand Marcos contested on the Nacionalista Party ticket⁶ and defeated Macapagal. He entered office with a charisma of war heroism and of connections with the Romualdez family. He the youngest man in the Philippines history to be the minority leader of the House of Representatives and the senate and President of his party.⁷ He openly expressed his preference for the earlier development strategy within the framework of dependent economy. He attempted to resolve acute problems of the economy. He encouraged cultivation of a new variety of 'miracle rice' developed by the Rice Research Institute. He undertook massive public works like building roads, bridges, schools, health centres. He launched the urban beautification programme and put able technocrats in the government.

He took advantage of continuing outcries against the American Bases by obtaining U.S. agreement in 1966 to shorten the 99 years' lease to 25 years from the date of agreement. Simultaneously, he emphasised close political and economic ties between the Philippines and the U.S. He assured his

6. Having been denied an opportunity in his Liberal Party to contest for Presidentship of the country, Marcos had defected from the Party and joined the Nacionalist Party. He had done the same as Raman Magsaysay had in 1953, when he had defected from the Liberal Party and joined the Nacionalist Party to contest the Presidential elections.

7. Hertzell Spencer, Marcos of the Philippines, A biography (New York, 1969), p.4.

American audiences that his administration "was not only ready for an increased level of private foreign investment" but that it would also provide "political stability, which, among the developing countries, makes the productivity of external capital relatively high".⁸ As an appeal to the Americans and other investors, he also enacted the investment incentive law in 1967". President Marcos's subservient approach to the U.S. strategic, regional interests was manifested in his readiness to dispatch Filipino troops in support of the U.S. offensive in Vietnam.⁹

Then in 1969 presidential elections he again won with 60 per cent of popular vote and became the first President to be elected for a second time. He said he needed more time for reforms. The conditions, however, worsened. By January 1970 thousands of students clashed with the police, inflation

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8. See Ferdinand E Marcos, "Democracy and challenge of Economic Development, Speech delivered to the World Affairs Council, Los Angeles, California, the Filipino communities of Southern California, Arizona and New Mexico, 24 September 1966 cited in Robert B. Stauffer, The Marcos regime: Failure of Transnational Developmentalism and Hegemony Building from above and outside (University of Honolulu, Hawaii, August 1985), p.11.
9. Marcos defied strong nationalist pressures in mounting opposition as manifested in huge mass street demonstration and furore in the Congress. As a concession to it, however, he declared in the Congress that Filipino troops would participate in purely civil action operations". See Robert B. Stauffer, ibid., p 12.

and the devaluation of the peso continued, crime was on the rise and so was corruption.

He had promised in the earlier years that he would restore law and order, free farm labourers from his inherited serfdom, accelerate his broad programme to redistribute wealth and reorganize government from top to bottom to create a fully representative society. These had also been perceptible signs of his efforts to unite the 'Filipinos' under the banner of the 'New Society' goals¹⁰ and also of a massive drive for industrialization and of wiping out the corruption. It is these efforts of his that had helped him in his re-election in 1969.¹¹ But as the years rolled by these programmes were far from being implemented.

Towards the end of the 1960's economic growth had slackened in the country. The policies of import substitution which various interest groups had pressed upon the Philippine legislature no longer promoted economic growth.

Growing budgetary, balance of payments, trade deficits, increasing money supply, growing external public debt,

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10. This was done to bring the people under his 'new society' system, so that they fully agree with him and do not counter attack him.
 11. John H. Esternline and Mac.H.Estermine, How Dominoes fell? (California, 1985), p.342.

declining foreign exchange reserves, rising consumer index and widening gaps in income distribution had become the main features of the economy. During 1966 and 1970 the deficits incurred annually averaged to 31.2 per cent.¹² The government had to float the Peso and the growing violence due to the above fact was attributed to Marcos himself.¹³ The inflationary pressures generated by all this had an adverse effect on those living below the poverty line. 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 1970.¹⁴

All these factors strengthened the communist party of the Philippines (PKP-ML - Philippine Communist Party - Marxist - Leninist) reestablished in 1968 and its armed wing New Peoples Army (N.P.A.) reestablished in 1969.

The levels of poverty to which the people fell could be assessed from the observations of J.B. Laurel, the speaker of the Philippine house of representatives. "Barely 7 per cent of our population enjoy a living income, while 93 per cent live on a hand to mouth existence with the vast majority doomed to a life of misery and want. No society can endure

12. B.D. Arora, n.5, p.252.

13. David Wurfel, "Martial Law in the Philippines: The Methods of Regime Survival", Pacific Affairs, Vol.59, no.1, Spring 1977, p.5.

14. B.D. Arora, n.5, p.252.

these conditions long".¹⁵ Unemployment was on the rise. About Land Reform programmes as on 30 June 1976. According to J.B. Laurel, "only 154 municipalities had been declared as land reform areas and only 13,377 out of 111,530 tenants were converted into lease holders, from 1966 to 69 only 708 hectares had been acquired by land authority and at this rate it would take 1,300 years before the then tenants would be converted into land cultivators".¹⁶

The U.S. businessmen had entrenched into the vitals of the economy. For instance, American investments had grown to US \$836 million constituting 73.4 per cent of the total foreign investment in the country.

As a manifestation of the mass discontent arising out of this situation, there were student and labour strikes against the government and the situation was still complicated by natural disasters, inflation and shortage of foodstuffs.

In the midst of the social tensions thus generated, President Marcos convened a Constitutional convention to draft

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15. Magna Carta of Social Justice and Economic Freedom, Appendix 'A' in J.B. Laurel Jr., *ibid.*, p.128, J.B. Laurel, then speaker of the Philippine house of Representatives was speaking on a Joint Resolution (under the title in the house on 3 May 1969.
 16. J.B. Laurel, Jr., Report on National Economy (Manila, 1971), p.42.

a new constitution catering to the needs of the people. It, instead, became just another issue in the intra-elite struggles that had already been on.

Another fact, and a serious one at that, was that, according to constitutional provisions, Marcos could not run for a third term. Moreover, due to the fact that mass grievances had been piling up against him, he was unlikely to be elected as President. In this context Benigno Aquino, his arch rival and opposition leader, had all chances of becoming the new President of the Republic. So Marcos had long discussions about the country's problems with close associates. He even 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 defense chief Juan Ponce Enrile designed a detailed plan for martial law. This represented in a sense intellectual input into the preparations for imposing martial law in the country.¹⁷

Marcos in the meantime started raising questions about the relevance of an American style democracy in the country. His questions were: would it be good enough for the country which does not have the means or the prosperity of the West

17. William H. Overholt, "The rise and fall of Ferdinand Marcos", Asian Survey, Vol.26, number 10, October, 1986, p.1139.

and would it be relevant to the socio-cultural life of the people in the Philippines.¹⁸ These questions of Marcos seemed to be to present his own programme of a 'new society'. His purpose was to get the people in favour of his concept of government which was suited to their needs.

On the other hand the nation's political parties had been proving themselves to be exclusive instruments of patronage rather than principles at defending democracy. Thus when confronted by a manipulator of personal and family interests and with the problems of a society given with poverty, inequality and crime and accustomed to view democratic politics as mere conflict patronage, these parties found themselves unable to defend democracy and its principles. Also, perhaps the elite or the familial oligarchy thought only of their own interests.¹⁹

On August 21, 1971 several banks were thrown into a crowded political rally held by Liberal Party in Manila to mark the opening of the mid-term campaign of eight sectoral seats. Marcos blamed the communists for it and suspended the writ of habeas corpus on this account. In November 1971, the opposition liberal party made a clean sweep of the senatorial

18. *ibid.*

19. *ibid.*, p.1140.

elections and showed the Macionistas that they would face heavy odds in the Presidential elections of 1973.²⁰

Mass protests increased MNLF also joined in. Benigno Aquino, The Liberal Party leader, was declared a communist. The militant student organizations such as 'kabutaang Makabayan' and the 'samahang Demokratikong kabatan' spread their influence throughout the nation's colleges and schools.²¹

In 1972 a whole series of problems beset the government, financial problems, natural calamities, guerilla activities, etc. Marcos accused the Liberal Party of siding with the N.P.A. and on September 22, 1972 proclaimed martial law in accordance with the authority vested in the President by the 1935 constitution in the event of rebellion.

Martial Law:

On September 22, 1972, the Philippines ended its long experiment with democracy. With the proclamation of martial law throughout the country began a drastic transformation of the Philippine political system and its institutions. Marcos rapidly began to dismantle the superstructure of constitutional government that had been transplanted under American colonial rule. The Congress was dissolved, civil

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

21. ibid., p.98.

liberties were curtailed, the Constitution of 1935 was replaced, A "new society" was proposed by Marcos to be implemented by a new style of government, called "constitutional authoritarianism".²²

In shift to authoritarian system of government raised certain questions that had special significance for the U.S. The U.S. colonial rule and commonwealth tutelage in the Philippines represented the most determined and most extensive effort to export American democratic ideals to another country. This was true from the very beginning of American civil government of the newly colonized territory. The instructions of President William McKily to the second Philippine Commission, headed by William Taft in 1901 made this clear:

"There are certain practical rules of government which we have found to be essential to the preservation of the great principles of liberty and law, and that these principles and these rule of government must be established and maintained in their islands for the sake of their liberty and happiness, however much they conflict with the customs of law and procedure with which they are familiar".²³

These very instructions became the guiding principles for American colonial rule. According to Corpuz, "the political vocabulary, electoral parties, system of party government, jurisprudence, doctrines of constitutionalism and

22. David Rosenberg, n.2, p.13.

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

theories of administrative management all reflected an American origin".²⁴ The U.S. exported its language, ideas of education, and its manufactures.²⁵ Given this intensive and extensive Americanization how could one explain the rapid dismantling of these long-nurtured institutions? Some argued that the transplant never took place and martial law only dispelled the false notion that democratic system would or should function in the Philippines; others argued that American neo-colonial influences had increased Philippine dependence on U.S. Ever concerned with their own interests, although the Americans laid the foundations of democracy, they never allowed with its geo-strategic as well as economic interests, it always sought to arrest its growth. The military installations at the Subic Bay naval base and Clark air field became increasingly important strategically, giving a crucial role to the Americans in the Asia Pacific region.²⁶

Quiet paradoxically, the U.S. provided Marcos with the wherewithal to consolidate his new authoritarian order by increasing military aid by over 100 per cent in the first years of the Martial law itself. The American Chamber of

24. Corpuz, n.4, p.69.

25. ibid.

26. Richard Kegglar, "Marcos and the Americans", Foreign Policy, Volume 63, No.2, Summer 1986, p.41.

Commerce, on the imposition of martial law, sent a telegram to Marcos, "All success in his endeavour".²⁷ The Reagan administration went further with the ex-Vice President George Bush toasting Marcos in the following manner:

"We love you sir... we love your adherence to democratic rights and process".²⁸

While answering a question about whether democracy in the Philippines was more important than the U.S. military basis, President Reagan was on record having said:

"One cannot minimise the importance of these bases, not only to us, but to the Western world and to the Philippines themselves. I do not know of anything more important than the Philippine bases".²⁹

Obviously, in the calculations of Washington, geo-strategic imperatives had a precedence over any other consideration, however, important, including damage to Philippine democracy. Thus, U.S. became a strong ally of Marcos. With no one there even raising a finger for civil liberties and democracy.³⁰

27. Walden Bello, "Benigno Aquino, "Between dictatorship and Revolution in the Philippines", Third World Quarterly, volume 6, No.2, April 1984, p.88.

28. Jasjit Singh, "U.S. military basis in the Philippines: Shifting patterns and strategies", Strategic Analysis (I.D.S.A., New Delhi), vol.10, no.2, May 1986, p.167.

29. ibid., p.189.

30. ibid.

In a telling commentary on the situation created under martial law, Far Eastern Economic Review observed in 1977:

"Politics in Philippines begins and ends with Marcos. There is no parliament, only a rubber stamp assembly. There is no judicial body to review Presidential decrees, the only legislation under martial law".³¹ It added:

"Yet Marcos does not rule by terror... and Philippines is not a conglomeration of illiterate and unpoliticised tribes people. Quote the opposite. How, then has Marcos managed to acquire all the levers of political power to a degree unknown even in most socialist states."³²

This observation gives in sum the essence of the martial law regime of President Marcos.

On the proclamation of martial law, Marcos said:

"The country was confronted with the threat from lawless elements who are moved by a common or similar ideological conviction, design, strategy and goal, one enjoying the active moral and material support of the foreign powers..... who are staging, undertaking and waging an armed insurrection and rebellion to support our existing political, social and legal order with an entirely new one whose form of

31. Far Eastern Economic Review (F.E.E.R), 1977, p.20.

32. ibid.

government... and whose political, social, economic, legal and moral, percepts are based on the Marxist-Maoist teachings and beliefs".³³

Dumped with endemic rival- insurgency, moslem separatism in the Southern provinces, the highest threat of *coups* etc. all these factors were used by Marcos to proclaim and then justify Martial Law.³⁴

So there was a basic need to curb such de-stabilizing elements and forces in the country.

While commenting of the necessity of martial law, Marcos observed:

"The compelling necessity arose out of the 7 grave threats to the existence of the Republic. These were the communist rebellion, the rightist conspiracy, the Muslim secessionist movement, the rampant corruption on all levels of society, the criminal and criminal political syndicates (including the private armies), the deteriorating economy and the increasing social injustice".³⁵

On the uniqueness of martial law, he remarked:

"Our Martial law is unique in that it is based on the supremacy of the civilian authority and the complete submission to the decision of the Supreme Court, and most important of all to the will of the people".³⁶

33. Ferdinand E. Macos, Democratic Revolution in the Philippines (New Jersey, 1977), p.184.

34. ibid.

35. ibid.

36. ibid.

According to the President, the Martial Law would enable the fulfilment of promises for improvements in political institutions, in providing a democratic government. To this effect urban workers, and labourers were allowed to have unions and federations and cooperatives were used fully for their interests of the improvement of the people. The church also joined the progressive reform movement and economic policy and foreign policy were steadily acquiring a nationalistic outlook.³⁷

All these factors were used to make the people believe that the new society goals were concrete and helpful to the masses.

DEVELOPMENTS AND REFORMS UNDER MARTIAL LAW:

Marcos's Concept of "New Society":

The twin objectives of the "new society" as proposed by Marcos was restoration of law and order and transformation of social, economic and political institutions from what be called "old society" to the "new society". These were to be achieved in the following years in order to bring stability and promote peace.³⁸

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

38. John H. Esterline 2 M. H. E., How Dominoes fell (Colorado, 1985), p.344.

The "new society" of Marcos was aimed at a "Revolution from the top" or "from the centre". The purpose was to "save the nation" or to prevent or abort what the President saw as the opposition's action to create chaos. The other goal was to "institute reforms" in the political, economic and social fields that was marked by an increasing concentration of power, wealth and opportunities for advancement and they resulted in the rule of the elite and oligarchy as before.

Under the "new society" immediately private armies were disarmed, price controls were imposed on basic goods, a purge of corrupt and inefficient bureaucrats and judges was undertaken and a sweeping national land reform programme to favour all small farmer was inaugurated. Tax procedures, banking laws and commodity marketing organizations were revamped, crime was reduced sharply, corruption in public works was penalised and economy improved. A seven-faceted society program was announced in mid November 1972. It encompassed law and order, land tenure, labour, education, social service, politics and government. It was well received by the people.³⁹

All these reforms were carried out in order to curb the demand of the common people for a welfare state as promised by Macapagal, social democracy as promised by Manglapus,

39. ibid.

socialism, national democracy, etc. against the adverse conditions of poverty, income inequality and lawlessness.⁴⁰

When Marcos had proclaimed martial law in the country through proclamation 1081, he did so with the support of the military in enforcing his decisions and actions as commander-in-chief and as President. On the night of September 22, 1972 under Presidential orders, army closed down all radio, television stations, newspaper offices, arrested prominent publishers, journalists and commentators critical of the President. Marcos suspended the Congress and political parties placed the judiciary under the President and curbed all political activities. Marcos had also stated that martial law was needed for ensuring peace under the "new society". It must be noted however, that his pronouncements on the "new society" did not indicate any systematic ideology. The basis of it was at least pragmatic and highly personalized rule of Marcos. Army cracked down on the so-called "political warlords" and private armies. It created military tribunals to process the martial law detainees. Presidential decrees, proclamations, orders and instructions were issued forth one after another. The purpose was to seek adherence to the will of the President and with the assistance of the military to

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

strengthen their control on the behaviour of the leaders and masses.⁴¹

Under the sponsorship of the government, labour unions and youth organizations, such as the trade union congress of the Philippines (TUCP) and a youthful movement called "Kabatang Barangay" with 8 million members under Marcos's daughter Imee, were formed.⁴²

On the constitutional level the 1935 Constitution was replaced by a new one in 1973. It was ratified by the so-called 'citizens Assemblies', under which there would be a parliamentary government, and Marcos was to hold both the posts of the President and the Prime Minister. Then in the name of political "normalization" for a "shift from authoritarianism to liberalism,"⁴³ Marcos resorted to the

41. M. Rajaratnam, n.16, p.20.

42. M. Rajaratnam, "The Philippines in 1979 - Towards Political Change" in 2000 Suryadenata, ed. (Singapore, 1979), p.243.

43. ibid. In 1976 the Filipino voters agreed to amend the constitution to set aside the regular 'National Assembly in favour of an Interim Batasan Pambayera, C.I.B.P. Interim National Assembly, under it the would-be parliament could not entertain a no-confidence vote on the Prime Minister or repeal the President's legislative power of issuing decrees. In December 1977 referendum, the electorate voted that Marcos would automatically become the new Prime Minister; in 1981 Filipinos voted for a presidential government.

politics of referendum/plebiscite and he managed to make amendments and changes in the Constitution to give a democratic look to his entirely one man rule. Marcos organized elections both at national and local levels and with this end formed his own political mass-based party the kulusang Bagong Lipunan (K.B.L.) in early 1978. Through elections on April 7, 1978, a quasi-independent Assembly was instituted. It was dominated by the supporters of the President Marcos's regime and those belonging to the K.B.L. most of whom were old oligarchs. In January 1980, local elections for governors, K.B.L. won 90 per cent of all seats.⁴⁴ (other elections being in 1980 for local government officials, 1981 for Presidency, 1982 for Barangay officials, May 1984 for Members of National Assembly, 1986 for Presidency; but the only multi party elections had been in 1978 and that too was under Marcos's pressure, marred by violence, rigging, vote buying fraud). All these exercises suggested the massive fraud committed by the K.B.L. candidates whose strengths was usually 90 per cent. The government had used block voting and nationwide allocation of parliamentary seats to favour the K.B.L.⁴⁵

44. MacArthur, Lorisino, "Prospects for Normalization in the Philippines", Southeast Asian Affairs (Singapore), Vol.6, no.3, 1990, p.265.

45. ibid.

On the economic front President Marcos faced problems in achieving of his goals of economic development. These were problems like inadequacy in basic needs, income inequality, unemployment and underemployment, pressure of rapid growth, energy constraint, environmental constraints, adverse balance of payments and price instability, regional growth disparities.⁴⁶ In order to solve these, Marcos, in his programmes under the 'new society', promised:-

- 1) promotion of social development and social justice through the creation of productive employment opportunities, reduction of income disparities, and improvement of the living standards of the poor.
- 2) Attainment of self sufficiency in food and self reliance in energy.
- 3) Attainment of a high and sustained economic growth.
- 4) Improvement in rural areas
- 5) Maintenance of internal security and international relations.⁴⁷

46. Ferdinand E. Marcos, The President's Report to the Nations, September 21, 1975 and September 21, 1976.

47. ibid. (With reference to the five year development plan, 1978-1982).

Constitutionality and Validity of Martial Law:

Under Martial Law, President Marcos had undertaken the framing of a new constitution through a constitutional convention, as the American system was deemed inadequate for an independent country struggling for political, economic and social and cultural development. However, following the imposition of martial law, President Marcos replaced the 1935 constitution by a decree in January 1973. Quite interestingly, prior to the ratification of the 1973 Constitution, the 1935 constitution had carried constitutional validity.

The ratification of Article VII of Section 10, paragraph 2 of the 1935 constitution states: "In case of invasion, insurrection, or rebellion or imminent danger thereof, when the public safety requires, he (President) may suspend the privileges of writ of *habeas corpus* or place the Philippines or any part thereof under martial law".⁴⁸

It might be pointed out that when martial law was proclaimed, the Congress was in session, the Supreme Court and inferior courts were open, the constitution convention was in session and none of the provisional governments were under communist control. Despite all this, however, it was this article of the 1935 Constitution that was used by Marcos

48. The Constitution of the Philippine made in 1935 cited in Pant P.D. Guogman a Mila Reforom, Government and Politics of the Philippines (Singapore, 1988), p.62.

to demonstrate the constitutional validity of his act of imposing martial law.

Financial Reforms and Land Reforms:

Under vested with all the powers of the State, President Marcos initiated far-reaching financial reforms to improve the economic conditions of the Filipino Society. These included improvement of laws on taxation, reorganisation of management of foreign investment rules to attract foreign investment, promotion of exports and launching of programmes and projects that attracted strong support of the World Bank.

These reforms had a meaningful impact on the economy.

From fiscal year 1964 to 1972 national government revenues were between 9 and 10 per cent of the G.N.P. In 1972 the revenues totalled P.5.3 billion. Between 1973 and 1976, they rose by an annual average of 32.8 per cent of the G.N.P. and rose to P.19.2 billion in 1976 on 14.6 per cent of G.N.P.⁴⁹ The administration aimed at dispersing infrastructural and other resources of the government on a more equitable regional basis. Staples like rice and sugar were sold at a lower price than at the international level. The international reserves grew from US \$200 - \$300 million

49. Marcos, n.45.

to \$1.17 billion in 1975. The economic growth rate of 6.9 per cent was accomplished. Foreign investment drew P.365 million into the country and the Philippines had 35 multinational corporations set ups.⁵⁰

As regards land reforms, the President quickly implemented more land reforms than had occurred in the two-and-a-half decades of democratic rule. The Presidential decree no.2 issued a few days after the Proclamation of martial law, made the entire country into a land reform area. The Presidential decree no.27 issued on October 21, 1972 was directed at emancipating the tenants from bondage to the soil by transferring to them the ownership of the land they tilled. The decree covered all lands devoted to the growing of rice and corn which involved the transfer of land. Transfer certificates were issued to farmers. This operation resulted in the breaking up of vast estates of the plantation owners. The landowners no longer remained the sources of credit. By 1976, 29,885 certificates were issued for 340,347 hectares of land to 188,642 tenants.⁵¹ However it was difficult to assess the effectiveness of the land reform programme due to conflicting reports issued by the government at that time.

50. John H. Estertine, n.37, p.352.

51. Rajaratnam, "Some observations on martial law in the Philippines: The Dilemma of a developing state", cited in Rajaratnam, n.16, p.34.

The other components of the land reform programme included physical, institutional and agricultural development. As of 1976, eight priority areas had been proclaimed as new settlements. Another agrarian reform was a cooperative programme known as samahang Nayon - credit for the farmer, which was one of the biggest problems of rural development. In order to solve this problem the Department of Agrarian reforms, strengthened the rural banking system. Associate a agrarian reforms, such as rural electrification, irrigation and subsidized credit for farmers, led to a boom and near self-sufficiency in rice production by 1976. Land reforms, and rural infrastructural programmes along with massive credit subsidies were the major characteristics of Marcos's land and agrarian reforms.

Press and Media:

The Philippines had always practised freedom of speech and depression, sometimes even to the extent of being imbalanced and irresponsible. Media ownership was, however, generally in the hands of the politically powerful families like the Lopez family which controlled a large broadcasting systems consisting of 4 TV stations, 2 TV relay stations and 20 radio stations. But with the proclamation of martial law, Marcos was determined to inhibit criticism of his administration. Thus, inspite of the fact that freedom of press was considered a fundamental civil rights, his

administration sought to curtail all the newspapers and other media of information. Only one newspaper 'The Philippines Daily Express' one television station Kauloan Broadcasting systems channel and one government owned radio station 'Voice of Philippines" was in operation, like his counterparts before him (Magsaysay, Osemena and Roxas) Marcos, used the media in extensively as an instrument of propoganda of the goals of the 'new society'. Obviously, by controlling the Press and other media, the martial law regime was hell-bent on choking all channels of mass information like his counterparts before him.

MILITARY, MARCOS'S POWER BASE:

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

Under the martial law, the Secretary of National Defense and the top military leaders worked directly and intimately with the President. The armed forces of the Philippines (A.F.P.) which numbered at 50,000 in 1972 rose to 200,000 in 1983 and was equipped with sophisticated counter-

insurgency weapons.⁵² During the same period armed forces' expenditure increased ten fold and salaries trippled.⁵³ As a result of the policies of the regime, the regime, the military also gained way into the political life of the country.

Basically, militarization took two forms. One was the integration of civilians in military organizations, such as creation of Civilian Home Defense Force (CHDF) and the nation-wide organization of barangay (village) brigades. The second took the form of military take over of civilian functions in the bureaucracy and in the business sector.⁵⁴ This resulted in a strong military back-up to the Marcos government. marcos promoted his own people in the high positions and get military involved in the decision making process. Gradually it emerged as an independent interest group in the Philippine national life. Members of the armed forces and some civilian technocrats exercised delegated Presidential authority as cabinet members.⁵⁵

52. Mizamur Rehman Khan, "The Philippines: An Anatomy of Marcos "New Society", BIISS Journal (Dacca, Bangladesh), vol.5, no.2, April 1984, p.211.

53. Ibid.

54. ibid.

55. ibid.

According to Robert B. Stauffer, "The military share an ideology of modernization, an aversion to politics, a belief in the free enterprise system and yet a need for government planning, an elitist view of society and commitment to development".⁵⁶ The military predominance in civilian affairs was in tune with Marcos's thinking. The military assisted Marcos in the exercise of his tremendous executive and legislative powers and were answerable only to Marcos.

Marcos and the Americans:

Another strong base of President Marcos's regime had been the U.S. It is a different matter that by its policies over a number of years it had created more problems for the Filipinos than solved them. The U.S., however, persisted in its policies which appeared to be more pro-Marcos than pro-people. Richard wrote: "Though the U.S. policy over five administrations, from Lydon Johnson's to Reagan's has been profoundly misguided and has contributed substantially to the emergence of political and economic problems."⁵⁷

Marcos understood the imperatives of American policy. For Washington the overriding consideration was to protect the U.S. military basis in the Philippines. In this

56. Robert B. Stauffer, Philippine Authoritarianism: Framework for Peripheral Development (Honolulu, 1976), p.8.

57. Richard J. Kessler, "Marcos and the Americans", Foreign Policy, Vol.63, no.2, Summer 1986, p.44.

connection Marcos strove to identify himself as closely as possible with the U.S. in order to bolster his domestic political standing and to improve his bargaining position with Washington. His thinking was that more he linked himself with the U.S. interests, the harder it would be for that country to use its influence to alter his authoritarian policies.

American President had different reasons at different times for supporting Marcos or refusing to criticize him. Johnson wanted Philippine military participation in the Vietnam war in the form of two engineer battalions. Richard Nixon while negotiating a Vietnam settlement, Richard Nixon wanted the Philippines and other friendly Asian nations to assume a larger defense role. Nixon Doctrine had called on America's "Asian friends" to assume their defense responsibilities for tackling their problems of internal security". Gerald Ford's priority after the fall of South Vietnam was to shore up the Nixon Doctrine through enhanced security assistance for America's Pacific allies. Carter, while pursuing human rights globally, wanted to retain U.S. bases in the Philippines so as to project American military power in the Indian ocean to protect Israel and to guard the West's oil supply lines from the middle east. Ronald Reagan's fea of Soviet policy of expansionism in South East

Asia made the support of Marcos, a friendly authoritarian leader, quite necessary.⁵⁸

Thus for U.S. the Philippine was one of its many client states in the region, albeit an important one and it had always played a major role in Philippine independence. It was only, when Benigno Aquino was assassinated, domestic pressures grew and the threat of communist take over loomed large, that President Reagan changed his stance.⁵⁹

However, all the reforms like fiscal reforms, land reforms generated an initial hope but proved ineffective in the long run. In regards to land reform, it met with a strong opposition from landlords, only a small number of farmers benefitted, as the landless agricultural workers in the Philippines constituted a sizeable portion of the peasantry, and less and less of the policies were implemented. Thus in the later stage there was an increase in poverty,

58. ibid.

59. In 1933 the U.S. offered to recognize Philippines independence that the U.S. would be allowed to retain U.S. bases. Under the Independence act of 1934 known as the Tyding McDuffe act offered to recognize the Independence of Philippines without retaining U.S. bases and was accepted but after the World War II and Japanese had occupied Philippines and in 1944 shortly before U.S. took over it exacted an agreement to retain those bases and in course violated the Tyding-McDuffe act and U.S. has used 100,000 hectares of land and in turn prevented a growth of industrialization. Cited in Roland G. Simbulan's book The basis of our Security, Manila, October 1983, pp.1-2.

foreign debt, corruption and stagnation. A detailed discussion on these aspects would be attempted in Chapter III.

Another factor was the role of the Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church was and continued to be an integral part of the Philippine society. 95 per cent of the Filipinos being Christians, the Church was one of the premier institutions which tended to oppose martial law. Marcos had always been critical of the church as the church had always mobilized people against the regime. A detailed discussion on these aspects would be attempted in Chapter III.

All the reforms and programmes were not implemented and led to stagnation of the economy. This was bound to have adverse impact on the fortunes of the martial law regime and its leader, President Marcos.

CHAPTER 3

**PEOPLE'S RESPONSE – FROM
ILLUSION TO REALITY**

By the time martial law was lifted in January 1981, the Philippines was plagued with mismanagement, corruption mounting debts, concentration of power and sinking deep into crisis. Politically, economically and in terms of human rights, the effects of martial law were devastating. Politically martial law had resulted in the degradation of whatever vestiges of democratic institutions that had been still existing. The main characteristics of the martial law regime were non-participation of people in the political process, suppression of freedom, prevalence of corruption at all levels, military abuse of power, inefficiency, soaring crime rate etc. The economic situation had slid from bad to worse. The "New Society" of Marcos had shown itself to be not so new and was virtually stagnating, mismanagement of Marcos's administration provided enough spark for the people's anger as the situation worsened.

In this context it would be interesting to analyse the reasons and factors that roused the Filipino people's ire against Marcos's promised "New Society" which had become a myth after generating an initial hope. It was this people's growing disenchantment with the Marcos's regime that promoted a yearning for the restoration of democracy.

The Economy

The economic reforms envisaged by Marcos in his "New Society" framework took a nosedive in the long run. After 1975 the reform drive stagnated and even reversed.

Land reform which was a significant part of the reform package got bogged down as a result of corruption and red tape. Despite early land reform efforts and investments in the field of rural credit and rural infrastructure, reforms slowed down. The problem of rural ownership was deferred for the future. Gradually, the peasant began to illegally sell their land back to the landlords.¹

The older landed oligarchy that Marcos had destroyed was quickly replaced by a new oligarchy composed of gigantic business conglomerates. It came to be run by the President's cronies. Instead of promoting employment by focusing investment on labour intensive industries the Marcos regime focussed on nuclear power, steel aluminium, copper and capital intensive industries, known as 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.² With these developments all hope for reducing the growing number of those unemployed and for establishing an egalitarian society disappeared. The huge projects were utterly unsuited for the nation's skills. His policies permitted huge foreign borrowings and much of the foreign exchange earnings were sent off to personal bank accounts. Marcos had thus substituted a ruthless elite for a merely inefficient one.³

1. William H. Overholt, "Rise and Fall of Ferdinand Marcos", Asian Survey, vol.26, no.11, 1986, p.1143.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p.1144.

Also, the policies to promote greater efficiency and growth stagnated. Administrative reforms never proceeded beyond the top. The ministers were quite often first-class managers but in the administration there remained a morass of corruption and incompetence.

Using leftist slogans about avoiding dependency on exploitative multinational corporations, the regime created vast monopolies that squeezed the Philippine poor to the physical limits and destroyed Philippine's system of independent entrepreneurship.⁴

Personalistic politics required access to resources that could be used to reward clients for their loyalty and support. Prior to martial law, the economy was concentrated in the hands of a few rich families. After September 1972, however, President Marcos moved to dismantle oligarchic fiefdoms and to take control over their resources either through state monopolies or private corporations dominated by his associates. The major characteristics distinguishing the Marcos's policies from those in the pre-martial law phase had been the concentration of economic power in the government and small factions loyal to the President.⁵ The clientalist nature of the Philippine society had been most obvious in the President's granting of monopoly privileges to selected

4. Ibid., p.1144.

5. Clark D. Neher, "Political Clientalism and Instability in Philippines", Asian Affairs - An American Review vol.12, no.3, Fall 1985, p.12.

followers especially in the coconut and sugar industry. Edwards Cojuango, one of the President's friends was even given control over virtually every part of the coconut industry.⁶

Marcos not only decreed monopoly privileges to his close associates but assured them lucrative contracts and immunity from loss. For example Rudolfo Cuenca was provided contracts that made him a rich construction worker but when his company failed due to poor management, the government bailed out the corporation with a huge amount equivalent to 25 per cent of the country's money supply and 30 per cent of tax collections.⁷ This President's support for his crony is a classic example of the clientalist emphasis on the use of public funds for private gains, to the extent that an estimated \$ 6 billion to \$ 7 billion of the \$ 26 billion debt comes from crony hand-outs.⁸

Improvements in certain kinds of infrastructure, were offset by key lapses, for example in the fields of power industry, reduced planning and investment caused daily power failures. Despite impressive paper revision of the foreign investment laws, red tape and corruption continued to hamper

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6. For a detailed accounting of "Crony Capitalism" see Fred Poole and Max Vandi, Revolution in Philippines (New York, 1984), pp.112-18
 7. Charles W. Lindsey, "Economic Crisis in the Philippines", Asian Survey, vol.24, no.12, December 1984, p.1187.
 8. Ibid., p.1025.

foreign investment in the Philippines. Thus the country came to be regarded as the least favoured site for foreign investment among the Market oriented economies of Asia during Marcos's rule. Dozens of presidential decrees and restrictive practices that created monopolies and near monopolies in nearly every field, off-set incentives for foreign investments.⁹

According to the Report of the School of Economics at the University of Philippines, less and less of the martial law government's capital expenditures had gone into the conventional infrastructure (roads, bridges, schools etc.). Infrastructural expenditures had decreased from 50.2 per cent of capital outlays in 1970 to 36.3 per cent in 1981. Education which obtained one thirds of the budget in the 1960's received only 12 per cent in the 1970's and 1980's. Whereas in 1965 social services accounted for 44.2 per cent of the budget, in 1982 the share had fallen to 23.3 per cent.¹⁰ The President increased the budgets of the military, the Human Settlements Ministry in the charge of the first lady Mrs. Imelda Marcos, and state enterprises to assure the continued support of major elements of his clientele.

The decline in economy that set in during 1970 and 1982 could be gauged from the following table ¹¹ comparing the

9. Ibid.

10. An Analysis of the Philippine Economic Crisis: A Workshop Report, Unpublished Document, June 1984, p.40.

11. Asia Year Book, 1984, p.41.

country's average growth percentage with that of other ASEAN members.

Table I

Average Growth of GDP/GNP (Percentage) in ASEAN Countries

	1970-77 (G.D.P.)	1978-82 Growth of G.N.P.
Indonesia	7.7	6.8
Malaysia	7.8	7.5
Philippines	6.4	4.6
Singapore	8.6	8.9
Thailand	7.1	6.5*

* 1982

The above table clearly shows how gloomy the economic situation had grown during the period of martial law. The G.D.P. and G.N.P. average growth rates registered in the other states of ASEAN and the Philippines clearly shows that the Philippines had registered a dismal performance. From 1970 onwards its average growth rate had risen by 6.4 per cent while during 1978-82, the average rate of G.N.P. had declined to 4.6 per cent only.

Table 2

Foreign Reserves, Foreign Debt and Debt Service Ratios of
the ASEAN Countries as of 1983¹²

	Foreign Reserves (US \$ mn)	Foreign Debt (US \$ bn)	Debt Service Ratio
Indonesia	4154*	19.7*	15.4
Malaysia	4022	5.64	6.0
Philippines	430	25.4	28.0
Singapore	1176.6	.409	1.94
Thailand	2403*	6.01	8.6

* 1982

The data in this table clearly reveals where the Philippines stood vis-a-vis other members of the ASEAN. In 1983 its foreign exchanges reserves stood at US \$ 430 million, many times lower than any other partner, its foreign debt and debt service ratio were \$ 25.4 billion and 28 per cent respectively higher than those of any other country in the regional association. These economic indicators showed decline had set off enormous domestic and external pressures on the polity which President and his "new society" were finding extremely difficult to cope with.

Jose Romero Junior of Research and Management institute in Manila summed up the causes of decline in economy during the Marcos era as follows:

1. According to him, the problem was one of policy direction as well as management. A basic and recurring

12. Ibid.

problem of the past had been the laxity of the government in its saving mobilisation drive.

2. An unrealistic interest rate policy which placed ceilings on rates, served to encourage administrative rather than market determination of the use of funds, as well as guarantee a low level of domestic savings thus contributing to heavy reliance on foreign loans to finance investment.
3. The use of foreign funds could not stand the test of cost-effectiveness, both economic and social.
4. The private sector external borrowing which accounted for half the country's external debt were largely utilised under a misdirected investment programme.
5. The economy was crippled by "crony capitalism", a system that saw the government financing institutions pouring millions of dollars into a handful of companies controlled by President Marcos's friends rather than channeling funds to the most efficient users of capital leader saw it. "The government as Benigna Aquino, the slain opposition leader had put it is supporting all enterprises which are bleeding the country dry".¹³
6. A serious problem had been a bias in investment policy favouring capital intensive rather than labour intensive investment in a country which faced the

13. Time (New York), 5 September 1983, p.8.

highest growth of labour force in the Asia Pacific region.

7. Finally Marcos could not bring highly professional technocrats who had a thorough knowledge of the socio-economic fabric of the nation as a whole, which is necessary for charting out a sound economic strategy.¹⁴

The faulty policies of the Marcos government proved disastrous for the Philippine society. This became in course of time a factor in creating mass resentment and revolt against martial law regime.

As grievances piled up the people revolted against the system, and also against the manifestations of Marcos's financial manipulation, such as disastrous decline in industrial and agricultural production, falling wages and increasing unemployment, the flight of capital, high inflation, severe malnutrition, a rich poor gap greater than in any other nation in the area, (for instance in 1965 when Marcos assumed power, 66 per cent of the country's population was living below the poverty line; by 1983 the figure had increased to 71 per cent), and a negative economic growth rate. The rich were getting richer and the poor were getting poorer.¹⁵

14. Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER) 15 December 1983, p.15.

15. G.V.C. Naidu, "From Marcos to Mrs. Aquino", Strategic Analysis (New Delhi, IDSA), vol.11, no.11, 1987, p.1280.

The continuing downward spiral in the economy, growing unemployment, rising cost of living, accumulating debt, chronic defects in balance of trade and balance of payments, continuing flight of capital and declining foreign exchange reserves all contributed to erosion in the legitimacy of leadership and its policies.¹⁶ The country was under a \$ 26 billion debt load. The country went into defacto default not only on payments on the principia but also on interest payments under a '90 day moratorium' that was repeated four times.¹⁷ Besides reflecting on the vulnerability of the dependent development strategy 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 are concerned.¹⁸

The Politics

The persistently growing decline in the economy was bound to have an impact on the political development. Initially, Marcos had been able to create order between different factions in politics, thus creating conditions for better implementation of reforms so as to create strong

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16. B.D. Arora, "Development Process in the Philippines", Parimal Kumar Das, ed., The Troubled Region (New Delhi, 1987), p.260.
17. Robert B. Stauffer, The Marcos regime -failure of transnational developmentalism and hegemony building from above and outside (Honolulu: University of Hawaii August 1981), p. 23.
18. B.D. Arora, n.16, p.260.

institutions, increased economic competition, improved income distribution and focus the economy on serving international markets. This was to be followed by substantial political consolidation. He promised these programmes but in reality followed the Spanish - American programme in which dependency theory is used to justify import substitution policies abroad. Monopolistic economies at home protect the interest of the landed oligarchies. The elite keep the institutions weak and pliable thus resulting in stagnation, accumulation of debt rather than foreign and domestic investment, social inequity, bankruptcy, unrest and unemployment.¹⁹

The results of the faulty policies were soon obvious. Incidence of crime began to grow apace. On the other hand the strength of the communist guerrillas which was 167 in 1967 increased to 800 in 1972; a small guerrilla presence in four key regions of the country by 1975 had grown to five to ten thousand guerrillas by 1980.²⁰

On the other hand, the defunct democratic patronage system no longer served to reduce growing conflicts among ethnic and regional groups, so regional antagonisms surfaced with a vengeance.²¹

19. This new strategy and its consequences have been discussed in William Overholt, "Martial law, Revolution and Democracy in the Philippines", South-East Asia Quarterly, vol.2, no.2, Spring, 1973, p.65.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

Simultaneously, by the mid 1970s, an inexorable decline in military performance had become perceptible. Martial law had begun with shifting of able officers, in the military. From being a competent, culturally sensitive, small unit which had a intelligence oriented strategy in dealing with guerillas (a strategy which had been successful against communists and Muslims), the military started using heavy artillery against the tribal guerillas. This strategy was not only totally ineffectual but also produced a number of refugees. Just at the time when Marcos had weakened the senior leadership, the Muslims chewed up the central core of the armed forces and there were heavy casualties. Marcos also installed relatives in all sensitive commands and instituted a logistics system that controlled all supplies from Malacanang palace at the cost of crippling local commander's initiative and kept most effective units for political advantage. By the end of the decade the Philippine military was no longer an effective fighting force. A professional and successful military was replaced by 200,000 corrupt and incompetent force in which all senior generals were Ilocanos and all key promotions were based on political patronage.²²

The Marcos regime invested funds heavily in the Ilocos, provinces to which Marcos and his family belonged. He also invested in Manila and Luzon for strategic reasons as well as in Mindanao to combat Moro guerillas. But other

22. William Overholt, n.1, p.1149.

regions were starved of funds, hence undeveloped and also exploited.

While authoritarian governments in South Korea, Singapore etc. were moving to create strong military governments and business institutions, under the Marcos regime, these were getting weaker in Philippines. Then there was the problem of succession to the President as there was no Vice-President, hence no orderly succession. Marcos was bothered about secession than avoiding competition for the top job. An executive committee was set up to arrange for a successor. In the absence of the President, his wife (who was the Minister of Human Settlements), the first lady, chaired the cabinet. Imelda Marcos enjoyed this position not as a part of her government duty as a minister but as Marcos's wife. She also controlled public and private funds upto 50 per cent of the total governmental budget.²³

Lifting of Martial Law and the Impotence of Democracy

Marcos came under rising pressures which were both domestic and international. One of the important domestic pressures was from the upper middle class business groups which launched a protest against the regime while Marcos retained most of the apparatus of martial law. This led to some degree of liberalisation in certain fields, although Marcos retained most of the apparatus of the martial law. Rule by decree dwindled. Somewhat greater press freedom and

23. Ibid., p. 1148.

political organisation was permitted by the administration. In August, the right to strike was also granted.

A new constitution was then approved by a plebiscite. Its highly centralized government structure was quite appropriate but the context of deinstitutionalization deprived the document of all force and legitimacy.²⁴ following the constitutional plebiscite Marcos held a presidential election in the Philippines in June 1981. Many influential groups of the society including the Roman Catholic Church, and the business group etc. were convinced that these concessions were undertaken in order mainly to draw a facade of democracy to legitimize and perpetuate president Marcos in office. This election had been boycotted by the democratic forces including for the first time even the communists. But the opposition boycott and the success of Marcos in coercing 62 per cent of the Filipinos to vote, convinced most Filipinos that democratic opposition had grown to be impotent.

Abuse of Human Rights

Marcos's human rights record is ridden with most appalling statistics. Following the imposition of martial law, a large number of political descendents and others had been detained without trial. A report by the U.S. human rights lawyers in early December 1985 catalogued 600

24. Raul P.D. Guzman and Mita A. Reforma, Government and Politics of the Phillipine (Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1988), p. 5.

disappearances during January-December 1985. According to Fidel Ramos, the then deputy chief of armed forces, at least 4,500 people including 1,339 civilians died in engagements, with the communists during the same period. Also a dozen journalists were shot. This happened usually after their having written pieces critical of the Marcos's regime. Even Catholic priests met a virtually similar fate; seven priests, closely involved in activities relating to social change in Asia's only Roman Catholic country had disappeared or killed.²⁵ Assassination and disappearances became the order of the day. The late 1970s saw the establishment of a unit inside the Malacanang palace to direct assassinations. There also emerged a squad of soldiers nicknamed 'MONKEES' who had wide ranging license to kill during their operations in the southern Philippines.

The People's Response - Towards
Revolutionary Campaign Against Marcos

This was the situation that pushed the people of the Philippines first to desperation and then to a revolution. To a large extent the stability of the martial law regime since 1972 had been partly due to the varying degrees of support it had received from various elite groups and to the utter dejection of those fundamentally opposed to the martial law. But during the later years the regime supporters became disenchanted with the government while anti-regime groups, both moderate and radical, gained importance as a result of

25. Crisis in the Philippines (Royal United Service Institute, 'News Brief') (London), no.59, December 1985, p.40.

the government's inability to arrest the deteriorating political and economic situation.²⁶

Moves for Opposition Unity

Since the 1980s discussions for unity had become very much a part of opposition politics in the country. In April 1982 after long parleys among leaders of various opposition groups like Lorenzo Tanada of the Laban party, former President Diosdado Macapagal of the Liberal party, former speaker of the House of Representatives, Jose Laurel Junior of the Nationalista party and also some U.S. based oppositionists, a 'grand coalition' of twelve opposition groups called the United Nationalist Democratic Front (UNIDO) came into existence. It included some exiled Filipino politicians in the U.S. as well. Its first President was Assemblyman Salvoder "Doy" Laurel. The formation of UNIDO was promoted by a desire to offer a viable political alternative to Marcos and the K.B.L. (New Society Movement).

It was also aimed at establishing a machinery to prepare a programme for fighting elections. But it fell short of becoming a single effective opposition party. There was constant bickering and infighting in the opposition ranks which had been plagued with jealousies and factionalism and which had in consequence strengthened the hands of Marcos over the years. Nevertheless, it was an awakening of the peoples conscience which inspired leaders of various

26. Mizanur Rahman Khan, "The Philippines: An Anatomy of Marcos's "New Society"", Biiss Journal. vol.5, no.5, April 1984, p.216.

political parties in UNIDO to unite and rise in revolt in the early 1980's.

Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino

At this juncture, the people looked forward to the exiled leader of the opposition Liberal party, Benigno Aquino, for his stewardship in the campaign against Marcos's authoritarian regime. Aquino's role in the Philippine opposition was unique. Part of this was his personal charisma that combined his populist appeal and the purposeful tirade against "corruption", for "reform" and "social justice". By 1969, Benigno Aquino had risen rapidly from being regional politician to be the Secretary General of the opposition Liberal party. It was from this position that he began his quest for presidency, which he had hoped to gain when Marcos's second term would come to an end in 1973.²⁷ But he was arrested on the eve of martial law.'

The first chance for the opposition came in 1978 elections for an interim National Assembly. Benigno Aquino while still in detention had managed to give a semblance of unity to the opposition. On the eve of the elections the opposition raised the slogan (LABAN - peoples power) and organised a spectacular demonstration in peaceful protest by getting the citizens of Manila at an agreed hour to blow

27. Walder Bello, "Benigno Aquino: Between Dictatorship and Revolution in the Philippines", Third World Quarterly, vol.6, no.2, April 1984, p.284.

horns and dustbins.²⁸

But a quasi-independent Assembly was instituted. It was dominated by Marcos's supporters. Then in January 1980 came elections for governors and mayors. The K.B.L won 90 per cent of all seats. ° Aquino had developed some heart trouble. So Salvador Laurd and Gararado Roxax became the opposition heads and they designed a manifesto to unite all opposition within UNIDO. As the preparation began for the 1984 elections Beningno Aquino decided to come back after heart surgery in U.s. Marcos fully recognized the magnitude of the threat to his poosition. Despite his efforts to the contrary Aquino returned on August 21, 1983; unfortunately, however, as he alighted from the plane he was brutally assassinated on the Tarmac of the Manila International Airport.

After the assassination, latent opposition became far more vocal and reawakened the desire of the opposition to unite in their endeavour to dislodge Marcos. The governments base of support started sinking further. Interestingly the crowds at the funeral of Aquino were the largest in recent Philippine history exceeding those at the Popes and Maysaysay's funeral. Business leaders with the support of clergy, labour and farm groups organised anti-government slogans. Under pressure from mass indignation that arose

28. Alexander Turpin, "The Philippines - Problems of the Ageing New Society", Conflict Studies, vol.165, no.4, 1984, p.12.

from Aquino's murder, the regime found itself unable to mount offensive counter demonstrations. One such effort to organise a "prop-Marcos demonstration" backfired when most of them arrived with signs 'Marcos resign'.²⁹ Thus Aquino's assassination made him into a catalyst for mass mobilization against Marcos's regime.

The Role of the Church

The Catholic Church had since the period of Spanish colonialism been a powerful institution in the Philippines. As such, it had always been exerting the most significant influence on the socio-political life of the nation. The position of Cardinal Jaime Sin, the arch bishop of Manila and the biggest diocese in the Catholic world as a leader of 43 million Catholics (Over 80 per cent of the population) making him one of the most important figures in the country. In view of his religious position his political activism made him one of the most powerful citizens in the country.

In fact the Church and the government had long been on a sort of collision course since 1979, when Cardinal Sin advocated a policy of "critical collaboration" with the administration. Since then the policy leaned heavily on the critical side. Particularly irksome to the leadership of the state was Sin's remark in mid-1983 that Marcos had "lost the respect of the people" and thus should resign. It prompted a rebuff from the then political Affairs Minister, Leonardo

29. William H. Overholt, n.1, p.1157.

Perez that Cardinal "was suffering from hallucinations" and was seeking to become a 'Filipino Khomeni'.³⁰ Then onwards the Church-state conflict got intensified and resulted in a dialogue between bishops and the military. In 1983, the 110 member Catholic Bishops' conference of the Philippines (CBCP) circulated a nationwide pastoral letter that lambasted the administration for arrests of priests, nuns and lay workers and for allowing increasing corruption and militarisation. The Bishops also pulled out of the ten-year old Church military liaison committee designed to ensure church state dialogue.³¹

Since Aquino's murder, the stance of Cardinal Sin changed to a tough line. During high mass at Aquino's funeral, he called for a pact, a covenant whose charge was to "bring reconciliation, restoration of all these freedoms the people lost, the freedom whose denial had reduced the Filipino to an exile in his own country".³² while Marcos invited Sin to participate in the commission for investigation into the assassination, he refused, for he feared his voice to be a "voice in the wilderness".³³ Since then Arch Bishop of Manila repeatedly called for formation

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30. Quoted in Robert L. Youngblood, "The Philippines in 1982, Marcos gets tough with domestic critics", Asian Survey, vol.23, no.2, February 1983, p.212.
31. Asia Week, August 12, 1983, p.3.
32. Asia Week, September 9, 1983, p.8.
33. Time, September 5, 1983, p.12.

of a National Reconciliation Council, made up of representatives from the government, the Church, the opposition and the private sector. But this did not materialise. As an instant result - oriented programme on his part, President Marcos spoke bitterly of Catholic teachers, priests and nuns, "teaching the children hatred against Marcos, hatred against the government".³⁴

Sin retorted back: "This is not true, helping youngsters to know the real situation in the country is not hatred".³⁵ Whatever arguments and counter arguments, it was interesting to note that more than 2,000 high grade Catholic schools, not to mention thousands of Churches and Chapels, constituted a direct and formidable opinion moulding force in the Philippines. More importantly, despite the fact that the Church as non-institution was not a direct participant, its stance on national issues mattered a lot particularly where Catholicism runs deep into the heart of all the Filipinos.

The Communists

Economic hardships, military repression and the weakened and demoralised democratic forces in a ways strengthened the radical left. The communist-supported National Democratic Front (N.D.F.) acquired massive support from students, large segments of the middle class, human rights groups, teachers

34. Asia Week, October 7, 1983, p.10.

35. Ibid.

and deposed clergymen. The left wing parties and group provided a radical or illegal opposition to the Marcos regime in the belief that no amount of participation in elections and other political exercises would bring needed structural change. These parties while trying to provide an alternative, chose to go underground and engage in revolutionary armed struggle. The communist party of Philippines (C.P.P), its military arm New People's Army (N.P.A.) and to some extent secessionist groups in Mindanao led by Moro National Liberation Front (M.N.L.F) served as left wing opposition. After 1972 C.P.P. formed the National Democratic Front (N.D.F.) in an attempt to incorporate non-party groups including some elements of the Church into the mass movement. The N.D.F. preparatory commission prepared a 10 point programme to overthrow forces of imperialism in the Philippines.³⁶

The N.P.A. which had once been confined only to four limited areas, became influential in Cagayan, Samar, Southern Leyte, Bataan, Laguna, Western Pangasinan, Bicol, Panay, Southern Negros oriental and five provinces of Mindanao.³⁷ The new communists had leadership in depth and impressive professional qualifications.

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

37. William H. Overhold, n.1, p.1152.

Thus powerful trends transformed the opposition and subdued and suppressed people of the Philippines into a revolutionary lot thereby weakening the edifice of the Marcos's authoritarian set up in the Philippines. William H. Overholt summarised the erosion of the authoritarianism in the Philippines in the following points.³⁸

1. The Marcos government lost the support of the military forces. Although the (largely Ilocano) senior leadership remained loyal a clear majority of younger officers found the government distasteful and resented the disrespect into which the military had fallen. By 1985, some of the Reform Army Movement (R.A.M.) officers talked of the need to assassinate Marcos and the distinguished pre-martial law generals organised a group called Senior Cavalier's Reform Army Movement (SCRAM) to consult on how to save the country and the dignity of the military.
2. The communist guerilla movement began spreading with extraordinary speed. Although, the Philippine society, according to William H. Overholt, is powerfully inclined towards moderation and peace, this inclination was upset by anger at the regime, frustration over the impotence of the moderate opposition and fear of punishment.³⁹ thus the N.P.A. spread into every region and sector of the Philippines.

38. Ibid, pp.1158-1160.

39. Ibid., p.1159.

3. The government lost its unity. the President was ill and was not inclined to hear bad news. The Prime Minister was weak and protected his position by not conveying all the bad news to the President. The Prime Minister who was also the Finance Minister, did not work smoothly with the governor of the Central Bank. The army had less able officers and was run by cronies. The Secretary of National Defense and the Armed forces chief Fabien Ver became enemies. The elite was demoralized more than before and was seeking to ensure personal and financial refuge abroad.
4. Due to the above facts, high level disunity and fear prevailed. The government was immobilized and unable to act or manage, the two greatest national crises since World War II, i.e. the financial and security crises.
5. The democratic opposition proved its relentless capability to mount a series of demonstrations in the face of all the physical, financial and legal threats that the authoritarian regime of Marcos could muster. the regime had lost all legitimacy and authority with the Filipino social elite and hence the ability to act on even the greatest national emergencies, ceased.

Inspite of all these developments, however, the opposition to Marcos remained fatally factious, divided into more than a dozen self seeking groups. It soon became obvious that the only person, far above the political

differences to unite the opposition was the martyr's (Benigno Aquino's) Widow Corazon Aquino, though virtually uninitiated into politics, took to the steering of opposition movement not merely to provide the cementing force but also to emerge soon at the helm of the mounting political force capable of ousting the Marcos regime, by a bloodless people's revolution.

CHAPTER 4
TRANSITION FROM AUTHORITARIANISM
TO DEMOCRACY; ACCESSION OF
CORAZON AQUINO AND HER DIFFICULTIES

In 1985, the Marcos regime was confronted with the severest challenge to its rule. It emanated from the interlocking, social, political and economic problems that had been shaped over the years. While President Marcos attempted to institute reforms and a return to democracy with the lifting of martial law in 1981, and the subsequent holding of Presidential elections in June of that year, the opposition groups and sympathetic sections of the society, such as the Church and business groups were increasingly convinced that the concessions were undertaken mainly for a purpose of seeking legitimacy and hence perpetuation of President Marco's rule.

A major contributing factor that exacerbated people's disaffection with the Marcos government, however, was the assassination of his political opponent. Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino in August 1983.¹ Aquino's 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 a turning point in Philippine politics. It reawakened a renewed determination by the different opposition forces to dislodge Marcos from power and

1. Benigno Aquino had been an important leader of the opposition and a strong contender for Presidentship back in 1973 elections. Marcos proclaimed martial law in 1972 and arrested Aquino. Aquino continued to influence politics. He was still able to influence the 1978 election of governors. When Aquino was coming back in 1983 he was still a threat and therefore was assassinated, but the blame for killing him went to the communists.

establish a regime more in tune with the sentiments of the Filipino people.²

During the authoritarian regime opposition was under constant harassment from all directions and the press and the media had been fully controlled. Towards the end of Marcos's rule, however, the situation relaxed for the better. The press and other media started to openly criticize the administration and its policies. By this time Marcos's mass-support base had dwindled. Also due to the failure of the fiscal and agrarian reforms the conditions had worsened, with huge debts, unemployment, high poverty rates, higher prices, etc.

Marcos had during his one-man rule replaced oligarchic families with his crony capitalist which resulted in the distribution of wealth among his own loyal friends. Also, the sort of dependent economic policies of his led to socio-economic tensions. These manifested in massive street demonstrations by students and workers, many of them swelling the ranks of the Philippine Communist Party and New People's Army guerrillas. In a way, the dependent nature of the economy also reinforced the authoritarian orientation of the state which continued to respond with still more severe measures of repression against the dissenters, both on the left and the right. Growing unemployment, rising cost of living, accumulating foreign public debt, chronic deficits in balance of trade and balance of payments, continuing flight

2. Nitufar Chaudhary, "Peoples' power in the Philippines: Quest for Bangladesh Democracy", Bliss Journal (Dacca), Vol.8, no.2, April 1986, p.210.

capital etc. were complicating the situation still further. As a result, the oppressed Manilans came out on the streets. Demonstrations included workers, peasants and local business men as well. It also led to coalescing of the disparate moderate as well as radical groups and parties as the country was paying huge interests on accumulating of foreign debt. Guerilla activities were on the rise and external pressures, both fiscal and political were growing".³

Former Senator Jose W. Dioko, one of Marcos's strongest and staunchest critics who was arrested along with Bengno Aquino upon the declaration of martial law in September 1972 described the situation in the country in the turbulent years following the Aquino assassination:

"The economy is in shambles, the result of bad policies, badly implemented. His (Marcos) inept handling of the Aquino assassination and the arrogance with which it was perpetuated destroyed the little credibility he still had both at home and abroad. Local capital has fled the country. Foreign investments have stopped. Foreign creditors have refused to grant new loans or roll over old ones. Marcos has had to sue for a suspension of payments, to devalue the currency twice in 3 months - deprecating its value by more than 50 per cent in 1983 and to install a rigid system of internal control. As a result, the rate of inflation has

3. Bhagwan Dass Arora, "Development process in the Philippines", in Parimal Kumar Das, ed., The Troubled Region by Parimal Kumar Das (New Delhi, 1987), p.261.

leaped. Workers and employers in government industry have become restless, layoffs have increased, consumer are angry, frustrated and militant".⁴

It was tensions arising from this highly disturbed situation that precipitated the call for 'snap' Presidential election in November 1985. The social, political and economic upheavals that rocked the society following the Aquino assassination proved decisive in sharpening the crisis of legitimacy and confidence in Marcos's authoritarian dispensation. Moreover, in August 1985, the opposition filed impeachment proceedings in the Marcos dominated parliament, the Batasang Pambansa. The opposition petition accused President Marcos of wanton violation of the 1973 constitution. This was with reference to the appointment of his powerful brother-in-law as ambassador to the U.S., while still holding the post of the governor of Leyte, the home town of Imelda Marcos. The numerical superiority of Marcos's ruling party, Kulusang Bagong Lipunan ('new society' movement) in the parliament, however, succeeded in defeating the impeachment petition.

Pressures which were both domestic (in the form of severe socio-economic crisis) and international (from the US) compelled Marcos to hold elections, first to the National assembly and then later to the Presidency. The U.S. was also showing signs of lessening support (due to domestic unrest and threat of communist uprising after Aquino's

4. Jose Diokno, "The Present crisis" in May and Nemenzo, ed., The Philippines after Marcos (London, 1985), p.1.

assassination) as the military had begun to think that Marcos was willing to see a communist Philippine rather than relinquish personal power and the attendant advantages. Therefore Washington decided on diplomatic distancing. Thus, like "Marcos's other bases of support Washington was still there though nervously and reluctantly".⁵

Interestingly, Washington's approach succeeded. In November 1985, during an interview to AB TV's David Brinkley on American nationwide television, Marcos announced his intention of holding a snap presidential election in 1986 to settle what he casually referred to as the "childish claims of popularity on both sides".⁶ Marcos thought that upon winning the elections he would become president for the third term. It is interesting to note that when the elections were round the corner there was a sudden volley of scandals implicating President Marcus's coming into power. The World War II record was being dug up to show instances of corruption and accumulation of wealth outside the country. The New York Times brought out a series of reports which disclosed that US army investigations concluded long ago that Marcos claim to have led a major guerilla resistance against

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5. William H. Onerholt, "The rise and fall of Ferdinand Marcos", Asian Survey, vol.26, no.11, November 1986, p.1161.
 6. Behinda Oriveres Cunaman, "The Opposition Snaps to attention", Mr. and Mrs. Magazine (Manila), November 8-14m 1985, pp.12-15.

Japanese was both 'fraudulent' and 'absurd'.⁷ A U.S. House 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 U.S.⁸ Senate Foreign Relations committee chairman G. Dugar led an official U.S. delegation to observe the February 1986 presidential elections. The U.S. also made it very clear that containment of insurgency and security of U.S. military bases were the main concern. The U.S. was doubtful of Marcos's ability to contain communists. As one U.S. official said "If Mrs. Aquino wins things may get worse but they may improve. If Marcos stays we know it cannot get better".⁹

In the prevailing situation and unsure of its own prospects against Marcos the opposition parties were reluctant to participate in the elections. This in a way stalled the preparations for holding the snap poll for some time. U.S. anticipated that Marcos would rig the election results, because of the circumstances, as his term was not due to expire until June 30, 1987 and the fact that he wanted to pre-pone the elections for one year made his motives a suspect.¹⁰

7. Newsweek, February 3, 1986, p.8.

8. ibid.

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

10. Raul P. Guzman and Mila D Reforma, Government and Politics of the Philippines (Singapore, 1988), p.66.

CORY AQUINO:The Popular Mandate:

With some degree of reluctance, yet motivated by the challenge and prospect of unseating Marcos, the then splintered opposition groups decided to coalesce and put up Corazon Aquino, the assassinated leader's (Benigno Aquino's) widow, as their common candidate, with another noted opposition leader, Salvador S. Laurel, as the Vice Presidential candidate.

The church came out openly in support of Corozon Aquino who emerged as the consensus leader and candidate with mass popularity and eager to resist electoral cheating and intimidation. Cardinal Sin, through his appeals to the people, gave a veiled endorsement of Aquino's candidature.¹¹ In Cory Aquino, the people found a clear unchallenged focal point of popular support. In such a situation even those who wanted to reform the military, the backbone of martial law, were left with no choice but to recognize her leadership. The people found in her the presence of a creditable and extremely popular alternative civilian leader.

In a country where more than 95 per cent people were Catholics, the voice of cardinal sin was bound to have a profound impact. It thus contributed substantially to promote anti-Marcos sentiments among the masses.

11. International Herald Tribune (Paris), January 30, 1986.

In order to continue civil protest against the Marcos regime, Cory Aquino adopted a strategy of mobilizing the people first by "prayer rallies" and later by strikes, initially started at one or two places and then expanding, attempting by degrees to bring the corrupt government and the economy to a halt.¹² Although she did not have the levers of power to carry out her strategy, yet she had the loyalties of the 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 two decades of Marco's authoritarian rule.¹³

An election for the presidency and the Vice-presidency took place on February 11, 1986. The elections made two things clear - one, the brazenly arrogant and immoral way with which Marcos was prepared to use his dictatorial powers to get himself re-elected; and two, the tremendous spontaneous and unprecedented support given to Cory Aquino by the people who showed their massive presence in all rallies called by the new leader.

During the elections there were reports that the electoral process was marred by cheating intimidation, vote buying and other election irregularities. Later, having control of the commission on election (COMELEC). Marcos and

12. Nilofar Choudhary, n.2, p.212.

13. Ibid.

his cronies tried to manipulate the results. The results showed Marcos winning the election inspite of claims of fraudulent elections. On the night of February 22, 1986 ten days after the snap poll, two prominent figures of the Marcos government - Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile and Vice Chief of staff of the armed forces. Lt. General Fidel Ramos barricaded themselves at the military camp Aquinaldo and later at Camp Game and and denounced the Marcos regime for having manipulated the results of the elections thereby cheating Aquino of electoral victory. Along with their military supporters, the top military officials called on the people to support their refusal to allow Marcos to subvert the will of the people by rigging the results of the elections.¹⁴

The revolt of the top military generals was as surprising as it was welcome to the people. Cardinal Jaime Sin also gave a call to the people to extend their support to the military leaders. In time the people responded and gathered at the E.D.S.A. (Epifanio delos Santos Avenue). The event marked the launching of the historic "people power" revolution.¹⁵

All the efforts by Marcos to control the situation by every means were of no avail. Marcos called upon the two officials to surrender and threatened to use military force. The threat seemed futile. The succeeding days saw military

14. Raul P. Guzman, et al., n.9, p.66.

15. Ibid., p.67.

officials disobeying Marcos and his loyal chief of staff Fanbianver. The presence of over a million civilians at E.D.S.A. protected Fidel Ramos and Juan Ponce Enrile from the fear of attack.

It was the people who prevented the tanks, armoured vehicles and other similar military vehicles from approaching the camps. "The people saw the Enrile-Ramos Reformot's mutiny as an integral part of Cory Aquino's civil disobedience campaign. If there was any apprehensions that the whole affair was just an internal struggle within the army which had no clear linkage to Cory Aquino's crusade, there were soon dispelled by the appeal of cardinal Jaime Sin to support the reformist's rebellion".¹⁶

For more than a decade, the people had viewed the entire military apparatus as a collection of mind less gangsters in uniform, without ideals or their own mind. As it turned out, the people were awed by the reformist soldier's extraordinary display of courage and determination and they reciprocated by marshalling the same zeal, idealism and bravado that they showed in the February elections. This came to be known as "Beanstaying Bayan (vigilants of the people) syndrome" or "people's power" as coined by Fidel Ramos. In the final analysis, this was what won the election; this was what lent the entire uprising its enviable

16. Randolph S. David, "Revolution without tears" (from a paper presented at the Third World Press meeting organized by the Third World network), April 3, 1986, New Delhi, p.11.

participatory character.¹⁷ It was everybody's revolution, not exclusive to a group. It was a good, non-violent struggle against evil, against suppression and subjugation, for freedom and dignity. People did not use arms. It represented from people's effort to release themselves from the clutches of authoritarianism and shift to democracy.

There are several interpretations of the meaning of the February 1986, People's Revolution on the People's Power Revolution led by Cory Aquino by certain persons knowledgeable about the situation in the country.

1. One such opinion considers this phenomenon as the Filipino people's desire to protect their democratic electoral system from the continuing manipulation of the Marcos's dictatorship and restore it as a legitimate system for selecting the officials of the land.¹⁸
2. The events that shook Philippines in February represented a unique demonstration of the repressed emotions of the Filipino masses under the long years of Marcos dictatorship.

17. Ibid.

18. The assassination of Benigno Aquino in September 1983 brought deterioration of the Marcos regime. Since that time, the rate of inflation grew to a high of 40 per cent with almost one-half of the labour force unemployed or underemployed and Marcos government borrowings from abroad reached \$28 billion.

3. It epitomised the importance and the emergence of the "power of the people", "People's power" upholds the primacy of people, who had at last discovered a capacity to reshape their life. The 1986 revolution or uprising marks the re-discovery of such a democracy.¹⁹
4. It was the most irregular, the bloodiest election ever held in the Philippine, to date. The irregularities were so blatantly exercised by the Marcos regime that the winner had been decided even before the election were held.²⁰
5. The 1986 revolution emphasised the consenses among a section of the civilian military leadership in the Philippines that Marcos must go of the country was to survive as a political system particularly against the increasing pressure of the democratic left the Communist Party of the Philippines and its military wing, the New People's army (N.P.A.).²¹
6. The revolution was largely unorganized. The people came and they did not need to get their orders from any central committee, "we had a people that was totally

19. Leslie Edwin J. Ruiz, "Philippine politics as a people's quest for Authentic political subjecthood", Alternatives, Vol.11, No.4, Oct. 1986, p.60.

20. A. Ezapitan, "The Re-democratization of the Philippines", Asian Profile, Vol.17, NO.3, June 1989, p.23.

21. Ibid.

'Psyched' for a conclusive civil disobedience. Since they were mostly unorganized, no major initiative would come from the people. Somebody creditable had to make a call to summon its awesome presence. That somebody had to be either the Church or Aquino or both.²²

7. The people's power was morally righteous and thus moral superiority motivated the people to confront the immoral state with courage and a sense of self-sacrifice seen in all types of crusaders.²³
8. The February 1986 revolution is identified as a phenomenon which provided the opportunity for the common people to express their concerns regarding the further deterioration of their social and economic life under the Marcos regime. The authoritarian system became unacceptable when it was coupled with high levels of unemployment and a high rate of inflation.
9. According to Professor A. Elapitan, University of Dayton, Ohio, U.S.A., "The military support of Enrile and Ramos group did not even clearly state a position on the re-establishment of Philippine democracy. Its primary plan was the overthrow of President Marcos and his cronies. Its support of the installation of Cory Aquino to the Presidency seems to be a short term

22. Randof S. David, n.15, p.15.

23. ibid.

objective. Enrile's actions taken during the early period of Aquino's administration, particularly, his inability to accept President Aquino's leadership and programmatic priorities, indicate beyond a reasonable doubt his objectives to lead Philippines after the civilian military coup".²⁴

This clearly shows that people revolution contained in itself a new wave and new form of struggle which has been new in recent history and the fact that it was a bloodless revolution and the first one of its kind.

On February 26, 1986, Marcos and his family and their official entourage were whisked off from Malachanang palace en-route to Clark air base in Angeles from where they were later taken to Guam, then Hawaii, their final destination. With the departure of Marcos, Corazon Aquino was proclaimed the new President; With it began a new era in the Philippine history, 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. For all except Marcos and his cronies the dawn of the new era

24. A. Elapitan, n.19, p.238. He also writes that Juan P. Enrile has been identified directly or indirectly with all the successful military coup attempts in 1986-87 against the Aquino government.

was quite refreshing after Marcos's authoritarian rule.

Although Aquino came to power through extra-parliamentary means on the back of military and through a populist movement, the ratification of the new constitution in February 1986 plebiscite provided the Aquino government with a democratic seal. The new constitution provided for the establishment of a full constitutional democracy. "The proposed charter provides for the development of a multi-party system by recognizing sectoral representation in lower house of the bi-cameral Congress. The constitution provided for a bicameral legislature and Presidential form of government. The House of Representatives shall not only be composed of members elected from legislative districts and sectoral parties or organisations during the first three consecutive terms. One half of the seats allocated to these party list representatives are to be drawn, by election or selection, from the present sector, labour, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, as well as from women, youth and other sectors, except the religious sectors.²⁵ After three consecutive terms, it is expected that these sectoral organizations shall have evolved into programme oriented political parties that will be able to compete either in the legislative district or party list system of elected members of the lower house of Congress. Whether or not the proposed charter explicitly provides for it. However, a multi-party system became a de-facto reality.

25. Proposed Philippine Constitution, 1986, Article VI, Section 5.

This in turn led to the (1) effective dismantling of the traditional political parties by the Marcos dictatorship (2) The significant gains made by the left which encouraged the formation of ideologically distinct political groupings and the general erosion of elite oriented politics with the growing grassroots politicalization sparked by mass movement.²⁶

This constitution provided Aquino, a six year term (as set time for each Presidential term) in office. This bestowed on her, the tasks of leading the country in its journey towards democracy.

Before embarking on the reforms carried out and the hurdles faced by the Aquino government, it would be useful to outline the basic features of the Aquino government after the February Revolution.

1. The most striking feature of her government that determined its ruling class character was its dependence on massive popular mobilization or 'people's power'. Elite interest groups surrounded Aquino and tried to influence her towards their interest but she was connected with the direct charismatic relationship with the masses.²⁷ She came

26. Alex Magno, "Political Parties from Fray", We Forum, vol.4, no.3, September 1986, p.7.

27. Walden Bello, "Aquino's elite populism: Initial reflections", Third World Quarterly, vol.8, no.3, July 1980, p.1028.

into power only because the people supported her. It was again the "people's power" upon which she had to rely on to maintain a balance between the disparate political forces and to build a new Philippines free from dispotism, emerging after two decades of harsh repression. Her government exhibited a spirt of revolutionary puritanism, i.e. one who is precise and pure in morals.²⁸

2. Another critical feature of the Aquino administration was a high degree of ambivalence towards the U.S. at least till the beginning of 1992.²⁹

28. Ibid.

29. U.S. support has proved to be of a help to Cory Aquino during the coup attempts, as the Philippine government and have not been able to curb them.

3. Her government was in reality an unstable coalition of sharply competing factions. Her coalition also included the army.

Challenges to the Aquino Government

Aquino was an honest and unpretentious person leading a simple life, was not a politician as has been said; but her purity or moral values alone could not bring the country out of the morass of backwardness to progress.

She had made promises about translating an eight point programme into action. These related to land reforms establishment of budget priorities, education, housing,

health and healthcare and to rid the society of the inequalities. All these had been downgraded during Marcos's dictatorial regime.³⁰

Besides, the Philippines continued to face the problems of under-development. The environment in both the domestic socio-political scene and in the field of international relations seemed to be highly depressing. Internally, politics continued to be based on traditional feudalistic milieu and externally the basis of relations with the outside world remained one of colonial type exports. There were no easy solutions to the problems arising out of this situation.

Industry needed alternative development strategy for an active role for foreign investment. Genuine agrarian reforms would be necessary to reduce the alternative of low risk, high return investment in land and to increase production in order to fulfil the needs of the people in the Philippines. These were the basic problems of the economy. Thus to upgrade the society and country there was a dire need for improvement in these fields.

The problems and challenges that she faced were daunting. These could be divided into four categories:

1. Faltering Economy

The Philippines had since independence remained an economic colony of the U.S. The economy functioned mainly on

30. Daniel B. Schirmer and Stephan Ross Kamm Shalom, ed., The Philippines Reader: History of Colonialism, Neo-colonialism, Dictatorship and Resistance (Boston, 1975), pp.339-43.

a subsistence basis with a few cash crops as export. Industry remained backward. U.S. dominated the external trade getting 80 per cent of the Philippine exports and supplying most of its manufactured imports.³¹ Investment was inadequate and domestic industry, weak. During the Marcos's regime governmental intervention in basic sectors, such as food grains, coconut, sugar, etc. and was proving arbitrary and inefficient and downright corrupt. Highly adverse international environment also aggravated the problem. Trade with the outside world remained adverse.³²

Negative growth rates were haunting the economy. The cost economic mismanagement was mainly characterised by use of stabilizing measures alone. The economy shrank by 6.8 and 3.8 per cent in 1984-1985, respectively after growing just 1.1 per cent in 1983. The share of debt service in the national budget had increased to 23 per cent 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 to 36 per cent in 1984 to 21 per cent in 1985.³³

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31. Gary Humes, "U.S. support for Marcos administration and pressure that made for change", Contemporary Southeast Asia, vol.8, no.1, June 1980, p.27.
 32. Jose W. Diokno, "Present Crisis" in R.J. May and Nemanzo, ed., The Philippines after Marcos (London, 1985), p.6.
 33. National Economic Development Authority (N.E.D.A.) Five Year Development Plan 1978-82 (Manila, September 1977).

Industry had been hit by the contraction of the domestic market, the dampened performance of manufactured efforts and the foreign exchange shortage which led to substantial cuts in raw material imports. Unemployment swelled to 12.5 per cent. Despite respite in agricultural output of 4 per cent increase, still neglect in this area largely contributed to spatial growth imbalances. Population growth was a rapid 2.5 per cent per year. Continuing inflation, dependent economy, and devaluation of currency occurred.³⁴

Thus her government could not ignore the basic problems of the Philippine society. The inequality of the social system and the malfunctioning of its economy, which together had bred poverty injustice and a massive discontent among the depressed.³⁵

2. Communist Insurgency

It was one of the major problems because the communists had been able to mobilise people even way back in 1940 and early 1950s in the form of the Hukbalahap movement. In 1968 came a powerful infusion of ideological confrontation. This was manifested in the wide-spread activities of the PKP-ML and its armed wing, the New People's Army. Infact Marcos faulty policies were responsible for the growing strength and mass appeal of the communist party. This had in a sense, led the U.S. to put pressures on Marcos' regime to seek popular legitimacy.

34. Ibid.

35. Nilofar Chowdary, n.2, p.218.

Aquino from the very beginning initiated a policy of "reconciliation" with the left aimed at integrating it into the "democratic mainstream".³⁶ However for their own reasons the communists did not respond positively to her gestures.

36. Governmental Coalition

Corazon Aquino had come to power with the people's support and the support of various political parties who were supporting her in the overthrow of Marcos. Initially her candidacy was backed by several political parties led by P.D.P. LABAN but later joined the UNIDO headed by Salvador Laurel due to its enlarged national base, logistical capabilities and as its acceleration as a dominant opposition party by the COMELEC.

The United Democratic Organisation (UNIDO) was formed of N.P. Laurel Wing, L.P. LABAN, Mindano Alliance, Bicol Saro, Cause-oriented groups like the Peoples movement for independence, Nationalism and Democracy (MIND) and the National Union for Liberation (NUL).³⁷

As a result no single party loomed large in the political arena. Then there was the UNIDO-PDP LABAN power

36. Ibid.

37. 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 Conference on comparative study of Electoral Systems in Asia and the Pacific, Oregon city, 2-3 February, 1986, pp.69-70.

struggle and split. There have been serious defections. Thus intense power struggle caused conflicts among the coalitions partners and this caused a high degree of destabilization in the political strength of the Aquino administration.

This infighting within the Aquino's administration brought a golden opportunity to the opposition Grand Alliance for Democracy (G.A.D) led by Juan Ponce Enrile, former Defense Secretary. The deepening chasm and power play among Aquino associates had ultimately lead to a dangerous stalemate.³⁸

Divided Military

Still an other challenge that Aquino faced arose from the rifts within the 250,000 strong armed forces of the Philippines. In fact there were four distinct factions among them, Pro Aquino forces (Yellow Army) and Fidel Ramos's supported Marcos loyalists and the activist reformist officers of the Armed forces (R.A.M.).³⁹

The issue of factionalism and divisiveness within the army proved to be a serious problem of the administration. General Fidel Ramos said "we cannot afford to have an armed forces within the armed forces. Otherwise we will have anarchy".⁴⁰ The result of these interfactional quarrels was

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

39. William H. Overholt, n.5, p.161.

40. Ibid.

quite obvious. There were frequent coup talks and attempts which became rampant in Philippines.

Land Reforms:

This has been a perennial problem in the Philippines. It has always been considered as being a scale for the success and failure of the government as President Marcos had put it. Marcos had promised to lessen the gap between the peasants and the elites and had envisaged reforms like family size plots to tenants, farming rice and corn, to grow food crops rather than cash crops and to reduce import etc. Nevertheless, every policy was late in implementation. The elites held all the riches, the wide gap between the haves and the have nots increased and too much agricultural deficit presented a grim picture. Marcos left surmountable problems for Aquino.

U.S. Military bases:

US bases have been an integral part of Philippines society. Their presence had always influenced the government's policies in one way or the other. Recently following Benigno Aquino's assassination in 1983, the U.S. attitude had changed towards Marcos. The Aquino government has, however, not been able to remove the bases due to impending danger of coups. Hence, the U.S. military bases presented a serious problem for the Aquino government. The fact was that she had become President on popular support and the people were against these bases.

Goals and Reforms:

The legacy of colonial exploitation and corruption and maladministration of the Marcos regime left unsurmountable problems for the Aquino government when she came to power. Not only were the problems massive but were also deepseated in the Philippines. Aquino thus had to formulate long term goal policies to bring back the country from stagnation. They were the following goals:

- 1) Consolidation of power;
- 2) Institutionalisation of the democratic process and constitutional politics;
- 3) revitalization of the plundered economy;
- 4) bridging ranks with the left;
- 5) Reorganizing the military;
- 6) Socio-economic development and the raising of standard of living of the Philippine people and assuring social justice;
- 7) To aim for ethnic unity in the Philippines.
- 8) Promoting administrative integrity and efficiency;
- 9) and lastly, decentralization as a means of attaining the government's development goals and objectives.⁴¹

Under her government, still another goal was to ratify the institution. A constitutional commission established by the President was called by and met in the plenary session

41. Adgardo J. Angara, "Aquino Revolutionary government", Bulletin Today, Vol.8, no.2, 1986, pp.5-6.

from June to October 1986 and proposed a draft constitution. It was subsequently ratified by an overwhelming majority of votes (76.3 per cent) in a plebiscite held for the purpose on February 2, 1987. President Aquino then proclaimed the constitution ratified. Thus was established the new democratic system in the Philippines.⁴²

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 freedoms enshrined in the 1935 constitution; to emphasis on these provisions would prevent concentration of power for any further authoritarian rule, and thus help in establishing a representative government.⁴³

Democracy was undoubtedly a goal and was thus restored. The problem, however was that it could not be consolidated unless there was economic development that was both self-reliant and equitable. Thus, the Aquino government embarked on arresting the decline of the staggering economy by introducing fiscal measures. The Aquino administration quickly removed the remaining vestiges of the monopolies that had been set up by Marcos and his cronies to control the sugar and coconut industries. This was part of the large Aquino programme package to get the government out of the economic mess. Responding to domestic political pressures and following the advice of the World Bank and the I.M.F.,

the Aquino government adjusted its fiscal and monetary policies so as to pursue its alleged "comparative advantage in tropical agriculture and labour costs".⁴⁴ Tariffs, currency rates, budget allocations for subsidies and labour laws were all part of the Aquino goals to reduce what were apparently inefficient government interference with the free operations of the market.⁴⁵

The Aquino government also took peace initiatives to check, control, if not eliminate the internal conflicts in the Philippines and stop the abuse of human rights. Not only were the political prisoners released and a committee for human rights setup, but also peace talks were resumed with the communist party of the Philippines and the N.P.A. for a ceasefire agreement.⁴⁶ 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 1987 ceasefire the Philippines declared an all-out anti-communist drive while the N.P.A./P.K.P.M. the new people's army of the

42. Ibid.

43. A.F. Lapitan, n.19, p.239.

44. Gary Hauris, "Aquino's administration View from the countryside", Pacific Affairs, vol.62, no.1, Spring 1989, p.10.

45. ibid., pp.89-90.

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

communist party of the Philippines escalated their offensive and also extended their operations into the urban centres.

"The Press also recovered its former verve that had made them in pre-martial law times one of the liveliest (not necessarily, the most representative) in Asia".⁴⁷ Unlike Marcos, Aquino was not afraid of criticism of the independent minded reporters nor did she instil fear in them as was under Marcos's government.⁴⁸ The 1987 Constitution's 'Bill of rights' adopted from the US Charter stated that "no law shall be passed abridging the freedom of press, of expression nor of the press... but false news... may endanger the public order."⁴⁹

Thus Aquino had very many problems and tasks to perform and to implement policies in order to create a political and social equilibrium in the country.

47. Gerald Sussman, "Politics and the Press", Philippines since Marcos", Bulletin of concerned Asian Scholars, Vol.22, no.1, 1990, p.502.

48. Ibid., p.50.

49. Ibid.

CONCLUSION

The fall of Ferdinand Marcos from power and the rise of Corazon Aquino to the presidency represents a shift from authoritarianism to democracy. In this sense it could be treated as a significant change in the recent Philippine history. Its significance lay in demonstrating the fact that democracy, whatever its imperfections, had deeper roots in the hearts and minds of the 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. Without the help of some among the military top brass, restoration of democracy would have been extremely difficult, if not an impossible proposition and that the systemic change in favour of democracy was based on "people's power" and non-violent struggle of the masses.

Marcos had proclaimed martial law in the Philippines on September 22, 1972, in order, as he claimed, to protect the country from internal and external threats and to achieve meaningful reforms.

He had perceived the threats coming mainly from - landed families' control over economic and hence political levers of power including control over press and other information media, chronic problems relating to land reforms and land tenure, growing strength and expanding activities of the PKP-ML/N.P.A. and of the Moro insurgency in the Southern Philippines. As a long term goal he had suggested the

establishment of a "New Society". Lack of any meaningful achievement in all these fields reflected on the bankruptcy of the martial law regime he had imposed. His only achievement had been in perpetuating himself in the position of power. Not only had he miserably failed to realize martial law and the "New Society" goals, but also, in the process, he had demoralized and twisted all democratic institutions to serve his own ends.

Between 1946 and 1968, the legitimacy, stability and responsiveness of the Philippine political system appeared to have passed a series of tests. Except the Hukbalahap rebellion, there was little challenge to the authority of the national government. After 1968, however, the situation had changed. The authority of the government got weakened. The challenges came from various directions. There was an all round increase in population, graft and corruption, underdevelopment, economic mismanagement, incidence of crime, unemployment resulting in strikes and lockouts and on top of it all, non-implementation of the land reforms. Highly personalized politics/distribution of spoils among those loyal to the leader rather than on principles, laxity in discipline and the phenomena of defection contributed to the decline in the nature of the polity.

Failure of democratic institutions in various fields created a condition conducive to the emergence of a person with dictatorial ambitions. It enabled Marcos to assume, all state powers. In spite of the fact that the 1935 Constitution

barred President Marcos from becoming President for the third term. President Marcos assumed all powers, imposed martial law under some provisions in the same Constitution, and continued to use all means to legalize his authoritarian regime. The constitution, according to him, gave him the right to proclaim martial law in order to bring stability in the chaotic situation in the country. Through his decrees, he was misusing the Constitution in the name Constitution, distorting it to serve his own ends, and at the same time projecting himself as the saviour of the people and the republic.

Simultaneously he launched the process of systematically destroying the very vestiges of democracy in the country. On imposition of martial law, Morcos as President, became the *de jure* and *de facto* leader of the government, state and the society. He made changes in the legislative, executive and judicial fields to suit his own needs. On assuming power, he dismantled the superstructure of constitutional government, 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". In time 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 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 legitimize his martial law, Marcos had brought in a programme of reforms and reconstruction of the political institutions. As far as the electoral process was concerned, the citizens councils from the Barangay (Village) level upwards, became an administrative arm of the government. While explaining his "New Society" goods, Marcos launched a tirade against democratic institutions and their functions. For him, parties and elections became just hurdles in the path of nation building. In his view, multi party elections, the barometer of people's will, became costly, divisive 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, under various kinds of pressures, particularly from outside the country, he held multiparty elections only in 1978. The Kilusang Bangong Lipunan (K.B.L.) became the major and the only dominating political party. Mechanisms which the martial law regime attempted to develop, such as citizen councils (which numbered 36,000) turned out to be nearly methods of mass mobilization and hence legitimations of authoritarianism.

The legal basis of the legislature created during martial law and after were either presidential decrees ratified by the people in referendum or constitutional amendment proposed by the President. The Batasang Bayan (a legislative body) and the Prime Minister in practice were

accountable only to the president. The dominance of a single party tended to weaken the legislature vis-a-vis the Prime Minister and his cabinet. Checks and balances between the President and 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 vet in him all powers of the Prime Minister and the President unlike the 1935 constitution. Further, he tampered with the constitution in 1976 and 1981 to further consolidate his executive position and after the 1981 amendments he institutionalized a powerful President..

During the authoritarian rule, President Marcos was at the hand of the authoritarian structure. Below him were them military, the cabinet members including technocrats and the bureaucracy and all those who owed their positions to him and hence their loyalty towards him. They worked during his pleasure. It encouraged a high degree of sycophancy. Thus loyalty became more important than public morality leading to corruption and laxity indiscipline. Thus, there occurred a loss of faith in the leadership and then in the system. As a result, it was the radical left forces that got strengthened.

The Supreme Court lost its respect because of the inability of the judiciary to solve the perennial problems of

delays, cumbersome and expensive procedures, incompetence and corruption. The judiciary had lost part of its autonomy to the president and the president had the power of removal and appointment of judges and officials. Decisions by the military tribunals became final on the president's approval. Active participation of judiciary in this process turned to restraining its independence of action. Also hesitation on its part to compete for political power with the other branches did not help in maintaining the image of an independent body. Thus, there occurred an erosion of the "rule of law" in the Philippines with Marcos at the top and his family and the cronies getting all immunity from the laws. They became above the law.

In the field of bureaucracy, Marcos had launched a sort of reorganization of the government in strengthening the regional and subregional structures for better coordination and integration and also decentralization of power at various levels of administration. However, he miserably failed to check graft, corruption, red-tapism and incompetence. It rather resulted into still further concentration of power and control over administrative matters by Marcos and his cronies. It led to the regional and local councils becoming a tool for the transfer of power and authority to agencies which were mere extensions of the central governmental agencies.

The degradation and the fragmentation of the socio-economic and political fabric of the Philippine society

during the Marcos period, gave impetus to resentment and essentially to a mass uprising leading to the emergence of a movement for democracy. But the failure of the system and later the demand for democracy and change could be traced 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 Barangays, the small, isolated units with no central authority, little communication and no unity. Absence of any centralized power and authority kept the country weak. This enabled the colonial powers, especially, the Spaniards, to occupy the islands virtually without a fight. The Spanish colonialism brought in Christianity, centralised administration and public administration. However, as regards democracy is concerned, it is the Americans who in the brief period of less than fifty years introduced various institutions of democracy in the Philippines, since they had occupied it around the turn of this century.

It was during the American colonialism that, through the help of a public school system and English language, the ground was laid for training in the art of self-government and in the art of functioning democratic institutions. The overall US colonial policies, essentially led to the introduction of concepts of individual political freedom, public participation, Filipinization of public services,

self-government, centralized government, political parties, elections, so on and so forth. On the other hand, the Filipino society became dependent on the US in the field of economic development and national security. Even democracy assumed the colour of oligarchical rule. So much so that, on independence in July 1946 it 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.

A major factor which contributed to the growth of authoritarianism in Philippines was the nature of the party system since independence. All the major political parties were personality based and with no fixed ideology, 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 the Liberal party to the Nationalista party, just as Ramon Magsaysay had done in 1953. Thus, fragmented polity brought in disequilibrium while non-implementation of promised reforms proved conducive to authoritarianism in the Philippines.

The mass resentment and uprising against the Marcos's authoritarian regime culminated in 1986 in the form of the "people's power revolution". This revolution in a way marked the resurgence of the democratic process in Philippines. It all started with the assassination of the popular opposition leader Benigno (Ninoy) Aquino in August 1983. It became a

catalyst in the process of this resurgence. The reinforced mass anger in the post Benigno Aquino assassination period manifested itself in the coalescing and unity of all the opposition parties in the country to fight for democracy. It was in this process that Madame Corazon Aquino (the widow of the slain leader Benigno Aquino) became the choice to contest the Presidential elections (agreed to by President Marcos under both internal and external pressures) in February 1986. Thus, Corazon Aquino became a symbol for freedom, liberty and democracy and against authoritarianism, tyranny and corruption. Support also came from the Roman Catholic Church which had been mobilising the people against the authoritarian rule. Unfortunately for Marcos and his cronies, the United States (the strongest ally of Marcos) changed its stance due to the increasing human rights violations and the threat of Communist insurgency. The military which constituted the power base of Marcos since 1972, was in the process of diluting its pro-Marcos's stance for fear of uncontrollable public uprising. It was in this volatile situation that elections took place in February 1986. As the election result started trickling in, there were widespread rumours of electoral malpractices indulged by the Marcos's loyalists. It was at this juncture that "people's power" rose to a crescendo of protest and Marcos had to quit the country.

The Aquino government, although revolutionary in character derives both its essence and existence not from its

constitution but direct from the people. It was through an act of revolution in the name of democracy that she became the President of the country. Aquino got this act of people's faith in democracy ratified through a plebiscite. This was the third experience in ratifying the constitution to restore democracy in the country, the other two instances being 1899 and 1935. The principle of government responsibility, public accountability, separation of powers and respect for the concept of rule of law and not of men, found their way into the proposed fundamental law of the land.

The major achievements of the Aquino government with regard to democracy has been the restoration of people's power, revitalizing the freedom of speech and expression, abolishing the ban on the writ of Habeas Corpus, the dismantling of the K.B.L. and the elite-oriented politics and the introduction of the multiparty system. As far as bureaucracy was concerned, she brought in a few changes to make it accountable systematic and neutral. The advent of the Aquino government also heralded a transformation of the judiciary from a stagnant, docile and demoralised organ to an active upholder of individual liberty. Aquino bestowed judiciary with fiscal autonomy. The Supreme Court was restored its independence and autonomy. Aquino's reforms in local administration enhanced decentralisation which helped in developing a self-reliant community and strengthening the

grassroot decision making units, which was vital for a healthy functioning democracy.

A comparison of the two regimes shows that one was totally authoritarian and the other adhering to people's participation and democracy. It also demonstrates vast difference in the implementation of policies and reforms and in the fields of executive, legislative and judicial branches of government as also in respect of bureaucracy.

The steps taken by the Aquino government mark a positive change from the degenerated past of the Marcos legacy. However, the fear of croney capitalism remains, the anti-subversion law is still in place, the promised land reforms are embodied in an executive order under the Congress which has representatives from the elites thus showing an elite dominance. The inability to remove the economic dependence shows the vulnerability of Aquino's regime, which is clearly marked by the US assistance in diffusing the seven coup attempts made against her.

The weakness of the civilian government and its inability to curb insurgency and bring equilibrium in the coalition clearly shows the weakness of Aquino's government which is unable to stem the socio-economic and political rot and bring further reforms.

Thus there is the need for national democracy as a possible solution to the crisis of the semi-feudal and semi-colonial formation. For this purpose, what is urgently

needed in the Philippines is a strong political will and commitment on the part of all the duly elected representatives of the Filipino people 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. Again, as the euphoria of revolution is dying out and the moral rhetoric cannot stem the rot and bring socio-economic progress, there is a need to improve the conditions of the masses in the whole of the country. Therein lies the hope for the survival of democracy in the Philippines.

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