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The "Yellow Revolution": Its Mixed Historical Legacy

THEODORE FRIEND

THE YELLOW REVOLUTION IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

The Yellow Revolution in the Philippines, 1983-86, already begins to recede in time. The question is whether or not its basic hue will hold fast in the fabric of Philippine life. President Aquino finds it acceptable now to wear dresses of a greater variety of colors, her wardrobe suggesting the opportunities, as well as the pressures, of normality. The institutions, ideas, and alliances which will be her legacy are still developing. And both form and style of government in the Philippines are in the remaking. Will they, to harken back to the revolution of 1896, settle out as legislative and libertarian, or as executive and authoritarian; or will they be driven by circumstances toward the dictatorial? Historical perspective on Mrs. Aquino's situation and her problems may be helpful.¹

A one-man, one-party state such as President Marcos developed before her, with an increasingly militarized bureaucracy and a tendency to rule through appanage or crony-patronage, is hardly unknown in Southeast Asia. The interesting questions are to what degree such systems provide food, jobs, education and enhanced real social opportunity, as distinct from management of malnutrition and underemploy-

This article originally appeared in *Rebuilding A Nation: Philippine Challenges and American Policy*, edited by Carl H. Lande, Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute Press, 1987.

1. I find two recent articles in *Foreign Affairs* particularly helpful, one regional, and one country-specific: Richard Holbrooke, "East Asia: The Next Challenge," 64, 4 (Spring, 1986):732-51, and Carl Lande and Richard Hooley, "Aquino Takes Charge," 64, 5 (Summer, 1986):1087-1107.

ment, combined with indoctrination and manipulation of hopes. Marcos' regime, while perhaps marginally constructive from 1965 to 1975, clearly tilted toward the destructive sometime after that, and toppled from power when its rot and inertia were tested by an aroused populace.

The forces that pressed for Marcos' downfall, however—leaving aside the contribution of his own errors and hubris—are not found in clear confluence anywhere else in Southeast Asia. They could be generalized as consisting of bourgeois, intellectuals, and clerics. But all those terms suffer from intellectual bloat. More accurately they are businessmen, educated middle and upper middle classes, and activist priests and nuns. Individuals from those groups in a rare and new coherence, joined by the votes and energies of the hungry, produced the change.

One may detect resemblances to forces in Latin America which have brought about the surprising democratic resurgences there since 1980. "Only the most optimistic observers imagined five years ago that South America would enter the second half of the 1980s with 94 percent of its population living under civilian and constitutional regimes. . . ."² The temptation arises to look for predictable patterns in Iberian-American history and to fit the Philippines into those shapes. Such analyses would distort, however, first, because of the Malay ethnic base to Philippine history, and second, because of the American superstructure to it.

For an understanding of the recent past, and a sense of probable futures, one does better to look at Philippine history itself since 1896, which leads inevitably to examining the patterns and latent probabilities in the bilateral relationship with the United States.³

INITIATIVES AND PHASE-CHANGES IN PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN HISTORY

In transnational perspective, Philippine-American history of the last

2. Abraham F. Lowenthal, "Threat and Opportunity in the Americas," *Foreign Affairs*, 64, No. 3 (1985):539-61; quotation p. 544.

3. I have examined that subject at some length in "Freedom, Independence, and Development: Philippine-American Tensions in History," John Bresnan, ed., *Crisis in the Philippines: The Marcos Era and Beyond* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). I have also written an article for a Japanese audience, translated into Japanese by Professor Miwa Kimitada, to appear in *Chuo Koron*, September 1986.

ninety years may be seen as containing five fundamental initiatives. The first three were American, and the most recent two Filipino. Each, inescapably, became a series of bilateral processes, lurching forward in directions intended by the initiators, then lapsing away; ricocheting off counterforces; partially recaptured and insisted into being. Energies both of resistance and reformulation transformed these initiatives into the compromises, inanitions, celebrations, sedate facts and accepted data which are thought of as "history."

All periodizations are arbitrary. The following list of initiatives and phase-changes may summarize a complex history in a new and suggestive way.

1898-1901: American conquest and assimilation: American dominance was established, the principles of constitutional government were laid down and lines of imperial culture laid out.

1929-34: American approaches to devolution: pressure from American farm and labor lobbies, recognition of strategic jeopardy, and resurgence of antiimperial principle led to accelerated Filipinization of the government, American determination of eventual independence, and scheduling of Philippine sovereignty for 1946.

1942-49: American defense of the binational achievement and assertion of neomercantilism: the Fil-American joint loss to Japan in 1942 and joint triumph in 1945 led to trade, aid, and basic agreements 1946-49, overshadowing the fact of Philippine sovereignty.

1955-65: Philippine economic nationalism: the Laurel-Langley Agreement of 1955 revised terms of trade, and was accompanied and followed by entrepreneurial initiatives in Philippine legislation and regulation.

1972-81: Philippine Martial Law government: this experiment in "constitutional authoritarianism" lost its economic productivity as early as 1975, while continuing its dilution of national institutions and civil rights into 1986.

The Yellow Revolution clearly initiates another phase-change, but one that can only be partly described. Until time allows better definition, looking back will serve to help clarify the present.

CONTRADICTIONARY FORCES IN THE PHILIPPINE POLITY

To Americans who care, and Filipinos proud of a binational tradition, it is a matter for chagrin that a former colony of the United States, with mass education, high literacy, and free institutions, should go into a period of show-of-hands constitution making, buttoned lips regarding governmental fallibility, and eyes averted from invasions of privacy, rights, and human life itself. There were, of course, masses of Americans who did not know enough to care. And the American government, in addition to recognizing the fact that the Philippines had been for a quarter century a sovereign nation, privileged to make its own mistakes, in 1972 was preoccupied with extracting itself from Vietnam. There were also many Filipinos who did not "care" in the sense that their libertarian tradition was passive and ideal, and their authoritarian heritage more concrete and real—a daily matter of home, school, and church.⁴ And this last may be a vital fact, underappreciated by American journalists and officials.

Little of Spanish rule in the sixteenth century through nineteenth century conveyed a sense of individual rights to Filipinos. The government was foreign, imperial, and monarchical. Geography and structure of government strongly constrained against the expression either of individual conscience or of collective will in public affairs. Whether one looks high or low in formal power, *gobernador* or *cabeza de barangay*, or at the *principales* holding local influence, one tends to find power and resources focused in single persons. Only as European liberalism slowly and belatedly percolated into the consciousness of many Philippine-born *ilustrados* were counterexpectations developed.

Revolution broke out against Spain in 1896, but it was riven with factionalism and in retreat by 1898. Its key general, Emilio Aguinaldo, was exiled in Singapore when American arrival in Manila both insured defeat of Spain, and a new confrontation: young expanding empire against young would-be nation. In the Philippine-American war that followed, three strains of Filipino political thinking can be identified. First was the autocratic: Aguinaldo announced a "dictatorial govern-

4. This is by no means a new discovery; see Rex Drilon, et., "Philippine Democracy Reexamined," pamphlet based on *Philippine Historical Bulletin* 6 (December 1962).

ment," which revealed his true instincts but alienated many potential followers. Second was the authoritarian, as represented by Apolinario Mabini, a romantic nationalist who favored a strong executive for the discipline necessary to social regeneration. Third was the libertarian, favored by the cosmopolitan *ilustrados*, who mistrusted both Aguinaldo and Mabini, and wished a strong legislature instead. The third element prevailed politically in 1898-99, and eventually articulated and managed the compromises with the United States that brought about peace and assimilation politics, 1899-1901.⁵

All three elements can be detected in subsequent history. The American presence insured libertarian dominance, under that flag. But authoritarian elements came in as an undercurrent during Quezon's presidency of the Commonwealth in 1935-41; military-executive fiat prevailed under the Japanese, 1942-45; and native dictatorship, emboldened as an experiment in regional dynasticism, prevailed after Marcos announced martial law.

At first, however, American organic laws and educational policy drew the Filipinos deep into modern constitutionalism and cultural liberalism, far beyond their own revolutionary document. On top of the Roman Catholic concept of the precious individual soul, which could be saved or damned, American culture strengthened new notions: individual social dignity which could be educated in its own self-expression, and individual secular ambition could be equipped for gathering economic momentum and political influence. If that sometimes led to factionalistic squabbling or near-anarchic competition, such might be the price of modernization, American style.

In restraint, there were still American colonial officials to cope with regression in standards of health and finance, such as were found by the Wood-Forbes Commission of 1921. An American majority prevailed on the Supreme Court even into the Commonwealth period. After 1935, an American High Commissioner might still curb the excesses of the popularly elected president.⁶ The job was transitional and performance varied with the men who did it: Frank Murphy, tactful and cooperative;

5. David Steinberg, et al., *In Search of Southeast Asia* (New York: Praeger, 1971), pp. 262-66. For the view of an Hispanic Filipino on the same events, see Antonio M. Molina, *Historia de Filipinas 2* (Madrid: Instituto de Cooperacion Iberoamericana, 1984):329-511.

6. The best descriptions of Philippine public institutions in this period remains Joseph Ralston Hayden, *The Philippines: A Study in National Development* (New York: Macmillan, 1947).

Paul McNutt, vigorous in pursuit of American interests; Francis Sayre, principled and stilted. Quezon, as time went on, found the powers of the High Commissioner a snafflebit. It restrained him, and he could not spit it away. Then a new invasion forced him into exile.

The Japanese occupation, 1941-45, brought great loss of life, material and moral damage to the Philippines. On the positive side, Tagalog as the basis for a national language was strengthened, and so was pride in native values clearly Asian. National identity, however, strongly resisted a proffered pan-Asian identity with Japan overlordship. And the form of presidency which the Japanese promoted, an authoritarian executive backed by the potential diktat of their own military, was accepted only because imposed. Jose P. Laurel as the bearer of that office, 1943-45, was acceptable to Filipinos as a buffer against the Japanese. And he did what little he could to use Fil-American legal principles to constrain the new conquerors. At the same time, a Mabini-esque concern for leader-inspired social regeneration flared out in him, just as genuine as his Yale-taught concern for due process of law.⁷

A strong mood of restoration after the war reestablished the political ethos of the Philippines in its now fundamental tension between the amalgam of Hispano-Catholic values with the Filipino family system on one side, and, on the other, the American matrix of constitution-civil service- representative elections-and education for citizenship.

A thoughtful Filipino sociologist has written of his countrymen's "Split-Level Christianity."⁸ By the same token, one may speak of split-level democracy in the Philippines. In the same nation, and sometimes in a single individual, there is genuine feeling, even passion, for democratic values; powerful rhetorical expression, both sincere and insincere, of those values; along with frequent avoidance of democratic processes in action. Even the avoiders may feel distress at any profound public estrangement from a core democratic credo. Private comfort with authoritarian values in home, school, and church may be profound, but will still not guarantee an easy time for statist behavior. Thousands of crypto-democrats may come out and express themselves in ways countervailing

7. Theodore Friend, "Revolution and Restoration: Java, Luzon and Japanese Impact, 1942-1945," (book ms. in preparation).

8. Jaime Bulatao, S.J., "Split-Level Christianity," and Vitaliano R. Gorospe, S.J., "Christian Renewal of Filipino Values" (Quezon City: Ateneo University Press, 1966).

to the state, should government dispose itself in too authoritarian a manner.

“NOON AND DARKNESS”

The American colonial presence apparently required a one-party system as a nationalistic rallying point. Quezon's success in keeping that party together, and in exploiting nationalistic issues, helps explain his twenty-one years of power from 1922 until his death in 1943. Postwar devolution of sovereignty, however, led to a series of one-term presidents, 1945-65: Roxas, Quirino, Magsaysay, Garcia, and Macapagal.⁹ All were chosen through close elections in a fluid-two party system, plastic, factional, and personalistic.

Ferdinand Marcos snapped the string. Elected in 1965 over Macapagal, he won again in 1969 to become the first twice-elected President of the Philippines. Two terms, however, were the limit constitutionally allowed. So Marcos in 1972 yanked the cord on martial law, and changed the rules to perpetuate his regime. Other essays and historians tell what followed, until Marco's presidency ended.

Marcos' twenty-year primacy in Philippine politics (1966-86) nearly equalled that of Quezon (1922-43) in duration, and probably exceeded it in impact. Attempts have already begun to link and liken their periods of rule; to analogize them in style as spendthrift autocrats. Some would imply that the “U.S.-Marcos Dictatorship” was prefigured in what could be called the “U.S.-Quezon Puppet Show.” In this view, America held the strings in the Commonwealth Period and pulled them when necessary for American interests, but they were basically indifferent to Quezon's enforcement of an extravagant power-appetite upon a subdued people. Forty years later, the political wires that animated and controlled from above were simply replaced by economic lifelines that sustained from abroad. America would succor Marcos while Marcos suckered America.

That picture, however, is grossly overdrawn. An eminent Filipino, a cultural critic and public servant who lived through both regimes, says, “Quezon and Marcos? They were as different as noon and darkness.” Quezon he found clear and open in style (the commentator pointed

9. Roxas and Magsaysay both died in office. They were strong presidents who might conceivably have been reelected had they lived.

to his heart as he talked); but Marcos was obscure, manipulative, calculating (he pointed to his head while frowning and narrowing his eyes).¹⁰

The dramatic difference in style is important. Allied to it are basic differences in values and procedure. Quezon's lineage was Mabini-esque, in that authoritarianism coexisted with romantic nationalism. But both remained under authentic discipline of law. Marcos, however, used the law tactically, without conviction as to its historic and social value. As a result his style approached Aguinaldo's in the dictatorial, but dextrous where Aguinaldo was awkward. At the same time he found an allure in the magic personalism of some neighboring potentates, and in monuments and dynasticism far exceeding anything expressed by Quezon. Basic distinctions drawn, it is revealing to pursue the thoughts of the two leaders.

QUEZON'S THEORY OF A PARTYLESS DEMOCRACY

Among leaders of colonized peoples before the Great Pacific War, Quezon was the only man styled as a president, and receiving a nineteen-gun salute. As he looked forward to twenty-one guns, he gave thought to the future shape of the Philippine polity and its leadership. In 1940 three speeches laid out a rough "Theory of a Partyless Democracy."¹¹ Quezon was at the height of his powers, and the Japanese threat, while felt, was still sixteen months away from becoming an invasion. In a speech at the University of the Philippines, he criticized dictatorships, including dictatorship of the proletariat, and lauded democracy of the Lincolnian kind, "of, by, and for the people." This rhetorical opening preceded a series of sallies against old ideas of the scope of governments, which accented too much the sacredness of property and contracts, and recognized too little the social obligations of men living under the same system.¹² Quezon proceeded to attack as "fetishes" the

10. S.P. Lopez, in conversation with the author, 8 June 1986.

11. "Addresses of His Excellency, Manuel L. Quezon, President of the Philippines, on the Theory of a Partyless Democracy," (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1940) 58 pages.

12. Quezon, "The Essence of Democracy," in *ibid.*, pp. 1-16. Quezon had earlier elaborated his criticism of excessively privileged defense of property rights in a candidly recorded "Conference given by the President to the Representatives of Foreign and Local Press held at Malacanang, February 2, 1939, at 10 A.M." (32 pages), transcript in Quezon Collection, National Library, Manila.

concept of political parties, and the idea that individual liberty must not be restricted,¹³ while heading towards his conceptual and practical goal: governmental initiatives in behalf of social justice.

Quezon made the metaphorical point that a nation is like a family, in which the father and the children cannot be at cross purposes. Nobody challenged his figure of speech. Quezon did not sound to his audience like a wayward Confucian from Northeast Asia; he was in fact touching the heart of some prominent values in the Philippines which were common to Greater Malaysia.¹⁴

But nearly everything else Quezon said that day was challenged: by students, professors, journalists, jurists, and the Civil Liberties Union. The latter organization raised fears of a "tyrant." Quezon, undaunted, reentered the fray with another speech, in which he clarified his principles and stressed his major aim of social justice. The second speech further reveals his attempt to clear theoretical ground so that the Philippines might catch up with the New Deal in the United States, and with the reforms of Miguel Aleman in Mexico; and to ride past the high-handed *hacendero* mentality which he disliked.¹⁵ He was not of that class; he could get along with it; could seek and get its support in some matters; and could still see its self-indulgence and social hierarchism as dangerous to the Philippines.

To the criticism that he wanted to do away with all "fiscalizers" (critics), Quezon said that nobody feared to speak out in the Philippines. The evidence was that so many had done so against him: "Your Constitution offers you all the checking you need, except the checking of the opposition." He wished to make the basic point that executive power was

13. In these comments one can now see analogy to Sukarno's attack on "free-fight liberalism" in the Indonesia of the 1950s and 1960s. Quezon's critique of party politics as causing inefficiency, delay, and lack of direction preceded Sukarno's attempt to lower the profile of parliamentary democracy in Indonesia. In that effort, the Suharto government since then has steadily persisted, and more solidly succeeded, while also achieving some economic goals which Sukarno never even tried to formulate.

14. Quezon's reasoning towards restriction of individual liberties anticipated themes that Jose P. Laurel, Sr. and Benigno Aquino, Sr. would voice during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines. They were prompted certainly by their new conquerors, but they spoke with a conviction consistent with the rest of the careers in behalf of social duties as prior to and inseparable from individual rights. Quezon, onstage, dominated Philippine politics. When he was offstage in exile, a number of politicians uttered a variety of things they had not previously expressed.

15. "A Partyless Government in a Democracy," in Quezon, "Theory of a Partyless Democracy," pp. 17-40.

required to effect social justice. This, the opposition was trying to block. He would be content, however, to succeed in less: to "show the world that this totalitarian ruler is known enough in the government university . . . for everybody to feel that he can disagree with him, and neither lose his job nor go to jail, that is enough for me."

Quezon had difficulty only in answering the observation of President Bienvenido Gonzalez of the University of the Philippines, that abolishing political organizations would lead to stronger class consciousness and to political control by a small and well-organized minority: both of which were bigger evils than political organizations as they then existed. Quezon did not effectively refute the point, but restated his belief that a carping opposition was the major obstacle to Philippine progress.¹⁶

In a third and final speech at Far Eastern University, Quezon carried his themes further. He stressed the great value of a nation of critical individuals, as distinct from opposition parties. Partyless government, he said, presupposes an educated citizenry, an independent and honest press, an "extended radio service that is not controlled either by the government or special interests"; and a community without privileged classes.

Idealized and modernized Athenian democracy was more to the taste of his university audience. But Quezon had to come back to the practical. He acknowledged criticism of the Philippines' "one-party system" by likening it to the southern states in the U.S.A. or the Irish Free State, where such things existed in ways that were democratic, and certainly not devoid of struggle. He concluded that the direction in which to move was not toward a system of two well-balanced parties, but toward a system in which parties were unnecessary. Far more education of the public would be required, however, to approach that desirable point. Quezon concluded more than a month of public debate by admitting that "it would seem to be rash to try and experiment now with a partyless government."¹⁷ By this public admission, Quezon displayed his talent for acknowledging frustration without admitting defeat. Even when his ideas created shivers of apprehension, his candor in advocacy and openness in debate could serve actually to enhance public trust in him.

An earlier speech shows how deep Quezon's concerns actually went—to the deepest levels of a national character. "The Filipino of

16. *Ibid.*; quotations, pp. 30, 26.

today is soft, easy-going. . . . He is uninclined to sustained strenuous effort. . . . Face-saving is the dominant note in the confused symphony of his existence. His sense of righteousness is often dulled by the desire of personal gain. His norm of conduct is generally prompted by expediency rather than by principle. . . ."¹⁸ Apologizing for the severity of what he was saying, he called upon memories of the heroes of the past, Bonifacio, both del Pilars, Mabini, Luna, and above all Rizal. Why wait for an emergency to awaken the flame of their spirit? To endow the Filipino with optimism and valor, refashion the culture and character is an urgent "task of national spiritual reconstruction." To insure its accomplishments, "we shall formulate and adopt a social code—a code of ethics and personal conduct—a written *Bushido*—that can be explained in the schools, preached from the pulpits, and taught in the streets and plazas. . . . We shall indoctrinate every man, woman, and child in its precepts. . . .

"Every official of the government will cooperate, and ignorance of, or failure to live up to, the rules of conduct established, will be a bar to public office. There will be some superficial men, those who claim and believe that they know it all, who would brand this as the first step toward totalitarianism. Let them bark at the moon."¹⁹

An astonishingly candid speech, defiant of ordinary political prudence. What does it signify? Certainly it shows some of the inner operations and colorings of Quezon's mind. His deep comprehension of the national character, usually expressed in compassionate patience, or voluble frustration, or humor, here takes the shape of imagining complete "spiritual reconstruction" once and for all. Such visions are not livable by whole peoples, or practicable by realistic leaders. Quezon's utterances here, particularly the reference to a "written *Bushido*," show his apprehension over the encroaching energies of Japan. And indeed, within four years, Laurel would be at the president's desk, uttering similar thought with Japanese advisors at his shoulder. But Quezon

17. Quezon, "The Elimination of Partisanship in a Democracy," in *ibid.*, pp. 41-58; quotations, pp. 43, 58.

18. "Policies and Achievements of the Government and Regeneration of the Filipinos" (paper delivered before the faculties and student bodies of public schools, colleges, and universities, at the Jose Rizal Memorial Field, 19 August 1938), *Messages of the President* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1938), 4, part 1, 146-57; quotation, p. 152. This speech also exists, with pp. 1-2 missing, in draft typescript in the Quezon Collection, National Library, Manila.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

apparently did not dare initiate his program of Philippine social Bushido. When he did nerve himself up to pursue an unpopular message, it took the form of criticism of what he saw as the irresponsible and fruitless carping of the opposition parties. And he backed down gracefully with himself in the limelight.

The first Filipino steps toward totalitarianism were not taken by Manuel Quezon. They were taken by Ferdinand Marcos, a full generation afterwards.

MARCOS' "IDEOLOGY FOR FILIPINOS"

From declaring martial law to ruling by presidential decree went rather smoothly for Marcos. There was a splutter of protest at the beginning. But many misgivings gave way to relief, and, en masse, to passivity. "The President was able to paralyze Congress in 1972, and then pulverize it in 1973, and finally resurrect it in canonized form in 1976." The Supreme Court, unable to stand alone against an assertive presidency, bowed before it until the assassination of Aquino, when it began to yield rights to demonstrators.²⁰

The resulting government was authoritarian by anybody's definition—autocratic in its initiative, cronyistic in its preferments, and oppressive in its impact. Where did it come from? It came, inescapably, from Philippine history and character. It could also be said to borrow, in part, from Madison Avenue for its PR techniques, from Sukarno for its verbalism and glib Third Worldism,²¹ from Suharto for its reliance on the military and on police surveillance and censorship. But it surely did not come in inspiration or example from Manuel Quezon.

By the time the ruling theories of Ferdinand Marcos (or his staff writers' redactions of them) had ripened,²² he was dismissive of pre-World War II democracy in the Philippines. He rejected the era and never mentioned Quezon by name.²³

20. Joaquin G. Bemas, S.J., "Constitutionalism after 1982," in Ramon C. Reyes, ed., *Budhi Papers VI*, "Philippines After 1972: A Multidisciplinary Perspective" (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 1985), pp. 190-203, quotation p. 202.

21. Ferdinand E. Marcos, *The Third World Challenge* (Manila: NMPC Books, 1976, 2nd printing 1980), 61 pages.

22. Ferdinand E. Marcos, *An Ideology for Filipinos* (n.p., n.d., "second printing," copyright 1980), 92 pages.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

One who knew and adhered to the 1935 constitution and kept his distance from Marcos does not recall Marcos ever using Quezon's theories or stances as arguments or precedents for himself. Marcos swept on by Quezon, the constitution, everything. He once described his intention to former Senators Pelaez, Padilla, and Sumulong, to "subvert" Philippine society.²⁴ That he corrupted it instead should not obscure the fact that social justice was still at that time one of his objectives.

Quezon helped popularize the term "social justice" in Philippine political parlance, and welcomed its introduction in the Constitution of 1935. He was largely frustrated, however, in achieving significant steps toward it by oligarchic skepticism, a caretaker colonial administration, and lack of allies. He spoke more sympathetically of the Communist leaders, Crisanto Evangelista and Guillermo Capadocia, than he did of Filipino plutocrats and oppositionist lawyer-politicians.²⁵ But they could not help him. And he had neither the power, nor in the end, the time to do much for the vast classes of the Filipino needy.

Marcos, in the martial law period, pictured himself almost as a frustrated Marxist. He said he wished to take governing beyond "a political game played by the economic and intellectual elite." But he could not take it to the masses, because 70 percent of the population only knew consciousness of oppression and demonstrated loyalty to *particular* leaders. They would take up arms for or against a personalized enemy, but not against the system. Marcos concluded that "there cannot be any genuine class revolution in this country."²⁶

There must, therefore, be a government-led revolution. Precisely what it would be for, and who would get what and who could give up what, were best left out of an ideology. But Marcos did declare that "Democracy is the formulation of a national consensus on basic guiding policies born of free and responsible discussion."²⁷ In that there is a tinny

24. Author's conversation with Ambassador Emmanuel Pelaez, 6 June 1986; the incident spoken of was early in the martial law period.

25. Undated draft of forty-one page transcript of [1939] press conference, pp. 1-5 missing; especially pp. 6-7; "Conference between his Excellency, the President and Mr. Wilkins of the Bulletin, 9 February 1939," pp. 7-9, 12-15, especially p. 13 (Quezon Collection).

26. Marcos, "Ideology," pp. 32-33.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

echo of Sukarno and his stress on *musyawara/mufakat* in Indonesia.²⁸ There is also a loud contradiction. What is meant by free and responsible discussion in circumstances that Marcos had already defined as "a rapacious oligarchy and an electorate, enfeebled by poverty, open to corruption"?²⁹ Discussion under such conditions became leader-dominated. Deliberation (*musyawara*) is initiated and structured by the leader. Consensus (*mufakat*) is determined and announced by the leader. The process could conceivably, under a wise leader, produce fresh ideas, broad support, and social advances. But Marcos appears to have pursued his own instinct, and the promptings of his own cunning, to his own ends.

Marcos proudly stated that his constitution had advanced beyond that of 1935 regarding social justice: from it "*should* be the concern of the state" to the state "*shall* promote social justice."³⁰ The pride was no doubt real. But what were the accomplishments? His "ideology" was discredited as blatantly insincere, the palaver of a consummate tactician. The people felt police repressiveness of a brutality not seen since the Japanese *Kenpeitai*, in the service of ordained ideas and regulated discussion not seen since the days of the Spanish, and for the first time combined in the Philippines with modern electronic modes of surveillance.

QUEZON AND MARCOS: CONTRARIETIES IN THE LIGHT OF THE PRESENT

In explaining how the Philippines brought Ferdinand Marcos on itself, it is tempting to look for a previous "dictator" in Manuel Quezon, and to say that the groundwork was laid before. But that would be grossly misleading as to basic processes. Quezon's theory of partyless democracy clearly shows that he would have liked to head toward a no-party state. To the credit of his common sense, however, he

28. J.D. Legge analyzes these concepts as advocated by Sukarno, as well as their flaws, in his excellent *Sukarno: A Political Biography* (New York: Praeger, 1972), esp. pp. 283-85.

Sukarno first began his rise to power (1942) as Quezon was dying, and his fall from power as Marcos was elected to the presidency (1965). The years between, in which the Philippines clung to two-party, fluid-faction, client-patron politics, were years in which Sukarno launched his critique of Western-style parliamentary liberalism, introduced his Guided Democracy, and elaborated his own brand of leader-dominated consensus.

29. Marcos, "Ideology," p. 39.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 54-58.

backed off. After weeks of the freest possible kind of public criticism, he concluded that the time was not ripe. What Quezon had going during the Commonwealth, in fact, was a one-party system, with an abundance of ill-organized "fiscalizers." They stung and annoyed him. But he could not and would not jail or silence them. Meanwhile, they could and did restrain him in his moments of ambitious imagination.³¹

What would have been the outcome had not there still been an American colonial presence as critic and counterweight to Quezon? Would he have overridden constitutional precepts or evaded his own wiser principles? Something different, no doubt, would have emerged, and less libertarian. But two points need to be firmly lodged in order to proceed to comparison with Marcos. First: the United States was there, as a guarantor of a due process state and of civil liberties. Second: along with his abundant flaws, Quezon did have scruples. He rejoiced in winning open political combat through eloquence, flair, agility, fervor. He would summon money for victory whenever he needed. But he was not a liar. And he was not a killer.

The system that Ferdinand Marcos introduced under martial law could be called a "one-party dominant" system, replacing the two-party system of 1945-72, and superficially resembling what took shape in Quezon's prewar presidency, 1935-41. The potential of one-party dominance for stability against coups has been shown to be greater than two-party systems.³² The KBL could conceivably have worked better for the Philippines than the alternating currents and personalities of the Nationalists and Liberal parties.

But the key is to consider what is given up for stability. A quick answer for the Philippines, to be reassessed in the light of time and further research, is that martial law may have yielded the Philippines some developmental advantages through 1975 or 1976, after which the exchange of liberty for order and welfare began to become a poor trade. By the early 1980s, not only had liberties been lost, but well-being too; and

31. A provocative comparison of strengths and weaknesses between Quezon and another successor as president is Miguel A. Bernad, S.J., "Quezon and Magsaysay," in his *Tradition and Discontinuity: Essays on Philippine History and Culture* (Manila: National Book Store, 1983), pp. 77-94.

32. Samuel P. Huntington, "Political Order in Changing Societies" (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 422-33.

even order was beginning to unravel.

Marcos' "ideology for Filipinos" in retrospect looks like sham, and a cover for corruption of power. Quezon's "theory of partyless democracy," however, appears at worst to have been a trial balloon. The political winds were against him, not to mention a good deal of buckshot. He drew back. In that simple sequence one may visualize functioning democracy in the late American period. It was a one-party-against-the-colonists system, with occasional splintered secondary parties. Quezon led it with panache and success. That success may be attributed not only to his own skill, but to America's stabilizing presence, and its political utility to him as a benign adversary. The American presence also gave courage to his opponents and silently inhibited him from authoritarian experiments that he imagined in moments of frustration.

Marcos took the Philippines into a new world. It was not a bright one. To preserve his power, he invoked martial law, ruled by presidential fiat, and availed of a supine legislature through one prevailing party held together by patronage ties. He allowed or licensed favorites into what became unchecked debauchery of the economy. He diverted government funds to preferred individuals as well as making them concessionaires.³³ The "compadre colonialism" of Quezon's era was perhaps a sloppy cultural adjustment on both sides. But the "crony capitalism" of Marcos' time became rampantly erosive of the finances and institutions of the Philippines.³⁴

Repairs of the damage of the Marcos era will take a long time. Most of the Aquino government apparently seeks to proceed in a style combining open politics with NAMFREL free enterprise and a modern Catholic religious spirit.³⁵ As it does so, it faces severe malnutrition, underemployment, debt, and insurgency all at once. Totalitarians in the

33. The distinction is important. Government concessions are a mode of life in Indonesia, for instance; but preferment there does not decline into the direct and massive pilferage of the Marcos family and circle of cronies.

34. Norman G. Owen, ed., *Compadre Colonialism: Studies on the Philippines Under American Rule* (Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, 1971); and David A. Rosenberg, ed., *Marcos and Martial Law in the Philippines* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979). In the latter volume, Robert A. Stauffer takes the view that American inspired "refeudalization" of the Philippines is the real demon: "The Political Economy of Refeudalization," pp. 180-218.

35. On the latter theme: Jaime Cardinal Sin, *Selected Writings on Church-State Relations and Human Development* (Manila: Centre for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia, 1984), 68 pages.

cordillera and in the outer islands, Marcos loyalists in the streets and the Manila Hotel: together they make a difficult beginning for the new government. It proceeds with divided views but with hope and apparent integrity of spirit.

Americans, in mid-1988, still tend to be jubilant at the renewal of what they conceive of as the best of the heritage that they offered to the Philippines. And Filipinos of many kinds—business, professional, ecclesiastics, educators, ordinary middle class, humble working class—rejoice in their own courageous overthrow of Marcos' armed autocracy. At the very same time, however, their Southeast Asian neighbors ask the Filipinos, "Why can't you make authoritarianism work?"

The question is chilling, but ignores the unique variety of alternatives latent in Philippine history. They include, without beginning to exhaust possibilities: militaristic dictatorship, whether Aguinaldo-clumsy or Marcos-adroit; romantic and authoritarian constitutionalism, whether derived from European traditions (Mabini) or Asian ones (Laurel); and guided democracy, Philippine style, whether finely tempered by American sense of due process, as in Quezon's years, or in some new indigenous form that Corazon Aquino and her counselors might evolve.³⁶ Out of a full stock of possibilities, it is only clear that they must evolve something credible, distinct, and effective.³⁷

36. In conversation with the late Benigno Aquino, Jr. (Philadelphia, 1982; Swarthmore, PA, 1983), I asked what he would do with the emergency powers of the president if he should succeed Marcos. He answered on the first occasion that he would need to retain a great many of those powers in order to repair the mess Marcos had made. On the second occasion he repeated that answer, but added a specific statement that he would reinstate the writ of habeas corpus and do away with preventive detention orders. I presume that Mrs. Aquino, while following her own best judgment in the light of circumstances, will continue to be moved by her husband's imprisonment in a way so as not lightly to inflict such experiences on others; and at the same time in other matters to exert power in a strong executive mode, as her husband would have done. Her own character, of course, adds still another variable, among many others.

37. Octavio Paz, the Mexican poet-essayist, in writing about the United States, may also be illuminating about the Philippines. Paz sees the errors of the United States as "revealing of vices and faults inherent in plutocratic democracies." At the same time its achievements, energies, and self-criticism keep high its potential for others. What he concludes of America might also be said of its former colony: "The malady of democracies is disunity, mother of demagogism. The . . . road . . . of political health leads by way of soul-searching and self-criticism: a return to origins, to the foundation of the nation. . . . to make a new beginning. Such beginnings are at once purifications and mutations. With them something different always begins as well." "Notes on the United States," *The Wilson Quarterly* (Spring 1986):80-93; quotation, p. 93.