

# The period of new society

Society



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With the declaration of Martial Law, President Marcos popularized the New Society which he claimed was envisioned to carry out a meaningful social change. In order to create a positive image in the public consciousness as well as in the local and foreign media that he was serious in effecting these changes, he initiated the following:

1. Dismissal from office of civil servants who were found guilty of corruption and abuse of authority;
2. Punishment of drug pushers;
3. Setting curfew to solve worsening criminality rate;
4. Popularization of " Isang Bansa, Isang Diwa" philosophy to instill nationalism among Filipinos; and
5. Training of citizens to be disciplined and law-abiding.

Meanwhile, in order to entertain and relieve the people from alarming social and political problems, his government initiates the following:

1. Establishment of theme parks such as the Coconut palace in Pasay, Palace in the Sky in Tagaytay and National Arts Centre in Makiling, Laguna; and cultural institutions such as Cultural Centre of the Philippines, Folk Arts Centre and Film Centre.
2. Sponsorship of cultural shows;
3. Popularization of indigenous culture;
4. Manipulation of the contents of the newspapers and textbooks on his favour;
5. Bribery of media commentators in order to sugar-coat the programs of his administration; and 6. Publication and popularization of literature

about his political philosophy such as " democratic revolution" and " revolution from the center".

Ferdinand Marcos with Secretary of State George Shultz, 1982. Amidst the rising wave of lawlessness and the threat of a Communist insurgency, Marcos declared martial law on September 21, 1972, by virtue of Proclamation No. 081. Marcos, ruling by decree, curtailed press freedom and other civil liberties, closed down Congress and media establishments, and ordered the arrest of opposition leaders and militant activists, including his staunchest critics, senators Benigno Aquino, Jr. , Jovito Salonga and Jose Diokno. [25] The declaration of martial law was initially well received, given the social turmoil the Philippines was experiencing. [26] Crime rates plunged dramatically after a curfew was implemented. [27] Many political opponents were forced to go into exile.

A constitutional convention, which had been called for in 1970 to replace the Commonwealth era 1935 Constitution, continued the work of framing a new constitution after the declaration of martial law. The new constitution went into effect in early 1973, changing the form of government from presidential to parliamentary and allowing Marcos to stay in power beyond 1973. Marcos claimed that martial law was the prelude to creating his Bagong Lipunan, a " New Society" based on new social and political values. [28] The economy during the 1970s was robust, with budgetary and trade surpluses.

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securing his sweeping powers and with the Batasan under his control, President Marcos lifted martial law on January 17, 1981. However, the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus continued in the autonomous regions of Western Mindanao and Central Mindanao.

The opposition dubbed the lifting of martial law as a mere "face lifting" as a precondition to the visit of Pope John Paul II. [30] Marcos had a vision of a Bagong Lipunan (New Society) similar to Indonesian president Suharto's "New Order administration". He used the years of martial law to implement this vision. According to Marcos's book, "Notes on the New Society," it was a movement urging the poor and the privileged to work as one for the common goals of society and to achieve the liberation of the Filipino people through self-realization. Marcos confiscated businesses owned by the oligarchy.

More often than not, they were taken over by Marcos's family members and close personal friends, who used them as fronts to launder proceeds from institutionalized graft and corruption in the different national governmental agencies as "crony capitalism," Marcos' friends using them for personal benefit. With genuinely nationalistic motives, crony capitalism was intended to redistribute monopolies traditionally owned by Chinese and Mestizo oligarchs to Filipino businessmen though in practice, it led to graft and corruption via bribery, racketeering, and embezzlement.

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This practice considerably alienated the support of the old social and economic elite and the media, who criticized the Marcos administration endlessly. The declaration of martial law was initially very well received, given the social turmoil the Philippines was experiencing though the rest of the world was surprised at how the Filipinos accepted Marcos's self-imposed dictatorship. Soon after Marcos declared martial law, one American official described the Philippines as a country composed " of 40 million cowards and one son of a bitch"; otherwise, he reasoned, they should have risen against the destroyer of their freedom. 31]

Crime rates plunged dramatically after dusk curfews were implemented and the country would enjoy economic prosperity throughout the 1970s in the midst of growing dissent to his strong-willed rule toward the end of martial law. Political opponents were given the opportunity of compliance or forced to go into exile. As a result, thousands migrated to other countries, like the U. S. and Canada. Public dissent on the streets was not tolerated and leaders of such protests were promptly arrested, detained, tortured, or never heard from again.

Communist leaders, as well as sympathizers, were forced to flee from the cities to the countryside, where they multiplied. Lim Seng, a feared drug lord, was arrested and executed in Luneta in 1972. As martial law dragged on for the next nine years, human rights violations went unchecked, and graft and corruption by the military and the administration became widespread, as made manifest by the Rolex 12. Over the years, Marcos's hand was strengthened by the support of the armed forces, whose size he tripled to 230, 000 troops, after declaring martial law in 1972.

The forces included some first-rate units as well as thousands of unruly and ill equipped personnel of the civilian home defense forces and other paramilitary organizations. Defense Minister Juan Ponce Enrile, Chief of Staff of the Philippine Constabulary Fidel Ramos, and Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Fabian Ver were the chief administrators of martial law from 1972 to 1981, and the three remained President Marcos's closest advisers until he was ousted in 1986.

Enrile and Ramos would later abandon Marcos's 'sinking ship' and seek protection behind the 1986 People Power Revolution. The Catholic hierarchy and Manila's middle class were crucial to the success of the massive crusade. [edit] Prime Minister (1972-1981) Ferdinand Marcos with Secretary of State George Shultz, 1982. Amidst the rising wave of lawlessness and the threat of a Communist insurgency, Marcos declared martial law on September 21, 1972, by virtue of Proclamation No. 1081.

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