

Explaining Philippine Authoritarianism: Martial Law in 1972

ALEX BELLO BRILLANTES, JR.*

The various explanations for the imposition of martial law in 1972 can be grouped into five major types, which, in turn, can be broadly categorized under two perspectives, the official and the alternative perspectives. The interplay of several imperatives including Marcos' efforts to perpetuate himself in power, the need to preserve economic and security interests of the US in the Philippines and the efforts to depoliticize the lower classes who were demanding fundamental structural changes, have influenced the decision to impose martial law.

Introduction

Why did President Marcos impose martial law in the Philippines in September 1972? What were the major factors taken into consideration when he made that decision? What sectors of society influenced the decision, one way or the other? This research tried to provide some answers to the foregoing questions.

In addressing these questions, I started out with an examination of the various explanations of martial law. I came to the conclusion that the explanation of martial law one held was largely determined by the perspective adopted. I therefore prepared a categorization of perspectives, and the accompanying explanations. This was largely based on (1) a review of literature on martial law in the Philippines and (2) interviews with key respondents, some of whom participated in the planning and implementation of martial law. Most of the respondents interviewed directly or indirectly affected the President's decision to declare martial law in 1972. The respondents included, among others, military officers, cabinet members, senators, constitutional convention delegates, supreme court justices, US ambassadors, and student leaders.

*Assistant Professor, College of Public Administration, University of the Philippines.

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The various perspectives on martial law in the Philippines can be classified into two, namely, (1) the official perspectives, and (2) the alternative perspectives. Based on the perspectives adopted, I identified five major explanations of martial law. The perspectives and the accompanying explanations are as follows:

Official perspectives

- a. triggering crisis — martial law was imposed in response to the various leftist and rightist plots against the government.
- b. modernization — martial law, and the accompanying imposition of an authoritarian governmental structure, was a major part of the political development process.
- c. corporatist/cultural — martial law was an adaptation of the hierarchical, authoritarian and organic view of man, society and polity.

Alternative perspectives

- d. ruler's imperative — martial law was an instrument used by President Marcos to perpetuate himself in power.
- e. Marxist —
 - 1) martial law was needed in order to further integrate the Philippines into the world state and world capitalist systems.
 - 2) martial law was used by one faction of the ruling class to eliminate its rivals as a result of intra-elite competition.
 - 3) martial law was used by the ruling class to depoliticize certain segments of the population who were demanding structural changes in the society.

Summary of Findings

The more significant findings of my research concerned the evaluation of the various explanations of martial law. Based on an examination of each of the explanations of martial law, I came to the conclusion that the imposition of martial law was a result of the interplay of the following major factors:

1. President Marcos' desire to perpetuate himself in power;

2. Pressures emanating from both the world state and world capitalist systems to preserve the (mostly) American security and economic interests in the Philippines.
3. Rivalry for political and economic dominance among certain factions of the ruling class.
4. Efforts of the ruling elite to depoliticize certain segments of the population who were threatening their dominant political and economic position in the society.

To put it in another way, the imposition of martial law was a result of the interplay of several imperatives occurring within the same political and economic contest: the imperative in order for Marcos to remain in power; the imperative in order to further the accumulation processes of international capital in the Philippines; the imperative in order to preserve the security interests of the United States in the Philippines as represented by the presence of the US bases; the imperative in order for one faction of the elite to eliminate its rivals; and finally, the imperative in order to depoliticize the lower classes who were demanding fundamental structural changes in the Philippine political economy.¹

My research findings therefore led me to reject the official perspectives' explanations of martial law and accept the explanations of the alternative perspectives.

Prelude to Martial Law

The Presidential elections on November 1969 between incumbent President Ferdinand Marcos and challenger Sergio Osmeña marked one of the most bitter, expensive, and violent elections in Philippine history. It was also one of the dirtiest elections. Newspapers, radio and television broadcasts carried reports of numerous election irregularities, including massive vote-buying, ballot box-stuffing, and cheating. Thus were the conditions when President Marcos assumed his second and last four-year term of office. His opponent, alleging massive fraud and cheating, never conceded.

A few months later, Marcos' first state-of-the-nation address as a re-elected President in January 1970 was marred by violence when the presidential party was assaulted by a group of demonstrators outside the Congress building. January 1970 also marked what is now referred to as the FQS (First Quarter Storm) which was a series of demonstrations spearheaded by the student and labor sectors demanding fundamental structural changes in Philippine society.² Most of these massive demonstrations and rallies mostly ended in violent confrontation between the demonstrators and the State.

It was within this social-political milieu that President Marcos first began to publicly discuss the idea that he would seriously consider the imposition of martial law if the conditions continued to deteriorate. As it turned out, conditions did deteriorate steadily and rapidly. Demonstrations became more violent amidst allegations of infiltration by both sides, i.e., government agents vs. communist provocateurs. Four students were killed during a confrontation between the demonstrators and the police. In August 1971, the senatorial candidates of the opposition were almost wiped out when grenades exploded before them during their rally at Plaza Miranda. The President immediately suspended the writ of habeas corpus (which he was to lift in six months). The suspension of the writ was seen as a prelude to martial law. In the Greater Manila Area, bombings of public utilities, government buildings, shopping centers and other public areas continued, thus creating a climate of panic and fear among the general population. It was widely believed that the bombings were all related and were part of a bigger plan to sow terror in the population. However, it was never determined who were ultimately responsible for all the bombings and violence, including Plaza Miranda. There was an instance, however, when a Philippine Constabulary soldier was arrested for planting a bomb in one of the shopping centers in Manila. Speculations were rife: the government blamed the communists for the bombings. It was in line with their urban guerrilla warfare, said the military. But there was the other side of the coin: there were those who believed that the government was orchestrating the creation of the climate of fear and panic among the people, in order to lay the ground for the imposition of martial law. Indeed, everybody — from Marcos to the opposition leaders, to the student and the man in the street — began to talk about the impending martial law. They all had their theories as to who was responsible for the bombings and when martial law would be imposed. In fact, the *Manila Times* ran a fact sheet about martial law “so that the people may know.” The stage was set for martial law: a situation bordering on anarchy (at least that’s how it appeared in the news); a people in fear and panic; a people psychologically prepared to accept anything — including martial law — just to put a stop to the violence.

On the eve of September 23, Marcos went on nationwide radio and TV to tell the people that he had placed the entire country under martial law.

An Evaluation of the Prevailing Explanations

As mentioned earlier, my research examined the various prevailing explanations of martial law. However, I felt that it was important first of all to determine what particular sectors and interests that directly influenced — or had direct linkage to — the President’s decision to impose martial law. My findings indicated that these were the following:

1. armed forces
2. student and labor sectors
3. constitutional convention
4. supreme court

Armed Forces. The declaration of martial law over a certain area has been likened to placing it under military rule: the armed forces play a central role in its planning and execution. When President Marcos placed the country under martial law, he was supported by the armed forces. He began to develop their loyalty to him as soon as he became President in 1965, he concurrently held the position as Secretary of National Defense during his early years as President thus controlling key appointments and promotions in the military. Additionally, the appointments and rapid promotions of the Ilocano officers in the armed forces began what some described as the "Ilocanization" of the armed forces. These moves led some people to speculate that martial law was his long range plan. The President therefore developed a solid base in the armed forces that was personally loyal to him. Thus when he declared martial law he had the military's backing and support.

President Marcos, together with a small group of high military officers very secretly planned and executed martial law. The operation was successful in the sense that it caught so many people off guard, from top opposition leader Benigno Aquino, to many constitutional convention delegates, to labor leaders and student leaders. Most of those arrested (and most of those I interviewed including the President's closest aides) had an inkling that martial law was going to be imposed, but they did not know it was going to be that soon.

The President said that he decided to impose martial law on the 17th of September, or a few days before it was supposed to have been signed, i.e., the 21st. However, I documented some fundamental inconsistencies in the President's assertion. First, he contradicted himself as to the actual signing of Proclamation 1081: the document says that it was signed on the 21st. However, in a later speech, he admitted that it was actually signed a few days earlier, perhaps the 17th of September. This may sound like nit-picking but I think that such a factual inconsistency in a significant document such as this should not be overlooked. This is distortion of historical facts.

A second fundamental inconsistency concerns the date he says he decided to impose martial law: he said that he reluctantly decided to impose martial law on the 17th of September. However, he is contradicted by those I interviewed who also belonged to the select group of people (mostly mili-

tary officers) who planned and executed martial law. Two of the generals I interviewed said that the decision to impose martial law was made much much earlier than the President claims. One General said the decision was made "months ahead." Another General was more specific: "the first week of July 1972." These generals said that they knew that the decision to impose martial law was made because the President himself told one General; the other was told about the President's decision by Secretary of Defense Enrile. Both, as were the others in the select group, were given specific instructions by the President in relation to the implementation of martial law.³

A third fundamental inconsistency concerned the inconsistency between his official explanation of martial law and the legal document, i.e., Proclamation 1081. In his book,⁴ he claimed that the imposition of martial law was in response to both the rightist and leftist conspiracies to overthrow his government. However, no mention is made of the rightist plot to overthrow his government in 1081. Everything is attributed to the left.

What are the implications of these fundamental factual inconsistencies? For one thing, it reveals that the President was less than candid in his revelations. Secondly, this means that the assertion that the decision to impose martial law was a "reluctant decision" and that historical events (i.e.; the anarchy, violence, communist rebellion, etc.) "thrust the decision" upon him, is part of a larger cover-up of the conspiracy angle, i.e., that the President, together with his select group, actually orchestrated events to justify martial law.

The assertion that there was some conspiracy at the highest levels of government to lay the groundwork for martial law is not without empirical basis. This brings us to the issue of presidential intervention into the affairs of the other sectors mentioned above that had direct linkage to the decision to impose martial law. The basic argument here is that there was deliberate presidential intervention into the affairs of these sectors with the overall purpose of (1) bringing about conditions that would create tension — and violence — hence justify government intervention through the declaration of martial law; (2) setting aside the 1935 Constitution's provision disqualifying Marcos from remaining as President beyond December 1973; and (3) legitimizing and institutionalizing the martial law regime that allowed the President to perpetuate himself in power. Taken in another light, it may be argued that the efforts of the President to justify the imposition of martial law, to "constitutionalize" the extension of his term of office, and to legitimize and institutionalize the authoritarian regime took place in the following arenas: the student and labor-led demonstrations; the Constitutional Convention; and the Supreme Court. The common thread that linked these three sectors was presidential intervention into their affairs.⁵

Student and Labor Sectors. My research provided some empirical evidence of direct presidential intervention into the affairs of students and labor groups (especially during their demonstrations). The specific purpose of such infiltration was to create conditions of tension which usually erupted into violent confrontation between the demonstrators and the agents of the State. Such a situation led to the aggravation of the already tense situation in Manila, thus providing excuse for direct government intervention — such as the imposition of martial law.

Former presidential aides told me about instances where there was presidential intervention into the affairs of the student and labor sectors. For instance, one example of such intervention came in the form of providing funds to rival political factions in the University of the Philippines, without the knowledge of the other faction. Additionally, the Malacañang conduits through which the funding was transmitted to the students were not aware themselves that the rival faction was also being funded by Malacañang! According to one former presidential aide interviewed, the only motivation for such double-dealing by Malacañang was to promote tensions between the rival student groups which could even escalate into violence, and thus provide excuse for open and direct intervention by the government. Moreover, two former university student leaders had some personal knowledge and experience of intervention and infiltration by agents provocateurs into their ranks at the time martial law was imposed. These infiltrators were unmasked by the students as government agents.

Constitutional Convention. Convened in 1971, the Constitutional Convention (ConCon) was the culmination of a series of moves in the legislature to draft a new constitution that would replace what was felt to be an old, outmoded and unresponsive constitution. It was seen by many as a hope for carrying out reforms in Philippine society. Unfortunately, the ConCon was transformed into the arena wherein the political future of President Marcos was determined. This single issue polarized the delegates into either the pro-Marcos or anti-Marcos camps. All this occurred amidst allegations of presidential intervention. From the day that it convened up to the declaration of martial law, there were incessant allegations that the ConCon could not perform its tasks independently because of efforts by the President to intervene in its affairs, specifically with reference to the issue of his continuance in office beyond that allowed by the 1973 Constitution. In May 1972, Delegate Eduardo Quintero revealed on the Convention floor that he and many other delegates were regularly receiving money from Malacañang ostensibly to help defeat the ban-Marcos proposals. However, at the height of the polarization of delegates, martial law was imposed. Consequently, some delegates were arrested, some went into hiding and some left for the United States. A few months later, a new constitution tailor-made for Marcos, i.e., one giving blanket constitutionality to his martial law administra-

tion and allowing him to be President beyond that allowed by the 1935 Constitution, was approved by the Convention.⁶

Supreme Court. Armed with martial law powers and with a new constitution, the President still needed legitimacy, i.e., legality and constitutionality. This was provided by the Supreme Court. The President, through counsel, appeared before the Court and submitted the martial law dispensation to its jurisdiction. Indeed, one of the claims of President Marcos that he is not a dictator is that if he were one, he would simply have abolished the judiciary. He repeatedly asked: "what dictator would submit himself to the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of the land?" However, there were numerous instances of presidential intervention into the affairs of the Court thus jeopardizing its independence.

The President consulted at least with one member of the Court, Justice Fred Ruiz Castro, about the imposition of martial law. However, Castro did not disqualify himself from participating in the deliberations of the Court pertaining to the constitutionality of martial law. This case already casts some doubt upon the so called "independence" of at least one Supreme Court Justice who later became Chief Justice.

Presidential intervention into the affairs of the Court was more pronounced after the imposition of martial law. Right after martial law, numerous cases were filed before the Court challenging its constitutionality and legality. While the Court was deliberating on these cases, the President met and consulted with some selected justices — in one instance even bringing them clandestinely to Malacañang — about the legal implications of martial law. Such intervention led to the early retirement of Chief Justice Concepcion as a sign of protest.

How do the various explanations of martial law fare in the light of the above discussions? At this point, only two explanations may be readily evaluated: the triggering crisis explanation and the ruler's imperative explanation. To a certain extent, these two explanations are mutually exclusive. It may be concluded that the above documentation casts some serious doubts as to the validity of the triggering crisis explanation and adds credence to the ruler's imperative explanation.

Other Official Explanations

My research also evaluated the two other official explanations of martial law. These were the modernization explanation and the corporatist/cultural explanation. These explanations have their theoretical grounding in the writings of Huntington on modernization and Wiarda on corporatist/cultural. Their arguments have been appropriated by the Marcos regime and its

apologists to provide justification for the imposition of some form of authoritarian government in the country. For instance, modernization theory justifies martial law by saying that the turn to authoritarian governments by the so-called "developing countries" is normal, i.e., that it is part of their development processes. Economic development has to take place ahead of political development. Corporatist/cultural theory argues that the imposition of authoritarian governments in Third World countries is an adaptation to their supposedly indigenous authoritarian traditions, reflective of their culture and values. At best, these theories may be applicable to specific cases of certain nations (e.g., in Latin America). At worst, they provide intellectual justification and rationalization for the adoption of authoritarian methods in countries like the Philippines. My research has demonstrated that these theories are not valid in looking at the case of the Philippines. For instance, modernization theory focuses only on a single problem of politics, that of political order. It is unidimensional and in this respect myopic. It obscures the class nature and major structural shifts occurring in the society. This is an aspect that is addressed by one of the Marxist explanations. Similarly, corporatist/cultural theories of martial law in the Philippines focus on the cultural aspects of the society, which one of my respondents said was "racist nonsense."

The Marxist Explanations

The Marxist explanations of martial law may be classified into three. First, there is the argument that martial law was imposed in order to further integrate the Philippine political economy into the world state and world capitalist systems. Second, martial law was imposed by one faction of the ruling elite to eliminate the other competing factions. Finally, martial law was a manifestation of class struggle between the ruling class and the lower classes: martial law was imposed in order to depoliticize certain segments of of the lower classes that threatened the dominant position of the ruling class.

World Systems. The United States had a central role in the imposition of martial law in the Philippines. This is the core of the world systems argument in relation to martial law. My research provided some empirical bases for such an assertion. For instance, President Marcos sent his Executive Secretary to the United States with the specific mission of explaining martial law to them. He met officials who were concerned about the security of US bases in the Philippines and the future of US investments in the country. Melchor assured them that economic interests of the US in the Philippines will not be adversely affected by the imposition of martial law. Additionally, the day after martial law was imposed, President Marcos sent a representative to the commanders of the US bases to assure them that their presence in the country will not be jeopardized.

There is the argument that Marcos actually sought clearance from the US before he declared martial law. This is based on the assertion that two days before martial law, Marcos had a long meeting with then US Ambassador to the Philippines Henry Byroade. After that meeting, Byroade sent a series of cables to Washington warning that martial law was going to be imposed in December. However, it was declared three months earlier.

There is some basis for this argument. The date Byroade stated in his cables was immaterial. The secrecy of the date was very vital for its successful implementation. What was important was there were no objections from the US. I asked Byroade about this. He said that indeed, President Marcos on numerous occasions mentioned to him (Byroade) that martial law may soon be imposed. No strong objections on the part of the US were raised which may have been taken to be tacit approval. As events later showed, such approval was manifested through the significant jump in both military and economic aid given to the Philippines immediately after martial law. No statement of condemnation — or even concern — was issued by the State Department as it did, for instance when Park Chung Hee placed Korea, also a US ally, under martial law in October 1972.

Finally, mention must be made concerning the issue securing the future of US economic interests in the Philippines. It may be recalled that prior to the declaration of martial law, the Supreme Court issued the Quasha and Lustevenco decision. These rulings were detrimental to the economic interests of the United States. The Quasha decision declared, among other things, that all private agricultural lands acquired by US citizens in the Philippines since 1946 were acquired illegally. Additionally, foreigners — including Americans — were prohibited from sitting in the boards of certain corporations in sectors of the economy reserved exclusively for Filipinos. After the imposition of martial law, these Supreme Court decisions were reversed by a provision in the martial law (1973) constitution.

There is therefore no question that the imposition of martial law was good for the security and economic interests of the Americans in the country. My research has documented the fact that they were at the very least, informed of presidential plans to impose martial law. And they gave their approval first, by being quiet about it (as against the experience of South Korea), and more significantly, by increasing both military and economic aid to the martial law regime.

Intra-elite Conflict. The second major explanation of martial law that flows from a Marxist perspective concerns the emphasis on the intra-elite rivalry that was taking place at the time martial law was declared. Such intra-elite conflict was manifested in the increasingly violent elections and in the increasing number of private armies. It was a status symbol for a Congress-

man or a Senator to have a private army. It was also manifested in the Constitutional Convention which was, as seen earlier, polarized between the pro and anti Marcos factions. Finally, the highest manifestation of intra-elite rivalry was the conflict between President Marcos and Vice-President Fernando Lopez.

In all these cases, one faction of the elite, headed by President Marcos was able to eliminate his rival factions through the instrument of martial law. The congress building was closed by the military. Congress itself was abolished. Numerous opposition senators and congressmen were arrested. Their private armies were dismantled. Many prominent anti-Marcos Constitutional Convention delegates were also arrested or went into hiding or exile. The properties of the Lopez clan were confiscated by the regime without any just compensation. With the elimination of the traditional elite opposition came the rise of a new elite, mostly cronies of the President who were given control and near monopoly over key industries in the economy.

Class Struggle. The third Marxist explanation of martial law concerns the use of martial law as an instrument to depoliticize certain segments of the population belonging to the lower classes who were demanding fundamental structural changes in the society. For instance, there was a public clamor for the nationalization of certain industries. There were demands for redistribution of wealth and property, land reform, and even for socialization. Demands were also made for the removal of the US bases in the country. All these assumed highly nationalistic overtones. The student and the labor movement spearheaded these moves. When martial law was imposed, many of the student leaders and labor leaders were arrested. Demonstrations and rallies (also referred to as the "parliament of the streets") which were the main channels used by these classes to air their demands and grievances, were banned. Strikes were outlawed.⁷ Elections were cancelled.

The government then went ahead and organized its own corporatist citizen-participative mechanisms to further legitimize itself, i.e., to demonstrate that there was a semblance of participation by the lower classes. Referendums were held, and government sponsored labor unions organized. So-called grass roots organizations, such as the barangays, served as sounding boards for the government propaganda and as the main instruments for manipulating public opinion.

Conclusion

This research tried to examine the reasons for the imposition of martial law in the Philippines in 1972. Its findings indicate that it is a complex question with a complex answer. Martial law was not simply an instrument used by one man to perpetuate himself in power. Although this certainly

was a reason as documented by the research, it was not the only reason. The explanation of martial law must be put in a broader historically specific context, located in the world systems, without, however, neglecting analysis of the classes internal to these systems. Indeed focus must be made on the impact of pressures from the world systems upon the Philippine political economy. After all, the Philippines is highly integrated into the world state system and world capitalist system. Equal emphasis must be given to internal class dynamics operating within the social system.⁸

Endnotes

¹The Civil Liberties Union of the Philippines (CLUP) issued a statement on the "State of the Nation after Three Years of Martial Law" in 1975. My explanation of martial law is similar to theirs. According to their statement, "martial law was the result of a confluence of needs. It answered the need of the President to stay in power. It answered the need of the Filipino elite to continue to enjoy and add to their wealth and privilege. And it answered the needs of the US government and business interests to protect US bases, secure US investments, and allow easier entry and greater scope for foreign capital." However, the CLUP explanation does not address the issue of how martial law was used to depoliticize certain segments of the population. Their explanation falls squarely into the ruler's imperative and Marxist perspectives. Parenthetically, it might be noted that when I was still preparing the proposal for this research, I discussed my conceptual framework with former Philippine Senator Jose W. Diokno. When he saw a crude diagram I made to represent the various perspectives, he immediately commented that the CLUP's explanation of martial law was the same. Diokno was one of the co-editors of the CLUP statement cited above.

²These included demands for the nationalization of certain industries, redistribution – through socialization – of wealth and property, and land reform. These demands were coupled with those raised by the nationalists demanding the removal of the US bases from the Philippines.

³For instance, one General interviewed was responsible for the arrest of hundreds of people believed to be "subversives." According to him, he was given a list by the President which was compiled by the intelligence of the armed forces. The compilation of names of those to be arrested was so thick, (around two inches) that he told the President that "if I could arrest at least 5 per cent of those in that compilation, then I would consider that to be very successful." The list was returned to General Paz of the intelligence (who incidentally was not in the select group) and it was trimmed down to a more "manageable" list. General Fabian Ver was assigned the responsibility of securing the perimeter of Malacañang.

⁴Ferdinand E. Marcos, *The Democratic Revolution in the Philippines*, (Manila, 1977), pp. 138-139.

⁵Another major sector that must not be ignored is the communist movement and its military arm, the New People's Army (NPA). Much of the bombings and violence in the Greater Manila Area have been attributed by the Government to the NPA, i.e., such violence was in line with their urban guerrilla warfare. Additionally, much of the violence that occurred during demonstrations have been likewise attributed by the government to NPA infiltrators among the ranks of the students.

There have been observations, like Casalmo's, that the NPA has been given more credit than it deserves. For instance, the President has repeatedly declared that a major reason for the declaration of martial law is the communist inspired rebellion which posed a threat to the security of the republic. However, only a year before, the President wrote that the backbone of the communist movement has been broken with as many as 46 of its top commanders killed or captured, and that the NPA was infil-

trated, weakened and pushed to the northeast mountains of Luzon. A fundamental inconsistency lies in the fact that the President claims that the NPA was substantially weakened but at the same time, claims that this same NPA with its leadership almost wiped out, is supposed to be threatening the security of the Greater Manila Area, warranting resort to the ultimate, i.e., martial law.

Another instance is the MV Karagatan incident in Palanan, Isabela in July 1972. The Government claimed that communist rebels received arms from foreign sources delivered in Isabela. However, there were numerous newspaper reports of Senate investigation headed by Senator Aquino into the incident because of claims that the supposed "arms shipment" to the rebels was only "a put-up job" by the government to substantiate its claims that the rebels were receiving external support, and thus provide further justification for martial law. This incident has in fact been cited in Proclamation 1081 as one of the major reasons for the declaration of martial law.

Finally, mention must be made of the so-called separatist movement of the Muslims in the southern Philippines, spearheaded by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). When martial law was declared, they were nothing more than what one observer described as a "rag tag band." However, after martial law, the movement increased in numbers and followers. The threat posed by the Muslim secessionist movement was therefore blown beyond proportions by the government in order to provide further justification for the declaration of martial law. It was in fact cited in Proclamation 1081 as one of the sources of threats to the security of the Republic.

⁶Of course the delegates had to be given something in return. With the absence of many of the independent minded delegates, it was easier to pass a number of controversial provisions. One of these included making the convention delegates automatic members of the transitory parliament, thus guaranteeing their future employment. Some delegates told me that such an arrangement was made with the approval of Malacanang in order to "bribe" the delegates into passing the transitory provisions as a whole, which also included allowing Marcos to remain in office beyond 1973. However, when the transitory provisions were in effect, the President called a referendum "going directly to the people" and asked them if they wanted the transitory parliament to be convened. The people supposedly voted against it, thus jeopardizing the guaranteed employment of the ConCon delegates, but not Marcos'. As one ConCon delegate put it, "we've been had."

⁷The prohibition of strikes in many industries may also be seen in the light of the regime's efforts to bring in more foreign investments. As seen in one of the martial law government's advertisements in the *Washington Post* (June 12, 1974), cheap and docile labor was one of the greatest incentives offered by the government to transnational corporations to invest in the Philippines.

⁸The inevitable question may be raised: has martial law attained the objectives for which it was imposed? Let us look at three of the more obvious objectives, one from the official perspective and two from the alternative perspectives.

Martial law was declared officially in response to the communist insurgency that was threatening the Republic. Thirteen years have passed since it was declared to stop the communist insurgency. However, by the government's own accounts, the insurgency has not been halted, but instead has grown. It continues to be a threat to the security of the Republic. Indeed, when martial law was declared in 1972 to meet the communist threat, the regulars belonging to the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines, the NPA were estimated to be only about 1,000. (*Asiaweek*, March 29, 1985). In 1985 the estimated strength of the NPA ranged from the 10,000 to 12,000, operating freely in 63 of the country's 73 provinces. Thus, if as the government claimed in 1972, martial law was imposed to meet the communist insurgency, then by applying this test alone, martial law has failed. The insurgency has grown tenfold.

One of the Marxist explanations of martial law was that it was imposed in order to depoliticize certain segments of the population, i.e., labor, students, nationalists, etc. Indeed, the years following the imposition of martial law witnessed a significant decrease in the number of strikes, demonstra-

tions, and other forms of citizen protest actions. However, in the early 80s, labor unrest increased. The number of strikes and laborers involved reached the highest peak in 1981, "the highest since martial law was declared in 1972, *indeed since 1957.*" (Miranda, 1985, p. 98) Citizen protest actions involving a cross section of society, from workers, businessmen, professionals, religious, urban poor, etc. which erupted in 1983 was sparked by the Aquino assassination while in the custody of the government. Thus, by applying this test of depoliticization of the population, martial law has also failed. Instead, the population became more politicized and radicalized because of the long years of deprivation of basic civil and political rights.

Perhaps the only "success" martial law may have achieved may be in prolonging President Marcos' stay in power from 1973 to the present. But the end of his regime seems to be in sight.

These are some areas that may be looked at when future studies examining the "success or failure" of martial law are done.