

BOOK NOTES

Recent Books on Philippine Government and Politics

by
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Aquino, Belinda A. *Politics of Plunder: The Philippines Under Marcos*, (Quezon City, Philippines: Great Books Trading and U.P. College of Public Administration, 1987), 208 pp.

This book is divided into nine chapters that piece together the corruption of the Marcos administration. It reveals details of the Marcos global empire of secret accounts, investments, art and jewelry collection, expensive real estate transactions of prime property in New York, Madrid, Rome, London, Switzerland and Austria, vouchers and bills that reflect high living of unimaginable proportions. The book includes documents which the author used such as an inventory of the U.S. Customs of the "Marcos loot", items that accompanied the couple and their entourage on their flight to Hawaii from the Philippines in February 1986. There were 300 crates that contained jewelry worth several million dollars and cash of freshly-minted Philippine pesos equivalent to US\$1.4 million, as well as other items that, according to the author, could "stock up a department store".

Brillantes Jr., Alex Bello. *Dictatorship and Martial Law: Philippine Authoritarianism in 1972* (Quezon City: Great Books Publishers and U.P. College of Public Administration, 1987), 182 pp.

This book has eleven chapters and an extensive bibliography. It focuses on various explanations on why martial law was declared in the Philippines in 1972. There were certain events and factors that

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led to the decision to impose martial rule such as internal class dynamics, (i.e. intra-elite rivalry, conflict between the elite and the lower classes); the impact of the student, labor, nationalist and other populist movements on the state; the role of the armed forces; the effect of the Constitutional Convention that was in session at the time of the imposition of martial law; and the role of the United States with its business and security interests in the Philippines. The author argues that not all events and factors regarded to have a bearing on the declaration of martial law were perceived in the same way. His thesis is that one's perspective in looking at martial law determines the explanation one arrives at. He mentions two perspectives and the corresponding explanations for martial law. One is the official perspective which justifies the imposition of martial law (triggering crisis, modernization, and corporatist/cultural authoritarianism) and the other is divided into two alternative perspectives which explains martial law as a ruler's imperative, or from a Marxist's point of view, as a function of a world capitalist system and internal class struggle.

de Dios, Aurora Javate, Petronilo Bn. Daroy and Lorna Kalaw-Tirol (eds.). *Dictatorship and Revolution: Roots of People's Power*, (Metro Manila: Conspectus Foundation Incorporated, 1988), 864 pp.

The book is divided into six chapters and an epilogue written by social scientists such as Francisco Nemenzo, Gemma N. Almendral, Ma. Serena I. Diokno, Emmanuel S. de Dios, Rigoberto D. Tiglao, Petronilo Bn. Daroy. Much of the material used for the text are primary sources. More than half of the book contains an impressive bibliography and original documents. It has for its theme contemporary Filipino popular dissent. It includes a comprehensive historical account of events leading to two major upheavals: the declaration of Martial law in 1972 and the February 1986 Revolution the "final showdown between the Filipino people and the dictatorship". There are serious and thought-provoking analyses and insights of those events. The book also chronicles the issues and ideologies of those times. It ends with a question regarding a larger "more sweeping and convulsive people's power".

de Guzman, Raul P. and Mila A. Reforma (editors). *Government and Politics of the Philippines* (Singapore: Oxford University Press and College of Public Administration, University of the Philippines, 1988), 289 pp.

This book has been written as a college textbook and attempts to explain the political world of the Philippines. Part I describes the socio-cultural and historical foundations of Philippine government and politics. Part II is about the institutions of government. These are analyzed in terms of power relationships as well their functions against the background of the successes and failures in the attempts to make constitutional government and the rule of law, rather than individuals, the political way of life. Seven major political institutions and processes are described and analyzed. The last part of the book summarizes the development of Filipino political institutions, the effects of the Marcos years, particularly the martial law period, and analyzes the direction of post-Marcos politics in the country.

Velasco, Renato and Sylvano Mahiwo (eds.). *The Philippine Legislature Reader* (Quezon City: Great Books Publishers, 1989), 137 pp.

The first section of this Reader provides a general framework and historical background to the study of the Philippine legislature. The Philippine Congress as a pre-martial law legislature is described and analyzed by Manuel Caoili in the context of Philippine power structure, its composition, its relation with the Executive and its policy output for the period 1946 to 1972. A sequel to this is the second essay written by his wife, Olivia C. Caoili. It complements the first study of the post-independence Philippine legislature in terms of power structure, composition, legislative record and adds another dimension, the Batasan's role in political order and development during the martial law years.

The second section of the book contains three essays on the current legislature. The first is by Renato Velasco on a research survey regarding campaign tactics for the 1987 legislative elections. The second essay is a profile of the legislative staff and its training requirements written by Socorro Reyes. The third article is about the

powers, structures, activities and operations of the current Philippine Congress written by Josie de Leon.

The Ninoy Aquino Phenomenon II: A Study in Peaceful Change, (Quezon City: A Publication of the Professors World Peace Academy of the Philippines, 1987), 152 pp.

This book records the proceedings of a meeting of the Professors World Peace Academy of the Philippines (PWPA) held three months after the February Revolution of 1986 that installed Mrs. Corazon C. Aquino as President of the Republic. This was the second conference convened (the First was in 1984) to look into the Ninoy Aquino Phenomenon. The PWPA analyzed this time the Ninoy phenomenon and its role in the transformation of the country from autocracy to democracy.

The volume includes articles on the images and meaning of the February Revolution by Jose V. Abueva; the cultural and philosophical dimensions of this event by Alfredo V. Lagmay; an economic perspective of the Aquino phenomenon by Tereso S. Tullao; the economic challenges facing the country by Solita Monsod; the spiritual and military perspectives by Bishop Francisco Claver and Emmanuel Soriano, respectively.

Caoili, Manuel A. *The Origins of Metropolitan Manila: A Political and Social Analysis* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1988), 280 pp.

This book is about the political, administrative and socio-economic problems of urban growth in Manila and the attempts to deal with these problems through the reorganization of a local government for the Metropolitan Manila Area. Its conceptual and theoretical framework focuses on issues about the urbanization process: whether urbanization in the Third World follows the same pattern of urbanization in Europe and North America and whether urbanization is necessary for development in the Third World or whether it is a symptom of the dependent nature of developing economics.

The study contains a historical background on the evolution of Manila as a capital and center of economic, educational and cultural activities. It describes the structural character of the Metropolitan Manila Area (MMA) and its implications on Philippine politics and urban policy. It discusses efforts at metropolitan reorganization and the creation of the Metropolitan Manila Commission (MMC) in 1975. On the whole, it provides valuable information on urban growth in the Philippines and useful lessons for the management of other urban centers in the country.

Bernas, S.J., Joaquin G. *Dismantling the Dictatorship: From MIA Tarmac 1983 to EDSA 1986 A Collection of Essays* (Loyola Heights, Quezon City: Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs, Ateneo de Manila University, 1990), 210 pp.

This book is a compilation of essays written from 1983 to 1986. It has ten chapters that reflect themes centered on the author's thoughts regarding the Marcos dictatorship and the Filipinos. The author asks in 1983 "What is it in the Filipino character that made us endow dictatorship and authoritarianism with a constitutional mantle of legitimacy?"

Fr. Bernas discusses the erosion of constitutional processes and the manner in which the Supreme Court ratified the 1973 Marcos Constitution informally. This led to the "softening (of) the judicial fiber of the Supreme Court". In his preface written in 1990, the author perceives a Supreme Court that "is not yet fully free from the temptation to please the Executive".

Taken in its entirety, the book reminds the reader of those memorable years of soul-searching, of questioning and analyzing the events and issues of that period. It also captures the gamut of emotions that were felt during those tumultuous times. But the author's reason for publishing this collection of essays brings the reader back to the question he asks regarding dictatorship and the Filipinos, he thinks that "a nation that does not look back to its history is bound to repeat its past mistakes".