

**ISSUES IN SOCIO-POLITICAL
TRANSFORMATION IN ASIA
AND THE PACIFIC:
THE RECENT PHILIPPINE
POLITICAL EXPERIENCE
PAPERS & PROCEEDINGS**



CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
University of the Philippines
PCED Hostel, U.P. Campus
Diliman, Quezon City

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POLITICAL EXPERIENCE
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Edited by

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FOREWORD

The popular uprising of February 1986 against the twenty-year rule of Ferdinand E. Marcos caught world-wide attention and inspired those who used to hold pessimistic views about the prospects of transforming society from dictatorship to democracy. As the Philippines and the new government under President Corazon C. Aquino occupied center stage in international news, colleagues from around the Asia-Pacific region began writing and calling, congratulating the Filipino people for their phenomenal achievement of removing a dictator from the seat of power with a minimum of bloodshed. Everyone was curious to understand the various forces at work in Philippine society which conjoined to erupt in that unusual flowering of People Power at EDSA. All were eager to seek some explanation for this unique event.

The idea for an exchange of views and a sharing of experiences slowly evolved from a few conversations among a number of colleagues within and outside the Philippines. Soon thereafter the Univeristy Center for Integrative and Development Studies assumed the pleasant task of hosting an international conference of interested scholars, analysts, participants, and observers of the People Power phenomenon. They sought to discuss issues relating to sociopolitical transformation in general, and in particular, to exchange views and to try to understand the unique Philippine experience.

The collection of papers and the proceedings of that conference are contained in this volume. The contributors do not all come from academe; many of them have been active participants in the continuing process of sociopolitical transformation in the Philippines. Some had paid their dues dearly by spending long years in jail, while others attempted to work within the framework of dictatorship in order to promote what they perceived to be the interest of the majority. Many contributed ideas to the continuing quest for solutions to social problems which lie at the heart of sociopolitical transformation.

This diversity in their background, their professions, and their consequent relationship to the process of social transformation account for their diversity of world views, the disparity in the quality of their treatment of the topics under discussion, as well as the particular positions which they take on the various issues addressed during the conference.

The conference took place at a time when Filipinos were still

generally euphoric over their triumph against the Marcos dictatorship. The sense of power which they felt at EDSA filtered through their optimism about what they could do as a united people. The foreign participants were more sober and perhaps more realistic in their assessments of the power of People Power, a term which many of them found difficult to understand and difficult to put under neat social science categories which they learned from the West. In spite of this divergence in the Filipino and foreign participants' views, the conference was a useful initial effort at addressing some of the issues involved in social change and at trying to understand the phenomenon of People Power among themselves.

The Center has since then embarked on two research projects which focus on People Power in an effort to understand the phenomenon, not only for heuristic, but also for practical purposes. Soon the outputs of these projects will be ready for sharing with interested parties.

The Center wishes to acknowledge the support of the Rockefeller Foundation without whose financial assistance the conference would not have been possible. It also wishes to acknowledge the generous sharing of ideas and time by all participants, local and foreign, without whose enthusiastic participation, the frank exchange of views would not have taken place.

CAROLINA G. HERNANDEZ

Director

Center for Integrative and Development Studies

WELCOME REMARKS

Dean Carlos P. Ramos

President Angara, distinguished participants and guests, ladies and gentlemen:

It is a great pleasure indeed and an honor for the Center for Integrative and Development Studies of the University of the Philippines to host this very important meeting on such a vital subject. As I look around in the room, I see very distinguished representatives of institutions with which the CIDS would like to have linkages. These institutions have been in operation for quite a while now. For instance, the one in Indonesia has been in operation since 1971, which would be 15 years ago. Our own CIDS is barely one year old, and went into operation about five or six months ago. However, I can say that our research program is now in place and we are about to launch a major research in two areas. The other function that we perform is conducting monthly forums on policy matters and questions of high priority confronting the nation.

I hope that you are comfortable in this hotel. There are at least two reasons for your having been placed in this hotel. Number one of course is, we would like you to feel that you are also staying at the University of the Philippines because this institution is a unit of the U.P. The second reason is: this hotel has become the substitute legislature of the opposition, who have been holding meetings here. I hope such meetings will happen while you are here so that by some manner of osmosis, you would absorb part of the political climate. Therefore it was, I think, correct strategy to give you a kind of balanced exposure during this forum. Well, we are a fledgling institution, and while we are probably the youngest among the institutions of a similar nature in this region, its director unfortunately is the oldest.

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the CIDS and the University of the Philippines, it is my pleasure indeed to welcome you to this seminar. We extend to you all the best wishes for great success in your meetings, and I hope that your stay with us here will be not only fruitful but also interesting.

Thank you.

STATEMENT

President Edgardo J. Angara

Thank you very much and good morning to one and all. I join my colleague, Dean Ramos, in welcoming you to our campus. We are all delighted to see all of you, especially some of you whom we all know from way back. We have a colleague from the University of Hawaii, Lindy Aquino, who used to be a member of our faculty but who had to leave during Martial Law. We are glad that she is back.

We thank you for choosing the Philippines as the venue for this initial major activity of the Center. You may have come to Manila at a very exciting time. As you know, almost everything is in fact happening in this country. Two days from now the Constitutional Commission will be convened to draft our Constitution which will embody the political, social and economic philosophy and program for a country that is passing through a difficult period of transition. In only 95 days, we expect to see a visible path towards transformation after the Constitution shall have been drafted.

The effects and the euphoria of that February event are still fresh. Right now, if one may characterize it, the Philippines is almost hanging on the word and popularity of one person, President Aquino, although we have a provisional constitution, the Freedom Constitution.

It is a fact that in February 1986, we started a long constitutional route to a transfer of power which, through some combination of circumstances, turned almost without anybody knowing it into an extra-constitutional route. But the result was something unique to us because the transfer of power was effected bloodlessly. Some say that those four days in February were more of a picnic, a fiesta for us than anything else. But perhaps that had something to do with the character of the Filipino. So here we are, on the road to political normalization.

One important event that will take place is the convening of a Constitutional Commission that will try to capture our own vision of our society. Perhaps in that forum, we will see in the next 90 days the pluralism that we think we have in this country. The different factions are all extraordinarily capable of articulating their own alternative visions of Philippine society and government. That is all to the good because it means seeing our transformation in a peaceful constitutional way.

We do not know whether the handiwork of that Commission will be to the liking of our people, but we have had some preliminary survey in the provinces on what people think the future Philippine society and government ought to look like. That preliminary survey is being fed or will be fed to the Commission.

Here in the University of the Philippines, we have a Constitution project that we launched about a month ago. It involves research on many aspects of Constitution-making and the results of that research will also be made available to the members of the Commission. That is our contribution to the important work of planning our future politically, economically and socially.

Indeed, one can truly say that there is a dynamism in Philippine society now. It is as if we were proceeding from an almost clean slate and one is, I think, really fortunate to be living in this country at this time when we can see the future being shaped here and now. We are therefore very happy that the outstanding scholars of the region are gathered here in Manila to discuss the Philippine experience as a starting point.

I know that the event is perhaps too contemporary for more objective analysis and reading, but one also must not lose sight of the contemporariness. Like a journalist, one must capture the unfolding event as quickly as possible. We could then add the drama of that current event to the perspective of the political scientist and the historian. Then, we will be able to present the Philippine experience not only to ourselves but also perhaps to our brothers in the region as an outstanding example, if I may say so, of a peaceful transfer of power.

I know that the problem of leadership transition in the region is a highly topical, highly discussed matter; thus the Philippines could be a good starting point, not necessarily the ideal paradigm, but a starting point for analyzing sociopolitical transformation in Asia and the Pacific. So, thank you very much, and I hope that this conference will be a success as no doubt it will be. We reiterate our appreciation for your coming together here in the University of the Philippines.

Thank you.

Day 1, Friday, 30 May 1986

8:30 - 9:00 Registration

9:00 - 10:00 Opening Ceremony

P R O G R A M M E

- 1. National Anthem**
- 2. Welcome Remarks**

Dean Carlos P. Ramos
Director, Center for Integrative
and Development Studies
(CIDS)

- 3. Statement**

Dr. Edgardo J. Angara
President, University of the
Philippines System
Chairman of the Board

- 4. Briefing on Conference**

Dr. Carolina G. Hernandez
Chairman, Organizing
Committee, CIDS

10:00 - 10:15 Coffee Break

10:15 - 12:30 Session I

Chairman:

Prof. Emmanuel C. Lallana
Department of Political
Science, CSSP
University of the Philippines

Speakers:

Modes of Social Change

**Armed Sociopolitical
Transformation**

Mr. Alan Jazmines
Society of Ex-Detainees
for Liberation against
Detention and Amnesty
(SELDA)

**Non-Violent¹ Sociopolitical
Transformation**

Prof. Edmundo Garcia
Department of Political
Science, CSSP
University of the Philippines

Reactor:

Dr. Chai-anan Samudavanija
Department of Political
Science, Chulalongkorn
University
Bangkok, Thailand

Open Forum

12:30 - 2:00 Lunch Break

2:00 - 3:30 Session II

Chairman:

Prof. Segundo Romero
Department of Political
Science, CSSP
University of the Philippines

Speakers:

Non-Violent Social Change

The Indian Experience

Dean Ajit Singh Rye
Asian Center
University of the Philippines

Reactor:

Dr. Milagros C. Guerrero
Department of History
CSSP
University of the Philippines

Open Forum

3:30 - 4:00 Coffee Break

4:00 - 5:30 Session II (Continued)

**The Philippine
Experience**

Atty. Ramon Pedrosa
Aksiyon Para Sa Katarungan
at Kapayapaan (AKKAPKA)

Reactor:

Dr. Belinda Aquino
Director, Philippine Studies
Program
University of Hawaii at
Manoa

Open Forum

7:00 p.m. **Dinner (hosted by President Edgardo J. Angara)**

Day 2, Saturday, 31 May 1986

8:30 - 10:00 Session III

Chairman:

Dr. Carolina G. Hernandez
Chairman, Organizing
Committee, CIDS

Speakers:

**Reconstructing The Philippine
Social Order**

**Reconstructing the
Constitutional and
Political Order**

Prof. Perfecto Fernandez
College of Law
University of the Philippines

Organizing People's Power

Prof. Ponciano Bennagen
President, Ugnayang Pang-
Agham Tao (UGAT), Inc.

Reactors:

Dr. Chan Heng-Chee
Chairman, Department of
Political Science
National University of
Singapore

Prof. Yugi Suzuki
Faculty of Law
Hosei University
Tokyo, Japan

10:00 - 10:15 Coffee Break

**10:15 - 12:30 Reconstructing the Socio-
Economic Order**

**Atty. Jeremias U.
Montemayor**
President, Federation of
Free Farmers

Reactor:

Dr. Hadi Soesastro
Center for Strategic and
International Studies
Jakarta, Indonesia

Open Forum

12:30 - 2:00 Lunch Break

2:30 - 3:30 Session IV

Chairman:

Dr. Kerniel Sandhu
Institute of South East
Asian Studies
Singapore

Speaker:

**Regional Cooperation and
Philippine Development**

Ambassador Narciso G. Reyes
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Reactors:

Dr. Han Sung-joo
Director, Asiatic Research
Center
Seoul, Korea

Dr. Sukhumband Paribatra
Institute of Security and
International Studies
Chulalongkorn University
Bangkok, Thailand

3:30- 4:00 Coffee Break

4:00- 4:30 Wrap Up Session

Chairman:

Dean Carlos P. Ramos

Summing Up

Dr. Carolina G. Hernandez

7:00 p.m. Dinner (Hosted by Dean Carlos P. Ramos)

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MODES OF SOCIAL CHANGE: ARMED SOCIOPOLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

Alan Jazmines

At the outset, let me state that I speak on the subject "Modes of Social Change: Armed Sociopolitical Transformation" not as one who has taken up arms nor as one who necessarily advocates violence given any situation, but as one who understands why at one time or another those who advocate revolutionary changes have no choice but to resort to force.

In the Philippine experience, the armed factor in the social transformation has been there almost continuously, if not always. It has been there for most of the past four and a half centuries starting from the time the country was invaded and dominated by the Spaniards up to the present. The numerous scattered native and peasant uprisings against Spanish colonial and feudal rule culminated in the first national-scale revolution, the National or Bourgeois Democratic Revolution of 1896 led by the Katipunan. This was followed in time, by a long period of massive anti-American resistance during the ensuing American occupation, a short but intense period of anti-Japanese resistance during the Japanese occupation in World War II, the sporadic resistance by the New People's Army (NPA) under the leadership of the National Democratic Front (NDF) and the reestablished Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). This last one has been with us for the last 17 years. It intensified during the years of fascist dictatorship and has not let up even under the new situation. It will continue to grow in various forms so long as the basic changes it seeks are not met by the government.

Aside from the main revolutionary forces mentioned above, there have been many others engaged in armed struggle at one time or another.

There should be no doubt that what happened at EDSA during the Four Days in February was essentially an armed military revolt complemented by a massive unarmed popular uprising. Doubt about the existence of an armed component in the February Revolution blurs the structure and essence of that "revolution", and unrealistically exaggerates the role and capabilities of what is now popularly known as "people power". Definitely, "people power" has immense potentials and its deep reservoir still has to be tapped for more "miracles" in social transformation, but it should be recognized that the nonviolent

movement has its limits. The nonviolent aspect of social transformation can only be carried out so far. We can perhaps agree, for instance, that it is indeed possible that the fascist face of a reactionary state can actually be transformed into a liberal one through nonviolent means without greatly disturbing the class structure of a society, as in the modern Spanish and Portuguese experiences. But to smash the reactionary state itself and put in its place a revolutionary state, to push out of power a reactionary class ruling by means of that state and put in its place a revolutionary class ruling with a new state, a nonviolent means is not sufficient by itself.

At any rate, what is it that motivates the continuation of the armed struggle by such groups as the NPA despite the new liberal dispensation?

The last two decades or so witnessed an intense, growing armed struggle waged principally by the NDF/CPP-NPA in an effort to rid the country of what they consider the basic problems of the Filipino people, the major hurdles to social transformation and progress in the country. These basic problems are the foreign and feudal domination of and stranglehold on Philippine society. These are structurally rooted and imbedded in our system through the bureaucratic and fascist structures and forces constituting the reactionary state.

Those who have been engaged in armed struggle these past two decades believe that theirs is the principal means of overthrowing the oppressive and exploitative system which they invariably describe as "semi-colonial and semi-feudal".

The February 1986 "Snap Revolution" dramatically ended 20 years of fascist tyranny in the country and brought about a new liberal democratic dispensation. And yet, the insurgency continues to grow. Why?

It is the belief of the insurgent forces that aside from the question of fascism which has been tucked away for now (but which has begun rearing its head again), there remain many basic problems that continue to tear this nation apart and, if not resolved satisfactorily, can still lead to the downfall of the present government. The observation grows that the present situation is quite tenuous, and even volatile.

Let me dwell then on how the perceived basic problems have taken shape in the new situation and what the prospects are for the alleviation of these problems in the near future.

First of all, the danger of a fascist revival looms. It is not far-fetched at all. Actually, the fascist forces have in the main remained

with us all along. They lie dormant for now, but are very much coiled up to spring back, given the opportunity, motivation, and leadership.

And this is because the so-called February Revolution was actually shortchanged in such a way as to preclude the full dismantling of the fascist dictatorship. Much of its forces remains in place, especially the military, which actually is the heart of the fascist machine and is the most intact of the fascist machinery used by the Marcos regime. With or without Marcos, the fascist forces have a strong comeback potential.

For one, there are pseudo-reformists now very influential in the Armed Force of the Philippines (AFP), rabidly laying the foundation for a takeover, or at least the exercise of a very strong influence by a professional military mafia in the government. Just as they would work and plot to overthrow a government that embarrassingly knew no limits to its corruption, they can also very well work and plot to overthrow another government which, in their opinion, is too incompetent and/or too weak, especially against the forces of dissent. In fact they have been making a show of wanting to lynch some "left-leaning" Cabinet officials closest to the President, but actually their target of attack is the President herself.

It is most important for them that the public is presented with a fresh-scented image of the military and this is why they are alarmed by the activities of the Human Rights Commission of Senator Diokno, and have expressed strong opposition to this probe body. They have skeletons in their closets, many of them having been implicated in many cases of torture, disappearances and other human rights abuses. That is also why they are asking for equal amnesty — accordingly, if amnesty is at all to be given to armed dissidents, then it should also be given to military officers and men who may have committed human rights abuses. In view of their continuing military setbacks in tactical battles with the NPA, they believe that investigations into the military's human rights abuses would only tie down the hands of the military in its current campaign against the NPA.

This line of reasoning reminds one of the celebrated Costa-Gavras movie, "The Investigation of a Citizen above Suspicion", a story of how the fascists in modern Italy work to protect the image of the police even if its members commit crimes.

With this kind of thinking, they become more dangerous fascists because their bigotry acquires ideological underpinnings.

We who have spent time in political prisons have a basis for saying this. In fact, we have intimate knowledge about this. You see, many of

the pseudo-reformists were the most cruel torturers and killers of detainees or suspected rebels.

The more immediate threat, however, as far as the revival of fascism is concerned, comes from the Marcos loyalists, perhaps from Marcos himself. He has recovered from the initial shock of the February uprising that drove him out of Malacanang. Now he is methodically laying down and orchestrating a well-funded plan for a possible comeback and recovery of power. The series of loyalist rallies; the convening of the rump Batasan; the claim of Arturo Tolentino to the Vice-Presidency and to the Presidency ("in an acting capacity"); the setting up of new newspapers; fresh overtures to certain government and military officials; his new tack in addressing his supporters – all these seem to be part of his plan. Actually, Marcos and his loyalists are only waiting for the ripe time to act. This will be when the problems of the present government become so debilitating as to provoke the military into making serious, even bloody, mistakes. They and their guns, goons and gold are also waiting for the next round of elections, confident that they can move more muscle and money than the Yellow forces can muster. Aside from the noisy loyalists outside the government, Marcos has many sleepers in the government and in the military. It is an understatement to say that he and his forces should not be disregarded.

In the countryside, however, the overriding issue is not simply the revival of fascism, but rather the upsurge of fascism, even as it has taken a respite in the cities. Perhaps because there is hardly any change in the military situation in the countryside, the rural folk generally continue to feel hostile towards the military. This may especially be so because they continue to be faced with the same military who had committed abuses and inflicted terror upon them and unfortunately are still doing so. Especially in the countryside, can we really expect that the Four Days in February would have revolutionized and "conscientized" the military down to the lowest units in the far-flung barrios, so easily and so soon? Has there really been much change in the AFP, except for the addition of the word "New" and except, of course, for the departure of General Ver and the henchmen of Marcos and Ver in the AFP?

At any rate, for as long as there is danger of a fascist revival, the NPA will not come down and lay down its arms. It will welcome a ceasefire, even an indefinite ceasefire and not only a 6-month ceasefire. But for it to consider its mission ended and its existence no longer necessary, it will have to make sure first that the conditions for such are