

## Marcos gone, but domestic problems persist

continued from page 9.

cited specific cases to support his answers and quoted the laws reight from the articles down to the page numbers.

"When they made a move, Marcos had anticipated it four or five steps earlier. I think the only time he miscalculated was the election," said Barranda.

Barranda, however, was not really sure if the result of the election was a miscalculation.

"Ramos is Marcos' second cousin and Enrile is Marcos' long time buddy. Is it possible that when Marcos saw the writing on the wall he decided to save the skin of these two people who haven't yet been tainted? After all, the least he could do is to make sure that they would be safe. He might say to them 'Move to the other camp and denounce me so you'll be safe.' So these two became instant heroes and Cory, whether she likes it or not, had to embrace the situation. The effect of this manoeuvre is apparent. These two will stay in power. They have the military behind them and, at this point, the military can roll down and Aquino will be gone. The only thing left for Aquino to do is to consolidate power and try to keep them in peace at the same time. Could there be a peaceful behind-the-scene power play?"

Barranda believes that the martial law imposed by Marcos in 1971 was necessary.

"The Philippines was the only country with martial law that was ruled by civilians. It's a paradox. The martial law was necessary, especially if you recall the drought which caused the government to ration the rice for the Filipinos. If martial law wasn't imposed at the time, many Filipinos would have starved," said Barranda.

Bongco, however, feels that the Marcos government passed too many amendments that gave the police and military a big leeway.

"After 1983, the controversial amendment

number six was passed. It gave the president the right to be the sole decider of subversive charges."

Bongco and four of her friends were arrested once for their supposedly political activities.

"It was a freak really. We were going home from a party and it was after midnight. We didn't get a ride so we had to walk some distance to get the public transportation. I guess the police found us suspicious so they told us to stop. One of my friends panicked because she was arrested before, so we got picked up and were taken to some sort of a headquarters. It was just a building, not a prison. A lot of these arrests were really usual. We called them pick ups. Basically, they just harassed you and tried to get information out of you. We were threatened and they asked us if we knew so and so. We were detained for three days. We didn't bribe them, but we've got relatives that worked for our release. Actually, you sort of expected this risk when you attended student activities, especially if you get your pictures in the alternative press," Bongco explained.

"I guess if you were back there and followed everything that had been happening, you would get involved as well," she said.

Bongco herself had attended some rallies while she was in the Philippines. "I was involved in a theatre group called the Peryante. Our plays or performances were basically full of insinuations, and we have a lot of support from the people. We would run and perform, and then run and perform again, so this jogging rally was really exhaust-

*"Everything was normal except a few days after the election result was announced. People stored canned goods, bought gas, withdrew money."*

ing, but we were happy," said Bongco.

"If Marcos stayed in power, the Philippines would turn into another Vietnam or Cambodia. And God help us if we turn into another Vietnam. That's why Benigno Aquino went back, for fear of possible communist takeover.

"The New People's Army's (NPA) is actually an armed wing of the main communist party in the Philippines. It has 30,000 soldiers recruited from students, peasants, and even priests," Rene explained.

"Marcos tried to convince the Filipinos that he was the only alternative to a communist government. But that's not true and Cory Aquino proved that it is possible to have a non-communist government that's not a dictatorship," said Rene.

"There's a lot of speculation and doubt if she could do it. there are lots of ifs and buts. I personally wish her luck. She won't have Marcos' calibre. Marcos has charisma, like Hitler. But Aquino is strong-willed and full of determination. She also has the full support of the Church, good advisors and most importantly, the people of the Philippines," Rene said.

"I guess a lot of people in North America think that 'Oh, look at her, she's so timid, how can she make it?', but people here forget that Cory was the only candidate the Filipinos trusted in an almost desperate election," Bongco noted.

Rene was satisfied by the American stand in the Philippines election and its aftermath.

"I am sick of hearing from the news about what the U.S. can do for the Philippines, or

that the Filipinos are unable to rule themselves. That's why I think that Cory's victory really shows people that the Filipinos are capable of making their own decisions," said Rene.

"I think there was simply too much emphasis on what the U.S. thinks, or what's at stake for the U.S. When things settled down nicely, they were patting their own backs and applauding themselves as if they were the ones who solved the problem," Bongco said.

"I don't like the idea of a foreign country meddling with another country's internal matters," said Barranda. "The U.S. always tells the other countries to manage themselves the way the U.S. wanted them to or they'd sock these countries. Look at Iran when the Shah was in power, or Haiti during Duvalier's dictatorship.

"Politics in the Orient is different from politics in Western society," Barranda believes. "They have their own ways and they solve their problems the Oriental way. What's acceptable in the Orient is not necessarily acceptable here and vice versa."

Barranda said he is happy that the U.S. has (temporarily at least) allowed Marcos to stay in Hawaii. "The climate is the same as in the Philippines and a large number of the Filipinos there are the Ilocanos, which is the tribe Marcos came from. It's better than going to New York where they have more radical Filipinos."

Bongco may not like Marcos, but does not necessarily believe in revenge. "He is a sick man, leave him alone. The important thing is that there is hope for a better government for the Philippines," she said.

Rene Abada had even more basic feelings about the outcome of the elections.

"I am really happy that things have worked out well. Right now, I am really proud to be a Filipino."

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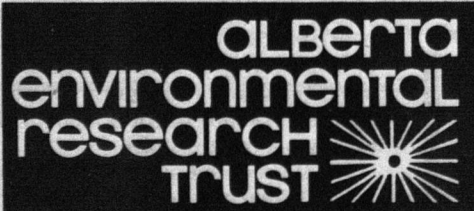
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