

THE U.P. BARRICADES — IN RETROSPECT

While the barricades straddled the streets in the UP campus, they carried different meanings to two different sectors.

To the so-called conservative and moderate citizens, in the faculty and among non-academic personnel and campus residents, the barricades represented nothing else but anarchy, breakdown of orthodox law and order, defiance of duly constituted authority — even the start of the feared revolution. However, to the students who set them up and defended them for eight days and nights — the youths impatient for change in our society, who despair of deliverance from the burgeoning evils of our political, economic and cultural systems — the barricades symbolized two things: more immediately, resistance against the entry of troops into the campus; and in a larger sense, active protest against the Establishment which is accused of perpetuating and even refining the evils of Philippine society.

The UP barricades may be likened to the Cry of Pugadlawin in August, 1896. To the Spanish authorities and the propertied gentry among the Filipinos, the Cry was unlawful, a defiance of authority, a breakdown of law and order. But to the Katipuneros, and the generations that came after them, the Cry was patriotism of the highest order.

The UP barricades remain to this day, in the minds of the timid and the fearful, an awesome thing. If conditions in the Philippines do not improve immediately, the barricades will remain an awesome thing for a lot of people for sometime. But if the barricades would contribute even a bit to the improvement of our society — as this writer hopes they would — then the Filipinos of the future would be beholden to those youths who risked lives to set them up and to defend them. History, a better judge than any one of us, will vindicate the barricades and the barricaders.

Chapter One

Blood, Sweat, Tears -- and Guts

I came to office in Vinzons Hall, about 8:30 a.m., before the first barricade went up on University Avenue. Later that morning, February 1, 1971, when I was informed that a human barricade had been set up, it was no surprise to me. The reasons: barricades were also set up last January and, after all, then as now, the UP students had expressed sympathy with the striking jeepney drivers. That there might be some unpleasant -- what an understatement, I later was to realize -- incidents in today's barricade I also did not discount.

But I was not completely prepared for the events that erupted after noon of February 1. For one thing, I didn't imagine that a UP professor would fire guns on the barricaders. For another, I didn't think that military forces would mount a massive retaliation. A few scuffles, a few arrests -- these were not improbable. How wrong I was!

About 5 minutes before 12, as I was going down the stairs of Vinzons Hall, I met some students running excitedly towards the building. "Namamaril ang mga pulis!" some shouted. Assistant Dean of Students Oscar Evangelista offered to drive me to the barricade site. Some students asked if they could hitch a ride. On the road fronting Palma Hall and the Faculty Center, we met more students running towards Vinzons (later I realized they were going to call their comrades and to arm themselves with pillboxes).

I got down behind the barricade; Dean Evangelista left to fetch his wife in Ateneo. There was much milling about of students, girls as well as boys. I saw a sprinkling of faculty members; they had been asked to leave their cars at the barricade and walk to their offices and classrooms. Up to this point, the scene was a repetition of the January barricade. This will blow over by this afternoon, I said to myself.

I walked towards Quezon Hall and saw President Lopez viewing the crowd at the barricade. He had tiny binoculars whose magnification, for its size, was a source of wonder for him. He asked me and two or three other faculty members to go back to the barricade and tell the barricaders to allow faculty members' cars inside. I understand that all morning he had been besieged -- by telephone and in person -- by faculty members who had been denied entry into the campus.

As I reached the barricade for the second time, a scuffle developed between the UP security guards (about 6 or 7 of them were standing to one side of University Ave.) and the barricaders. The

security guards were trying to remove a small tree that the students had placed across the road. (Later I was to learn that the tree, plus some rocks, were placed because half of the barricaders wanted to leave and take their lunch at Vinzons.) A pillbox exploded, but no one was hurt. A lull followed. Suddenly students began running again. Some shouted: "Si Campos, si Campos, may baril!" Discretion, which it is said comes with old age, should have come to me at this point, but still I went nearer. I saw Campos' car parked near the curb of the dividing island on University Ave. It looked to me that the car was disabled because its rear was jutting out of line, like a woman with an enlarged derriere. Then more explosions. The sharp explosions of pillboxes were mixed with the sharp ping of a shotgun. Students ran towards the waiting sheds. More explosions. I ran, too, for discretion had finally caught up with me. But as I started running, I looked back and saw a chilling sight. Professor Campos had gone out of his car, holding what at that time looked to me like a pistolized carbine or a rifle. Certainly it was not a revolver. That picture will remain in my memory for all time: he looked pale but his eyes were wide open and he had a grim smile on his face. I wondered if he would pick me out of that milling throng. More shots. I hid behind the waiting shed. Then some students came to where I was, shouting: "Sir, binaril ni Campos si Encinas!" (The true name, it turned out later, was Mesina.) I remember shouting, "Putang ina niya, bakit niya ginawa 'yon!"

There was another lull and I decided to go back to Quezon Hall. Suddenly I saw another unforgettable sight: two or three young men (one of them had a handkerchief around his head) carrying Mesina. The boy's face was towards me. Blood was spurting profusely from his forehead.

I reached Quezon Hall on a run. I went to President Lopez and told him a student had been shot. His face red and his eyes squinting (he does this when he is under emotional stress), President Lopez could only say, "I had warned him!" (He was referring to the occasion in December, I think, when he berated Campos for coming into the President's office armed.) I decided to stick with President Lopez; he seemed to be under such strain.

President Lopez and I went to the second floor. In the hallway leading to his office, we drew a curtain aside and saw students walking slowly towards Palma Hall. But a number of them were looking angrily towards Quezon Hall, particularly that part which contains President Lopez's office. Some were raising their fists and shaking them in that direction. Instead of continuing towards Palma Hall, the students took to the driveway leading to Quezon Hall. Some curious onlookers beneath the catwalk began running inside their offices; some left the building through the backstairs. Doors banged shut.

In a matter of minutes we could hear the tumult raised by the angry students. I heard invectives, glass panes being broken. Now and then a stone would thud against concrete walls. Then came rude

knocks on the heavy door separating the hallway from the area around the elevator.

"Mr. President," I said, "I think we will have to meet them." Mr. Lopez was silent, but he advanced and opened the door himself.

As the door opened, we were met by, literally, a mob. There must have been about 50 of them, boys as well as girls. They all seemed to be shouting at the same time. Some were crying hysterically; others were shouting obscenities. One boy had only his camiseta on (he either lost his shirt in the scuffle at the barricade or used it to stanch Mesina's blood). One shirt had blood stains on it.

President Lopez, speechless, advanced and met them at the head of the stairs.

I saw Eric Baculinao, chairman of the UP Student Council, and asked, "Eric, bakit!" His reply: "Bakit pinadala ni Lopez ang security without telling me."

In the roar of angry voices, hysterical shouts, and the breaking of window panes, I was able to make out the reason for the "invasion" of Quezon Hall and the angry confrontation with the UP president. They blamed President Lopez for the shooting of Pastor Mesina. If there had been no security force at the barricade, some motorists would not have been emboldened to protest, which led to a number of angry disputes. They thought Campos would not have returned with his guns if he was not counting on the UP security force to help him enter the campus. (Personally, I think Campos would have shot his way in, with or without the presence of UP security men.)

Some of the angrier students were shouting curses at President Lopez's face -- almost eyeball to eyeball. Then someone threw a piece of wood (part of the wooden divider which had earlier been wrecked by kicks) in the direction of the President. The wood hit President Lopez on the chest. Curiously, although there was so much din, I heard distinctly the thud on the President's person; it reminded me of the thud of a clod on a coffin after it has been deposited in the grave, preparatory to covering up. But the throwing was followed by the shout, "Huwag ninyong batuhin!" Suddenly the crowd broke into a song (but curiously, I can't remember now what song it was: the national anthem in Pilipino or some other song?). The song sort of calmed the crowd. (The militants always break into a patriotic song during very tense moments. They also did this the next day, when panic momentarily gripped the crowd on the steps of Palma Hall when helmeted policemen and soldiers were sighted near Abelardo Hall.)

Then another student began asking rhetorical questions in Tagalog, and after each question the crowd would answer, "Si Lopez!"

The burden of the questions was the same: it was President Lopez who sent the security to the barricade, who was responsible for the breaking up of the barricade, who was responsible for Mesina's shooting, etc. The fellow asking the questions then asked President Lopez if he had any explanation. Mr. Lopez started to speak in English, but the crowd shouted: "Tagalog, Tagalog!" I heard President Lopez say, "Ako'y Pilipino rin. . ." but he switched to English. He talked in a calm, subdued voice -- the man has guts -- but I did not hear the rest of his statement because I saw a fist-size stone in a corner (it had been used probably to smash the windows), and I went to where it was unobtrusively and stood over it. If some throwing is to be done again, I thought, that stone could hurt or even kill the President.

Two girls who had come up with the crowd were crying hysterically to one side. One of them, an IMC student, was my student. I left the stone I was covering with my feet (now I realize I should not have done that), placed an arm around the IMC student, told her: "Let's calm down and talk this over." She replied: "Sir, huwag ninyo kaming pigilin!" But I continued standing by their side as President Lopez talked to the leaders.

A complication arose when a Security Man, in spic and span uniform (I remember I wondered if he had been out in the sun at the barricade and not a spot of sweat was on his uniform), began to climb the stairs, probably to provide security to the President. (He was 15 minutes late!) Some students were stirred by sight of this security guard, and tension was rising again. I shouted to the security guard to leave us, but he had orders. He inched his way, hugging the wall as closely as he could, and stood just outside the women's comfort room. The two girls I was calming down earlier taunted him, sometimes poking fingers right near his nose, but fortunately he kept cool (I don't remember if he was armed).

As suddenly as it had flared, the students' fury died down. They had their catharsis. Had President Lopez assumed a belligerent attitude, worse things would have happened. One by one the students went down except for one big fellow who took longer to calm down than the others. In the end, he too consented to be led away.

After the last student had left, President Lopez and I slowly walked through a hallway littered with broken glass, shattered dividers, oil portraits thrown crazily on the floor or hanging askew on walls, bronze plaques which were dented because they had been used in smashing some window panes, torn curtains.

Without a word, President Lopez and I walked towards his office, feeling very lonely and tired. We plopped on the sofa in his office. "Well. . ." I said. "Well. . ." he replied. We didn't have to review the events of the past half hour. We had gone through thirty

minutes that seemed like a whole year in the slowness of its ending.

After a while, we went to the ante-room again. There were many persons this time: minor administration personnel, mass media men, janitors who began sweeping away the debris on the floor. President Lopez himself picked up a bronze plaque which used to hang under the portrait of one of his predecessors. He picked it up tenderly and brought it inside.

"Never mind this physical destruction," he told me. "It can be replaced." What he did not say, but which I understood, was that other things happened today that could not be replaced.

Compared with what was to happen the next day, Tuesday, Monday afternoon's events were mild ones. President Lopez was summoned to the meeting of the Peace and Order Council in Camp Aguinaldo, where three cabinet members ranged themselves against him. Then he went to see Mayor Amoranto in Quezon City Hall.

After a quick lunch at the campus Drive Inn, I went to my office in Vinzons Hall. That afternoon, the students put up again a human barricade on University Avenue, but the QC police broke it up, chased the students who spread out on both sides of the avenue, and arrested scores of them. When President Lopez was talking with Mayor Amoranto, some of the students went to the mayor's office and denounced the beating up they received as the barricade was broken up.

I spent a fitful night. Questions plagued me: What had happened in such a short time that the students and the Establishment, of which the UP is a proud symbol, are now poles apart? Is violence -- a sample of which we went through early that afternoon -- the only recourse to make the young and the old begin to understand each other? Why is the generation gap a veritable abyss now? In short, what went wrong?

Chapter Two

Intrusion into the Campus

My last question was: What went wrong?

The events of the afternoon of February 2 would provide the answer. The breaking up of the barricade on February 1 would be followed the next day with a massive intrusion of the armed forces; the groves of academe would resound to the explosions of tear gas canisters, guns, pillboxes and Molotov cocktails. Brute force would hold sway.

All along, since student militancy went beyond mere angry speeches and manifestoes, the State thought that force would solve the problem. The comparative ease with which the Quezon City police and the Metrocom had smashed the barricade on Feb. 1, plus the mass arrests that followed the chasing and beating up of the students, seemed to indicate that the formula would work again.

On Tuesday, the students put up the barricades again: stronger this time and defended by more students, armed with better pillboxes and Molotovs than previously. The ugly hulk that remained of Professor Campos' car was made part of the barricade on University Avenue.

Early in the afternoon, a delegation of faculty members, non-academic personnel and some students decided to talk things over with QC Chief of Police Karingal in what virtually was a no-man's-land. This was a space between the vanguard of the police and the barricade. If the armed forces were to move in and the hundreds of students were to resist, how many lives would be extinguished.

I sprinted across the grass space between Quezon and Plaridel Halls and excitedly told the administrative assistant of the Institute of Mass Communication if I could use his office phone. Tension was high. His hand was trembling as he opened his office. He helped me find Malacañang's number.

I had a crazy notion that if I could talk to President Marcos as a fraternity "brod," maybe he would order the waiting troops back. But Malacañang's phone was harder to get than one in the moon. Leo Mangaoil, the IMC administrative assistant, left me. I had to dial again and again. One time I was already connected with the office of Executive Secretary Melchor, but after a woman said, "Please hold your line," I was still holding the line -- ten minutes later. The communication gap between the President and his people was not only a personal one: it was also a telephonic abyss. I gave up, then went to the canteen on the second floor for a bite to eat.

While munching on a minute sandwich and washing it down with tepid 7-up, I saw a group, about ten abreast, of what seemed to me to be faculty members and office workers. At that time I didn't know if President Lopez was with the group. Like a sunduan crowd during the town fiesta of Parañaque, this civilian group advanced and met the officers of the Quezon City police and Metrocom soldiers. Optimism was aroused in me. Maybe the conference will succeed, I said; the soldiers would retire and the campus would be quiet again (there were only a few students left in front of Quezon Hall).

But the meeting was taking a longer time than it should. I decided to leave Plaridel Hall and find out for myself. About 20 meters from Plaridel Hall I met a man who lived in one of the areas nearby. He said: "Papasok daw ho sila," when I asked what he had learned. My heart sank.

"Matigas ho ang Metrocom. Nagbigay ng ultimatum, 30 minutes," the man said as he prepared to leave the danger zone to go home.

With so many policemen and soldiers ready to move inside the campus, I thought that I would not want to be in their part once they moved in (discretion had seized me with a vengeance!).

The phalanx of civilians that pleaded, argued, cajoled with the officers went back as dignified as they could. They had only five minutes to get out of the way. Five minutes later, a gun was fired in the air. Suddenly the QC policemen and the soldiers moved in, firing in the air. I saw cottonballs of white smoke spurt from the ground. The troops moved on both the left and right roads beside the administration hall (Quezon Hall). One jeep drove like mad over the grassy space in front of Plaridel Hall. Explosions came the direction of the engineering and arts and sciences buildings.

The QC platoon that took the left road stopped in front of Abelardo Hall, and remained standing for about 30 minutes. I wondered why they did not penetrate deeper into the campus. They were looking at Plaridel Hall, where curious students and graduate assistants were looking at the drama outside, like an audience in a rodeo. The policemen looked relaxed, and bored. Their khaki uniforms were ~~spic~~ spic and span. Occasionally an explosion would be heard but seemed so far away.

(The Manila Times was to report the next day that at 4:15 p.m. of Feb. 1, eight jeeps of QC police, augmented by 15 truckloads of Metrocom and Air Force troops and two QC fire trucks, had been dispatched to the UP. If this isn't massive retaliation, what is?

(Six students were arrested during the chase, the Times further reported, one of them a girl. About 19 were injured. They were

truncheoned and dragged into jeeps.)

A funny interlude. I saw policemen and soldiers rushing to one of the vehicles just in front of Quezon Hall. I thought they had caught a student, but it was only food that arrived for them. They must have been famished, the way they attacked that food jeep.

Later I was to learn that many of the students ran towards the Fisheries and Veterinary Medicine buildings, where they managed to leave the campus by passing through clumps of talahib, some sinking their feet in the ooze of the canals running through the area.

After the arrests and booking in the QC police precinct, the policemen and soldiers began filtering back to their bivouack area in front of Quezon Hall. Shortly thereafter, they too left.

As far as I could see, UP was deserted. But I managed to hitch-hike in Oscar Alfonso's car. He dropped me off at Timog and I had to walk for 30 minutes. When I got home, I must have looked a sight.

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The intrusion of the first day, carried out without any answering retaliation from the unprepared students, more than anything else, worsened the situation in the next days. It provided the students with a more valid justification for defiance than the barricade on University Ave. I believe that not many students were in favor of the barricade before it became a symbol of their struggle. The diehards who were themselves manning the barricade on the first day, were adamant, but majority of the students found their teachers could not meet their classes. And they were worried. After all, as Dean Cesar A. Majul puts it, beneath the rough, tough exterior of a barricader is a student who worries whether he will have classes or not. I think that if the barricade on the first day had not been smashed and if the QC police and soldiers had not entered the UP campus in the afternoon, the situation would not have got out of hand.

I will go back to what I started to say in answer to the question, What went wrong?

A state or a government that is not sure of the loyalty of its constituents, would retaliate readily and in force against any manifestation of protest or discontent. Some QC police officers later told me that as long as the lone barricade on University Avenue was standing, they were ridiculed by persons who told them: What kind of police are you, you cannot remove sticks and stones placed on the road by a bunch of kids? Wounded pride might have been a factor in the decision to invade the UP campus, but I think there was more to it than just pride. More than just an irritant, the barricade was regarded

as an act of anarchy, a defiance of "duly constituted authority." To meet it, the state used massive force. In a matter of minutes, that afternoon of February 1, the barricade was smashed, but the next day, . . .

Logs for the Barricades

I walked for about a kilometer from the Commonwealth Avenue intersection because buses, like yesterday, refused go inside the campus. When I got to Quezon Hall, I was informed that many faculty members and campus residents were demanding a dialogue with President Lopez to find out how they could go in without being stopped at the barricade. At first the dialogue was planned on the steps of Quezon Hall but it was transferred to the Operations Center on the third floor.

President Lopez was facing what impressed me as a hostile faculty. They demanded to know what the administration was going to do about the inconvenience they were having. They wanted to know who were the leaders of the students so an "understanding" could be had as to what cars should be allowed to enter the campus. I replied that right now it was hard to identify the leaders. I confessed that some of the faces I saw yesterday at the barricade were those of non-UP students. I volunteered, however, to try to contact Eric Baculinao and others, if I could find them.

As I was about to leave the room to carry out my mission, someone (was it Calabon of Arts and Sciences?) whispered to me that "the students were coming." I drew a curtain aside, and, sure enough, I saw a big and long line of students coming from Palma Hall. The males were carrying three or four logs on their shoulders; girls were marching, too. "They are coming, they are coming," I said excitedly, "now you will see how difficult it is to deal with such a big crowd." Some looked out and they saw literally hundreds of students marching towards University Ave. I told the faculty, "All right, I'll try to contact Eric. You stay right here."

But someone said the Operations Center room might not be large enough to contain all the approaching students should they decide to join in the dialogue. So I suggested the faculty all go down to the steps of Quezon Hall, where the space is much bigger.

(A pious but hypocritical clerico fascist who writes a now-and-then column for a morning newspaper, later was to say that my interruption of the dialogue to exclaim that the students were coming was part of a "script." She is lying. Or someone fed her with the wrong information, since she herself was not in the UP. The truth was, I was not prepared for the hords that was approaching, carrying logs or dragging tree trunks. As a matter of fact, when I first saw the logs (I was reminded of lines of black ants carrying twigs) I thought the logs were going to be used as battering rams, to break down the doors of Quezon Hall and that the students would occupy the building which was the heart of the university administration.

I went behind Quezon Hall and met the first log-carrying students near the branching of the road. I asked where I could find Eric Baculinao, but the answers were vague. About 20 students carried each log on their shoulders. They were marching to a cadence (their organizational genius was admirable, as subsequent events would also show).

But the logs were not carried to Quezon Hall. Instead they were put across both sides of University Avenue, where a human barricade had been set up the day before. The intent was clear: logs would be harder to smash than humans or rocks and branches.

As I could not find Eric Baculinao or Rey Vea or Fred Tirante -- officers of the Student Council whom I knew quite well -- I returned to Quezon Hall. The "indignant" faculty were on the steps watching the students place the logs across the road. I could sense the faculty's hostility towards me. One man said I had tricked them into stopping their meeting in Operations Center. I said, "Goddam, . . ." (That group of faculty members are a hopeless lot. They only think of their rights and prerogatives. That group has been more responsible for radicalism among the students than any other group.)

With Professor Juan Uy of business administration, Veterinary Medicine Dean Escudero and others, I went to the re-inforced barricade and looked for the leaders. We did succeed in getting hold of Rey Vea, whom I asked to come with me to Quezon Hall to discuss how we can ease the restrictions on entry into the campus. Vea said he'd go first to his colleagues and promised to return in 5 minutes. But he never came back.

Later I got hold of Eric Baculinao. The same thing happened: he promised to come to Quezon Hall but he would see his comrades first.

President Lopez told me he was being called to Quezon City Hall by Mayor Amoranto, and he asked me to go with him.

The mayor -- an old friend of mine -- was nice to us, soft spoken and gentle. But Col. Tomas Karingal, QC chief of police, was something else. Swarthy and hiding his eyes behind dark glasses, he was smouldering with anger. Mayor Amoranto told us that the barricades had to go. He had received many complaints, not only from motorists but also bus operators, about being turned back on University Ave. Chief Karingal kept saying he would break down the barricade. President Lopez and I pleaded: give us more time. We will convince the barricaders ourselves, but please don't let the police and the Metrocom come in. Told Amoranto and Karingal that I had already established some line of communication with the leaders but incidents at the barricade kept these leaders from sitting down with us to settle the issue.

President Lopez and I left City Hall without a firm commitment from him or Chief Karingal that the troops would not get in. But neither did they say when. We left with the feeling that the mayor was giving us some time to solve the barricade problem ourselves.

When we got back to the UP, the police and the Metrocom were still on University Ave., some distance from the barricade. I told President Lopez I would remain under the catwalk just in case Baculinao, Vea or others would want to see me. I was left alone on the steps of Quezon Hall.

Early in the afternoon Undersecretary of National Defense Jose Crisol came, wearing a Ranger's hat. At first he was in front of the Oblation, talking with Captain Clemente, Bernie Silverio (Amoranto's performance officer), and others. I asked Crisol to go with me to Quezon Hall to talk things over with President Lopez.

Instead of going to President Lopez's office, we decided to talk in the hallway fronting the registrar's office. Crisol said the UP situation "had become a comedy." As we did in Quezon City Hall, we asked Mr. Crisol to give us time to solve the problem. He suggested we keep in touch with Mayor Amoranto. It appeared that only Amoranto could give the order to enter the campus.

So the whole afternoon, there was a lull. The troopers kept their distance; the students kept theirs. As nothing was happening, I decided to go home. But that night, the dormitories were attacked.

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If the intrusion into the campus on Feb. 1 aroused and united the students of the University, the tear-gas raid early in the evening of Feb. 2 aroused the nation and polarized the people. Chasing mischievous boys throwing stones or pillboxes was not, in the minds of many, not very serious. After all, when young men fight the police they can expect some reaction. But lobbing tear gas into two dormitories for girls -- that's serious.

When Tuesday morning's newspapers, with long accounts and dramatic photographs, depicted the raids on the girls' Sampaguita and Kamia dormitories, the people were furnished eloquent proof that indeed militarization of the UP campus was underway. Alumni of the UP all over the Philippines expressed indignation and sympathy. More than any other event during the whole period of the siege, the attack on the dormitories exacerbated the situation, which, up to that afternoon, Crisol said was a "comedy."

I was not present at the raid but the accounts tallied substantially. It appears that late in the afternoon of Feb. 2, the police and the Metrocom rushed to Vinzons Hall after smashing the barricade in the rear (on Katipunan Rd.). The militants in Vinzons, including some 6 or 7 cafeteria workers, then ran in the direction of Sampaguita and Kamia dormitories, where the girls opened doors to give them refuge.

The police said later that, through a bull horn, they gave the male students inside the dormitories enough time to come out of hiding, with their hands raised. The police added that when the boys failed to come out after the given time, they (the police) charged. The students, especially the girls, say differently. They say that the police lobbed tear gas canisters into the buildings, later gave the boys an ultimatum.

What is a fact is that scores of students, mostly women, suffered from the tear gas. Their fury knew no bounds.

Lost in the drama of tear-gassed girls and arrested boys was the fact that the area of the UP eastward from Quezon Hall had been declared a "liberated area" by the students. Thereafter, it was a place to be defended even at the cost of life.

Chapter Four

The Soldiers are Withdrawn

Events moved at a dizzy pace the next day (Wednesday, February 3).

But first, a personal note. Late in the evening of February 2, Alice Lagman, a militant feminist and a member of the UP Student Council, called me up to say that "they" needed food. The decision to set up the barricade on Monday, followed by the police intrusion, had been made on the spur of the moment that there was no logistics in provisions in the first two days. I told Alice I'll bring some food the next day, as it was too late to go out that evening.

Early the next morning, my wife and I bought hot pan de sal in a Cubao bakery, and a big bunch of bananas. When we went to the UP, we found barricades all over. There must have been about 15 of these barricades, some elaborate (like those on the road fronting Palma Hall), others mere chairs-and-sticks affair. As we had many plastic bags containing bread to carry, we had to go down before each barricade to ask that some logs be removed so our Austin could get to Kamia dormitory as near as possible.

The barricaders were accommodating. They recognized me at once and removed some logs or other obstruction readily. Some got a couple of pan de sal (they said they had not had their breakfast), but the bananas were all gone by the time we reached the fourth barricade.

What a change the UP campus had undergone in just a night! At every intersection of roads, desks, tables, logs, stones -- anything that could be removed -- were straddling the way. The scene was fantastic. UP looked so different.

If the physical change of the campus was awesome, the barricaders' appearance was more so. From a distance of about ten feet, the barricaders looked like pirates -- dirty, bedraggled, hollow-eyed. Each one carried a Molotov cocktail in each hand. Coming nearer, after identifying myself, I'd recognize them as the boys who frequent Vinzons Hall, where I have been holding office for about a year now. What contrast! This barricader, for example, whose very appearance would send chills to the beholder, was, until a few days ago, a student who used the phone in my office, or asked for some mimeograph paper to print a manifesto, or talked to me about a personal problem with his parents or his instructor. Although they favored outlandish clothes and wore their hair long, they were neat, very courteous, and even meek. Now they were in a war -- a ragtag army whose hatred of the Marcos administration, the army, and the white imperialists was at white heat.

After turning in the pan de sal at Kamia, I walked from barricade to barricade, invariably recognizing one or two of the defenders at each one. I asked them if they had taken their breakfast; if not, go and get it at Kamia (where provisions had started to come in). I was reminded of the events of 1896. Bonifacio's men must have looked like these youths. And I didn't forget that the Katipuneros frequently used Diliman for their bivouacks. History had come back a full circle in 75 years! No wonder my voice broke when I appealed over Radyo Patrol (in front of Business Administration) for food, cigarets, and other provisions.

Visiting the barricaders took more than an hour. When I arrived at Quezon Hall, President Lopez said he was calling an assembly of everybody at 11 o'clock because of the repeated intrusion of the military into the campus, climaxed by the tear gassing of the girls' dormitories. But how do we assemble the community in such a short time? Radyo Patrol offered its service. It had a loudspeaker.

President Lopez himself gave the message, about 25 times. Cramped between me and the driver in the front seat of the small vehicle (not larger than a jeep), he'd say, "This is President Lopez. I am calling a meeting of the UP community at 11 o'clock this morning on the steps of the Arts and Sciences building to protect academic freedom and to protest the militarization of the U.P." We went from area to area, urging the people to attend the assembly. (SP didn't lose his sense of humor. He said: "If I lose my job as UP president, I can always be a barker.")

Students already occupied the steps of Palma Hall when the elders (faculty members, non-academic personnel, campus residents) arrived at 11 o'clock. A long haired barricader (Boni Ilagan) was recounting in flawless Tagalog the events of the past two days. President Lopez unobtrusively stood to one side, awaiting his turn to speak. When he began, the most sanguine of the oldsters were surprised: "Yes, today was the Day of the Great Conversion." A burst of applause from the students, raising of eyebrows among the oldsters.

As President Lopez affirmed his unity with the students, an activist handed him a Molotov cocktail. Laughs.

As the next speaker was speaking, the three or four students who were functioning as the lookouts on top of Palma Hall, shouted: "They are coming!" and pointed to the columns of jeeps and helmeted troopers slowly advancing on the other side of the campus, in front of Abelardo and Melchor (Engineering) Halls.

A momentary panic ensued. Some ran away. Some boys started leading in the singing of the national anthem, and the male students linked arms to cordon the crowd.

One fear gripped all. The soldiers would encircle the assembly at Palma Hall by going around it. The fearful ones somehow got through the encirclement of linked arms and began running for safety.

Somebody suggested that a delegation of the faculty meet the soldiers to talk them out of any plan they had. Finally we got about ten elderly people and we crossed the Beta Walk (hollow blocks laid out as a road crossing the space between Palma and Melchor Halls).

As I neared the deployed soldiers, I asked, "Who's in charge?" A trooper, his rifle at the ready, said it was Captain Clemente, the same QC police officer with whom I had talked the day before.

The delegation went to see Clemente. I asked him, "Major" -- unconsciously I had promoted him sooner than the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces could have done -- "ano ba ang nangyayari?" I asked. He pulled out a sheet of paper from his breast pocket and said he had orders to clear the national road.

Followed about ten minutes of pleading, cajoling, arguing. Meanwhile the deployed soldiers, on both sides of the street, had stopped in their tracks but they kept a steady eye on the windows and hallways of engineering building.

Many of the faculty members argued and pleaded, including a priest. I remember I told Clemente that the UP is going to contest in court the legal opinion of the Secretary of Justice that UP roads are national roads, so give us time to get a court ruling. Clemente kept saying, "But I am only following orders. . ."

I don't know what turned the trick. If I believe in miracles, I'd say a miracle did it. Clemente finally yielded, consenting to march his troopers back to their staging area in front of Quezon Hall. Squad by squad the troopers turned back, the jeeps (with headlights on, I don't know why their batteries should be wasted) turning back with them.

Ex-Ambassador Amelito Mutuc, who had crossed the Beta Walk with us, suggested I accompany him to Secretary of Justice Vicente Abad Santos, whose letter to Chief Karingal had been the standby of Clemente. We met President Lopez, who, with a retinue, had come from the direction of the Library and the College of Law building.

To cut the account of this day short, Mutuc and I failed to see Abad Santos. Mutuc likewise failed to convince Abad Santos (by telephone) to rescind his opinion about UP roads. Mutuc said the UP should go to court that very afternoon. I felt that job was no longer mine.

That afternoon, I was told that the senators were coming to the UP to see the situation for themselves. Senators Eva Estrada Kalaw and Helen Benitez (apparently not talking to each other), ebullient Benigno Aquino Jr., Wenceslao Lagumbay (who kept doodling), Mamintal Tamano, Gene Magsaysay (resembles a Kewpie doll), Salvador Laurel (puffing on a pipe), and Lorenzo M. Tañada (who seemed bent on grilling President Lopez). As the meeting in the President's office went on, explosions could be heard coming from the direction of the Library and the AS building. As TV cameras whirred, the senators would look out of the windows. They saw that red flags were flying over the Palma and Melchor Halls, also the Library. At one point, the UP Librarian came to raise an alarm: the Library was burning. Senator Kalaw then showed concern. "My golly, that's valuable," she said in her man's voice. For my part, I showed pictures taken of the first day of the barricades, including two showing Professor Campos holding a rifle.

The senators took matters in their hands. One group decided to see President Marcos and urge him to recall the Metrocom (whose presence, President Lopez kept saying, creates tension and makes solution impossible). Another group decided to go to the barricades (where they were met with indifference, I was later told, if not hostility).

We waited for about an hour. Then we were electrified by a secretary's words to President Lopez: "Sir, President Marcos would like to speak to you." We were silent. So much hinged on the next few minutes. Mr. Lopez kept saying, "Yes, Mr. President," as we held our breath.

The UP president put the receiver down, turned to us with a smile. "He is ordering the withdrawal of the Metrocom," he said. "Did he give us a deadline for the barricades?" I asked. "No, as a matter of fact when I suggested a deadline he said we should not have one."

What caused reason to fly in again in Malacañang?

Was it the mounting public opinion against the militarization of the campus? Did Marcos realize that his image would suffer more tarnishing?

Was it the mayors of outlying cities and municipalities (including Quezon City) who convinced Mr. Marcos to withdraw all Metrocom troops from their areas? (The Mayors had also seen the President in Malacañang.)

Was it the senators who came to the UP in their limousines and acted as though with a snap of their manicured fingers UP would go back to "normal"?

Or, did somehow the spirit of the barricaders and the girls who prepared and carried food to the barricades, the Cruz na Ligas residents who were protecting and helping the students, cross the 16 or 17 kilometers between UP and Malacañang and like a magic wand touch the heart and mind of the only one man who could ease the tension on campus?

* * *

DZUP was "liberated" this afternoon (Feb. 3), and soon was broadcasting. Had President Marcos known that in the next week and a half he would be the "featured artist" on DZUP, would he have ordered the withdrawal of the Metrocom?

These questions remain unanswered to this day. Maybe they'll never be answered.

Chapter Five

The "Liberated" Media

In the eight-day siege of the UP (February 1-8), no two events gripped the public imagination more than the seizure of the university's radio station and the printing press.

From the first day of the Emergency, the nation realized that if the armed forces wanted to come in great force, even at the cost of many lives, the barricades would have been smashed in a matter of minutes. Readers of metropolitan papers and viewers of TV saw that the barricades were not really formidable structures; they were made of objects that could easily have been bulldozed. It was plain enough that the main reason they were tolerated was because in their fanatic defense, many young lives would be lost. And President Lopez stood four square against sacrifice of lives. After a while, the barricades ceased to be a cause for great alarm.

But when the UP Press was seized on Feb. 4, and before that the radio station DZUP was likewise "liberated," the screeches of the reactionaries reached, it seemed, the heavens. The seizure of these two media proved, they said, that the UP students had mounted a revolution.

I have not much knowledge of the case of DZUP, but with the UP Press I was quite involved.

In the afternoon of Thursday, Feb. 4, I was holding office in the office of Vice President Alejandro M. Fernandez on the second floor of Quezon Hall. I was talking with a group of professors and some non-faculty personnel about the coming work of a Working Group which had been created to deal with the leaders of the Student Council with regards to the barricades, among other things. Earlier that day, I had somehow got through to Eric Baculinao and convinced him that a Working Group could deal with him and his companions if only we were to sit down for an hour or so.

As we were seated around a long table, Fernandez came in, solemnly said that "they" (meaning the students) had "broken into" the UP Press and are trying to run the machines. In my mind's eye I saw the door to the press smashed down and the presses in shambles due to ignorance of their mechanisms. Our nerves were frayed due to the events of the past three days; there was a sharp debate because someone (I'll spare his name) said, if necessary he'd order the UP security force to get back the press by force. But I had in mind not only the probable loss of lives, not only of the students but also of the security men (for obviously the students would not have entered

the press without arming themselves for an attempt of authorities to get it back). Moreover, the linotypes, the flatbed presses, and other equipment might be destroyed in the struggle. (Personal note: that UP Press has some sentimental value for me: it printed the Philippine Collegian when I was the editor, and I was the secretary of the UP Alumni Association when the UPAA sold the press to the UP.)

Vet Med Dean Escudero, Pacifico Aprieto (manager of the press) and myself decided to see if we could enter the shop and talk with the students who had seized it. Contrary to my fear, the door had not been bashed in. As a matter of fact, one would think it had not been entered at all. The lock on the door had been neatly removed; the shop was barred in the inside.

I knocked on the door and shouted: "This is Dean Malay --- will you open up, please?" The door opened and we three were surrounded by about 4 or 5 students, dressed like their companions at the barricades. One big young man (I remember he had a blackened eye) was seated before a linotype machine and was tentatively pressing the keys. He was setting in type an article written on white bond paper.

"Look, fellows," I said, "I know you want to use this press and you have a right to it. But this belongs to all of us --- not only you. If these machines are destroyed because of mishandling, all of us in the UP will suffer."

The boys said they would try their best to preserve the equipment. One of them was already poking the buttons in the flatbed press, trying to dope it out.

"If I get you two or three regular pressmen, will you promise not to touch these machines for about an hour or so?" I asked. "We shall try to get you one or two linotypists, a makeup man, and others you might need." (Aprieto said some of the press employees lived nearby and we could get them)

The boys knew a good thing when they saw it. They agreed to wait for an hour or so. I told them of the danger of "outsiders" coming in, destroying the machines so the blame would fall on them. "We will sleep here tonight, sir, to guard it," they promised.

Aprieto was able to get three or four press men and he brought them to the press. That whole night the shop was busy. When the first issue of Bandilang Pula (with colored nameplate yet!) came out on Feb. 5 it was as neat a paper as one could wish. And the contents were sober --- more sober, in fact, than some issues of the Philippine Collegian.

Now, did we do wrong in "legalizing" an "illegal act," as I was accused during the short exchange of words in Quezon Hall before we three ventured to the press? True the UP Press reported a loss of ₱6,483.75 (₱6,357.75 in equipment and ₱126 in supplies), but this loss would have been much bigger had the UP security or any other force attempted to get back the press in force. And fire was not unlikely.

On the 12th, a full one week later, a second (and so far the last) issue came out. As one who has been associated with newspapers and publications for the last 40 years (since high school), I can say that Pulang Bandila is a good paper: militant, clearly written and clearly printed. Some metropolitan newspapers cannot hold a candle to it.

* * *

As I said earlier, I am not well informed on the case of DZUP. It was "seized" earlier (Feb. 3), but news of its broadcasts did not get around until Feb. 4 and 5. For one thing, nobody (but nobody) had been listening to it before, even when it was improved to cover not one kilometer as before but five kilometers. It used to start broadcasting at 5, and judging from the never-changed bulletin board describing its daily program, it was not the kind of radio program that would attract listeners ("Thoughts at Evening," "Voice of the Alumni" -- that sort of thing!)

Suddenly, as news of the "new DZUP" spread, everybody in Quezon City, especially the university community, was tuned in on DZUP. "1410 kilohertz" became a byword. In my own house, the radio was tuned in at "1410" all day and night.

Unfortunately, unlike Bandilang Pula which surprised many by its sobriety, DZUP had its lapses. Because of the spontaneity of its messages, and the long time in which it was on the air (sometimes as much as 20 hours, I understand), the language sometimes descended to the level of the gutter. Because they were unrehearsed, and, carried away by their emotion, some of the speakers used vituperatives that were more remembered than the messages they sought to convey. In that sense, such program is a failure (when listeners remember the unimportant and forget the real message).

But to the credit of the young men and young women who operated DZUP during the siege, they corrected their mistakes. Take the case of a recording of a supposed bedroom conversation between a girl named Dovie Beams and a high government official. It so titillated the curious that they tuned in on DZUP in the hope the particular recording would be replayed. There was an attempt, of course, of the announcer to show the relation between the intimate conversation and the ills of our society, but just the same thousands cared more for the sighs and the "Pamulinawen" part than for the "relation" to imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism. After one replay, the DZUP stopped the Dovie Beams recording, for good.

To complete the account for this day (February 5):

We drew up a list of faculty members whom we thought the student leaders would like to talk to, to normalize the situation in the UP. Eric Baculinao saw the list I had prepared, and he had no objection to the list. So I told him to send a delegation of students of the same number as that in my list, so we could draw up working agreements for normalization.

Unfortunately, after I had called the faculty members to a meeting in Quezon Hall, Baculinao sent a representative to me who said that two in the list should be scrapped. It was my painful duty to notify these two that, to save the situation, would they please decline membership? They graciously did.

Unfortunately again, the promised student leaders failed to show up, though I and the members of the faculty Working Group waited for them until evening. I was to learn later why. Instead of collaborating with my Working Group, the students decided to form a Provisional Directorate for the "Diliman Commune."

Formation of the Commune drew varied reactions. To the alarmed, it was proof positive that the radicals intended to supplant not only the UP administration but the very government itself. The term "Diliman Republic," bandied about with impunity in halcyon days, was now a reality, although republic (which had become almost synonymous with American democracy) was, romantically, changed to commune.

President Lopez dismissed the "Diliman Commune" as fiction, a myth. He refused to recognize it, to have anything to do with it. "We can only deal with the Student Council," he told me. As a matter of fact, neither in talk nor in writing did we ever refer to the "Diliman Commune."

As a matter of fact, in the Philippine Collegian of February 10, 1971, in the long editorial on Page 10, there appeared this paragraph:

"The failure to concretely assess the concrete situation as it was happening early during the past week and the failure to immediately conceptualize events led to subjectivist ideological errors. On the one hand, there was the dogmatist error of trying to impose the idea of a 'liberated area' or a 'Paris commune' on conditions which would not warrant the imposition of such."
(Underlining supplied)

On the other hand, in the same issue, there were many articles hailing the formation of the "Diliman Commune."

I suppose in Vinzons Hall, for a long time to come, the question would be debated: Was the "Commune" an error or a right thing?

Picking up the Pieces

I had previously recounted how President Lopez, after being confronted by a mob of 50 crying, cursing, hell-bent students on Feb. 1, tenderly picked up a bronze plaque on the littered hallway and put it aside.

Like a seasoned diplomat, he had ridden the storm. He did not buck the fury; it would have been catastrophic. But as soon as the violence had reached its zenith, he began to pick up the pieces, like he did with the plaque, although, as he said at a press conference, "UP will never be the same again."

Because he was often called to conferences or meetings (In Quezon City Hall, in Congress, in Camp Aguinaldo), President Lopez entrusted some of the decision making to the Working Group.

One will be surprised what some of the things that people asked me to do:

(1) The employees of the PNB branch in Vinzons Hall wanted me to give them a pass so they could enter Vinzons and get their records out. I told them such a pass would have no value if some elements would bar them.

(2) The owner of a motorcycle with a sidecar, which had been commandeered, asked me to get the motorcycle (the sidecar had been detached and became part of the barricade in front of Quezon Hall) back. I told the owner that Baculiniao could solve his problem, not I.

(3) Two girls wanted me to seek "two or three" infiltrators they were sure they saw in Palma Hall. (Did they think I was James Bond?)

(4) Telephone calls asked me when classes would be resumed. In my confusion and frustration, I lapsed into the editorial we. "Resumption of classes is farthest from our mind," I said, and promptly it was quoted in the newspapers.

(5) One time some barricaders asked me to send word to another barricade that they had not had their breakfast and could they send some bread? As I turned to carry my "mission," one boy said, "Sir, will you also tell them to send us some more Molotovs? We are short."

President Lopez would be the first to admit that during the

first few days there was indeed some breakdown in administration. The reason was simple enough: we were not prepared for such a situation in which the administrative officials who stuck around were caught between the military forces that were itching to come in and the militants who were determined to keep them out. President had to do many things at the same time, and often he had to go to Manila to stand rigid questioning on what is being done. In the vacuum that was sometimes created, a few faculty members had to step in, although the extent of their authority had not been defined. As Dean of Students I found myself filling the vacuum sometimes.

But as the days wore on, President Lopez got better hold of the situation. He was picking the pieces with three guidelines to go by, in the order of their importance:

1. Save lives, as much as possible, especially of the students.
2. Defend the academic integrity of the University by resisting the entry of QC police or troops in mass.
3. Save as much of the physical plant as is possible while carrying out the first two objectives.

* * *

The first big step in normalization was the operation of a bus shuttle service. Before the intrusion by the Metrocom became the issue, it was the inconvenience suffered by those who had to get down at the intersection of Commonwealth and University Avenues (buses would not proceed farther). Motorists, too, were indignant; as a matter of fact, they were more vocal in their indignation than the poor people who depended on buses or jeepneys to move about. Unwilling to use their feet even for a hundred meters, these motorists had been besieging Quezon Hall, the Department of National Calls, even Malacañang with calls protesting the "anarchy" in the UP.

Baculinao and his companions recognized, too, that they had to do something about the transport problem. The Working Group drew up certain guidelines on the entry of some kinds of vehicles in the campus. The following vehicles, it was agreed, would be allowed entry:

Those carrying food or sick persons or on missions "vital to community life"; UP official cars (except UP security cars), private cars owned by UP residents on campus, and properly identified mass media vehicles. Private cars owned neither by UP residents on campus nor by UP faculty members and employees, shall be left on Emilio Jacinto St., leading to ALEC.

More importantly, we placed three UP vehicles on service to carry area residents. Two shuttled back and forth on University Ave., a third, smaller one brought people to the various residential areas.

The first trip was at 3 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 6. As I stood on the steps of Quezon Hall, watching the buses disgorge women and men who had been walking about a kilometer in the last five days, I felt as if a big thorn had been extracted from my side. Every passenger was smiling, not believing that they had actually ridden for free and carried to their doorsteps. They waved, smiled, and almost all cried out: "Salamat po!" The heartbreak of the past days was melting -- we had licked one problem!

But solving one problem did not mean solving the others. In addition to the red flags which earlier had been mounted on the Library, Palma and Melchor Halls, new names had been painted on the facades of buildings. The Faculty Center became the Jose Ma. Sison Center; Quezon Hall became Kom. Dante Hall, the Library (named after ex-President Bienvenido Gonzalez) became Amado Guerrero Hall. Abelardo Hall was baptized Tanghalang Bayan. On Palma and Melchor Halls, revolutionary slogans were scrawled in red paint.

I myself saw a faculty member painting a slogan in the wall behind Quezon Hall. Should I have stopped that faculty member, who turned around when I appeared on the catwalk in Quezon Hall? I said to myself: they have "liberated" the academic quadrangle, they have "liberated" the UP Press and the radio station, they have established a "Diliman Commune" and installed a Provisional Directorate (rolls well on the tongue) -- why shouldn't they have one more fling? We were rolling back on the punches; one more roll wouldn't make much difference. Let me explain this remark.

When President Lopez asked me to be Dean of Students in April 1970, he did not minimize our coming problems. Student activism was fast gaining ground and the students were becoming more demanding. After I made up my mind to accept President Lopez's offer, I told him: "Sir, we will have to roll with the punches, but let's put in a few licks ourselves." He laughed.

The "baptism" of four buildings with revolutionary names was the last "roll." As a matter of fact, it was anti-climatic. The canvass had been repainted, let the "artist" make his signature. Actually, it took only a few brush strokes to paint the names over. Attribute it to romanticism.

There were more pressing matters to occupy me on Feb. 6 (a Saturday) than worrying about new names on buildings.

When I arrived at the first barricade that morning, I was told that the police and Metrocom had smashed early that morning the barricade on Katipunan Road. Three students were hurt. I decided to pass by the infirmary. On my way, I peered down the path between Narra and the Teodora Alonzo (home economics) Building. Sure enough I saw men in khaki lined up on the farther side of Katipunan.

Of the three students who were casualties in that morning's battle, one, a certain Bello, suffered most. He had a gunshot wound on the shoulder. The others had minor injuries, one of them being a wound in the ankle caused by a pillbox.

"Okay, boys," I said, "get a good rest."

"Yes, sir," one of them said, "so I can get back there." "There," of course, meant the barricades. With such courage, I told myself, how does the State hope to ever turn back the youths' revolution? There was no whimper, not even an accusation against the troopers who shot them. All they wanted was to be well again to fight once more.

I passed by Engineering, waved to the four or five small figures on the roof, beneath a red flag. (Later, some of them were to say that they recognized me on the street below and had waved.)

By this time the area residents had mustered enough determination to hold a meeting on the stairs of Quezon Hall. Now they want to be part of whoever was running the University, whether it is the working group or the students.

But instead of concentrating on plans so that normalization could be achieved in the shortest time possible, recrimination held sway. They could not even agree on how they would be represented in the Working Group, which I said could be expanded to include all sectors of the University. Words, words, words -- until. . .

Some student activists, hearing there was an assembly in Quezon Hall, went there and sat before the faculty members standing or seated on the steps. Soon the meeting turned to be a rowdy debate. There were accusations and counter-accusations. One teacher was talking down to the student leader, who never lost his address of respect. The microphone was grabbed by one, only to be snatched by another. Some left in disgust. Clearly an impasse had developed.

I asked that if all the area associations would elect their representatives, I would include them in the Working Group. Somehow, despite the "boycott" by Baculinac and the others of previous meetings I had arranged, I felt that a Working Group could still solve many of

the problems still plaguing the community. Some students who said they represented the "silent majority" of the studentry whose only wish is to be allowed to continue their studies, were informed to be ready for any meeting.

Although the meeting on the steps of Quezon Hall ended on a note of uncertainty, I understood that rondas resulted therefrom. A group of male residents in an area would patrol the streets in shifts of a couple of hours each. Their main concern was that a lot of "strangers" had infiltrated the campus and were manning the barricades. Tales of strange men roaming the streets at night, of property being stolen -- those who had not evacuated hastily to other areas easily fell prey to their fears. I am not saying that there were no misdeeds, but the panic was out of proportion to the real situation. Remember the Librarian's report that the Library was burning? Or the tale that two machineguns had been mounted on the roofs of buildings? Or that girls had been raped at the barricades?

If someone had started the rumor that the US Marines had landed in Balara, it would have been believed as Gospel truth.

Chapter Seven

"SP" Takes the Offensive

Ironically, it was QC's hard-lining chief of police who furnished President Lopez the means to solve the problem of the barricades.

On Monday morning, Feb. 8, the President told me we would have to face Mayor Amoranto and Police Chief Karingal again.

The first part of the confrontation was a repeat of the one of Feb. 2. Mayor Amoranto said he was under pressure to have the offending barricades removed. President Lopez and I kept asking for more time to convince the students to bring down the barricades. This day, however, Chief Karingal was more aggressive. Hands shaking, he would thrust before us an envelope full of charges against Baculinao et al. He said he had affidavits to prove that commandeered taxis were returned only after payment of "ransom." He also said that a body had been found near President Lopez's residence and no report had been made to the QC police department. Worse, the barricaders were asking questions of investigators who wanted to gather clues.

As Chief Karingal was venting his fury on us, Mayor Amoranto read a newspaper. He was giving his chief of police some catharsis. Finally the mayor said, "All right, try to have those barricades removed as soon as you can." President Lopez and I sighed with relief: the mayor had not told us he would order the QC police (backed by Metrocom) to enter the campus. Profuse with our "Marami pong salamat, Mayor," we stood up. But Karingal pulled his ace. It made us sit down again, sweating profusely.

Karingal said that he was just awaiting for a judge's signature on warrants of arrest for Baculinao and so many John Does. "When I get those warrants," Karingal said, his voice trembling, "I shall serve them. And no one can interfere with me" -- looking in the direction of the mayor who was peering on a newspaper edge -- "for that would be a judicial order I'll be carrying out."

I said: "Chief, maybe you will have to serve those warrants because those are the court's orders. But can you have them served by two or three men, unarmed and in civilian clothes?" He jumped on me with both feet. He roared: "And who are you to impose conditions on how I would serve those warrants?"

I said, "I'm sorry, but I am still thinking of the lives that may be lost if your uniformed men go in force."

Karingal turned to one of his men: "Are those warrants signed already?" The other replied, "Malapit na, Sir."

Karingal had played it smart. He knew Mayor Amoranto has a soft heart and as long as possible would not issue the order to smash the barricades. But court orders are a different matter; even the mayor could not interfere in a judicial order.

President Lopez and I had been cornered. Karingal held the ace and we didn't even have a jack to offset it. No, not even the joker card.

We decided to leave. Ordinarily we would have been famished but when we reached Sulo Hotel and ordered the day's menu, the food tasted like sand in my mouth.

President Lopez knew that if Chief Karingal carries out his threat to serve the warrants, the barricaders would put up stiff resistance -- and die. At that point, President Lopez decided to resign. I started scribbling, on his instruction, a statement announcing his resignation.

"But resignation would be a defeatist action," he said. I stopped scribbling. We paced the floor again.

"On the other hand," he said, more to himself than to me, "if the police enter and many students die, I don't want their blood on my hands." I prepared to write again. We got stuck on how a sentence would be written. So I suggested we take a break and collect our thoughts.

He asked Hermie Dumiao if Baculiniao could be fetched from the UP. He was going to place his dilemma before Baculiniao and tell the Student Council president that if the barricades would not be dismantled and the police-Metrocom come in, he would resign as UP president because he would not want to be held responsible for the deaths that would occur.

Then some members of President Lopez's staff came in. Someone suggested that the Lopez-Baculiniao meeting be held in Dr. Oscar Alfonso's home nearby. As Baculiniao was going to be fetched to Sulo, I stayed behind to await him and to bring him to Alfonso's place. I cooled my heels for half an hour. I bought a Daily Mirror; the headline said: "Fate of UP's Lopez hangs." Actually, some congressmen had been after President Lopez's neck in the last few days. The fools! The situation in the UP could not be solved by firing one man and replacing him with another. More important: who will replace SP?

The presidential car stopped before the hotel and I was told that Baculinao was being brought to Dr. Alfonso's house instead of the hotel. As I got off the car in UP Village, Baculinao and the Philippine Collegian editor, Antonio Tagamolila, were entering the house

The President told Baculinao about Karingal's threat to enter the campus to serve the warrants. He told the black-jacketed diminutive militant that if the barricades were not removed he would announce his resignation.

Baculinao asked for time to go back to UP and consult his men.

President Lopez now went on the offensive. He had rolled with the punches, one after the other. Now it was time to roll back. He asked all of us to contact the TV and radio stations. He himself read a statement, in effect saying that his efforts to restore peace and order while maintaining the freedom and integrity of the University, had been unsuccessful. Meanwhile, he said, the police are insisting on coming in, and to this action he was "unalterably opposed."

"If, therefore," he intoned, "the barricades are not removed and the police forcibly enter the campus, I shall be constrained to resign."

As we listened in the next room on the "live" broadcast, gooseflesh crept all over me. Charles de Gaulle had done a similar thing; when he did not get the mandate he was asking from his countrymen, he retired.

The time of the first broadcast was about 5 p.m. Rody San Diego was drafted to scoot to newspaper offices with the statement.

Once he had made up his decision, President Lopez was relaxed. Since that noon he had been a Filipino Hamlet, wracked by a terrifying dilemma. He didn't want to quit with the UP in such a mess. On the other hand, Karingal didn't appear to be bluffing when he said he would move in to serve the warrants. And playing in the sides were lawmakers who were lawmakers who were after President Lopez's neck.

That evening, President Lopez slept in the Sulo Hotel. Amoranto's man had told him that they got wind of a plot that certain groups were going to kidnap the UP president and hold him hostage. Hostage for what? It was not made clear. But the president chose to follow the advice and took a suite in the hotel.

At 11 o'clock that night, in an emergency meeting, the "Provisional Directorate" decided to lift the barricades. Actually, some of them had already been removed, those on the auxiliary roads.

The next day, Feb. 9, the main barricades went down. "SP" had put in a major lick himself.