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A Planned and Coordinated Anarchy

The Barricades of 1971 and the “Diliman
Commune”

Joseph Scalice

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Abstract

In early February 1971, students at UP Diliman erected barricades, fought off the military, and briefly established the “Diliman Commune.” Using material produced by the “communards” themselves, along with contemporary press reports, I reconstruct the dramatic narrative of the commune and debunk two prominent myths: that it was a spontaneous uprising and that it was an isolated event. The commune was a part of a widely coordinated set of barricades raised by the radical groups Kabataang Makabayan (KM) and Samahan ng Demokratikong Kabataan (SDK) in service, in the final analysis, to the political interests of their ruling class allies in an election year.

Introduction

For nine days in early February 1971, students at the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman erected barricades around their campus, fought off repeated attempts by the military to tear the barricades down, and took control of the university. While the occupation of the Diliman campus invariably merits passing mention in the wave of memoirs, both personal and collective, produced over the past two decades, it has not been subjected to serious scholarly scrutiny.¹ As a result, two myths, which entered circulation in the months immediately after the events themselves, spread and became the established narrative of what became known as the “Diliman Commune.” The first is that the events were limited to Diliman; they were not. Barricades went up at the University Belt in downtown Manila and at UP Los Baños simultaneously, and there were

¹ Among the examples of this growing body of literature are Santos and Santos 2008; Quimpo and Quimpo 2012, 40–42; Melencio 2010, 24; Evangelista 2008, 41–47; and Llanes 2012.

pitched and protracted battles waged at both locations. Subsequent accounts entirely ignored these concurrent barricades.² The second myth is that the Commune emerged spontaneously. A headline article of *Bagong Pilipina* in its February 1971 issue expressed this conception: “The Diliman Commune was a spontaneous reaction to the needs of the Diliman Republic” (Berbano and Castillo 1971, 1). The story stuck.

Both myths were largely the product of silence. The Diliman Commune has been the subject of countless tangential references in a broader body of work on martial law-era politics, but not the subject of direct scholarly scrutiny. The heady rush of events in the first two weeks of February 1971 left those of Diliman, the flagship campus of the state university, at the center of popular consciousness, while the details regarding barricades elsewhere went largely unreported. Many scholarly works examining other aspects of the martial law era based themselves on this narrative and thus made passing mention of “the Diliman Commune.”³ Treated as such, its role in a broader, coordinated campaign of barricades was overlooked. Where coordination clearly reveals planning, isolation by easy inference suggests spontaneity.

A good deal of the conduct of the students and individual members of the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) and the Samahang Demokratikong Kabataan (SDK) throughout this affair was, of course, spontaneous. The barricades were launched, however, by a political leadership with a conscious orientation, which shaped the boundaries and channeled the direction of the spontaneous social anger that was finding expression in their erection. This leadership secured its own ends through the students in a planned and coordinated fashion, which is

² Among these accounts are Malay 1982 (various issues) and Palatino 2008.

³ A selective sampling of these works might include Hedman and Sidel 2000; Rodrigo 2007; Weekley 2001; Bresnan 2014; and Claudio 2017.

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the logical conclusion that I draw from the overwhelming weight of historical evidence presented in this article.

Using the manifestos, resolutions, and various ephemera produced by the “communards” themselves and combining these with contemporary newspaper reports and the official investigation conducted by the University of the Philippines, I have reconstructed a detailed narrative of the barricades of February 1971 to demonstrate their planned and coordinated character. In this I relied above all on the forty-three boxes of documents contained in the Philippine Radical Papers (PRP) Archive housed at UP Diliman and subsequently microfilmed by Cornell University. Any attempt to understand the internally contentious and immensely influential role of the left in Philippine politics in the lead up to martial law must grapple with the complicated contents of this invaluable collection.

I digitized every page of the PRP and carefully indexed each item. Many items were misdated; others were of obscure origin. By working over this material repeatedly, I was able to reconstruct — to triangulate on the basis of lies, half-truths, and honest accounts — an understanding of what had transpired. Much of this material was ephemera: single-page fliers announcing a demonstration on a particular issue. Many were undated because they were handed out a day before the rally, but I reconstructed the date of almost every item on the basis of vocabulary and topical references.

Stalinism and the Two Communist Parties

An immense social anger fueled the political developments of the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁴ The brutality of the American war in Vietnam, the skyrocketing cost of living, and the increas-

⁴ For all of the contextual material and background developments leading up to February 1971, which I have outlined here, see the detailed examination in Scalice 2017, where I copiously document these claims.

ingly repressive state apparatus — all bound up with the crisis of capitalism and the relative decline of the postwar economic hegemony of the US — combined to create a revolutionary situation throughout much of the globe. In the Philippines, Pres. Ferdinand Marcos began preparing the instruments of dictatorship, while his ruling-class opponents, many organized within the Liberal Party (LP), began plotting his ouster, concerned that they should be in power prior to the imposition of military rule. The affair known as the Diliman Commune was a manifestation of a broader trend in radical politics in the years leading up to the imposition of martial law. This article seeks to demonstrate the role that the ideas of Stalinism played in the unrest of the time. However, this role cannot be understood simply at the level of abstraction, for it requires the complex reconstruction of historical narrative to reveal Stalinism's precise social function. What I find is that, on the basis of their shared program of Stalinism, the Moscow-oriented Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) prepared to endorse Marcos and his imposition of martial law, while the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its front organizations labored to safely contain the explosive energy of a decade of unrest within the pistons of the bourgeois opposition's political machinery.

The Stalinist bureaucracies in first Moscow and then Beijing sought to consolidate their economic privileges and positions through the nationalist program of building socialism in a single country, an idea antithetical to the basic Marxist principle that socialism could only be built on an international scale. This program made paramount the political task of securing the borders and trade of the country in which socialism was to be constructed. International socialist revolution was no longer the order of the day, but rather the securing of alliances, diplomatic gains, and trade deals with other countries in opposition, above all, to Washington. This required intimate ties with a section of the ruling class within these countries. The task for Communist parties around the world was therefore not to organize the

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working class to seize power, but to secure the support of a section of the bourgeoisie for trade and diplomatic ties. To this end they heralded to the working class and peasantry that the tasks of the revolution were national and democratic only — and not yet socialist. In this national democratic revolution a section of the capitalist class, they claimed, would play a progressive role. On this basis, the Communist party leadership could offer the support of workers, the youth, and peasant groups to a section of the bourgeoisie and in return secure support for the foreign policy interests of the Communist bloc. As they each sought to build socialism in one country, Moscow and Beijing did not merge their economies and, as a result, their rival sets of national interests diverged and led to open conflict, precipitating splits across the globe.

Growing social tensions split the PKP along fault lines drawn by the Sino-Soviet dispute. In 1965 the party, including its youth wing, the Kabataang Makabayan (KM) [Nationalist Youth] under the leadership of Jose Ma. Sison, supported Ferdinand Marcos in his campaign for president. In 1967, however, a majority of the leadership of the party expelled the cohort around Sison, who were drawn to the political line of Mao Zedong and Beijing. In late 1968, the expelled members founded a rival party, the CPP. The PKP and the CPP — adhering to the lines of Moscow and Beijing, respectively — were both Stalinist organizations, but they were oriented to rival sections of the capitalist class.⁵ In keeping with the more conservative line of Moscow, the PKP saw in Marcos and his machinations toward dictatorship this “progressive” wing who

⁵ Mao Zedong thought, to which the CPP subscribed, was in fact a variant of Stalinism, retaining all of its critical programmatic features — Socialism in One Country, a two-stage revolution, and the bloc of four classes. My account of the origins of the split in the PKP is a revision of the standard historical narrative that revolves around domestic political disputes, in which personal animosity played a strong role. A key work in establishing the standard narrative is Nemenzo 1984.

would open ties with the Soviet bloc and move the Philippines away from subservience to Washington. The CPP meanwhile, using the radical rhetoric of protracted people's war and the anarchistic enthusiasm of the Cultural Revolution, was able to channel a great deal of the unrest of the times behind the increasingly restive bourgeois opposition to Marcos, in particular Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., the Lopez brothers (Vice Pres. Fernando Lopez and businessman Eugenio Lopez), and the Liberal Party.⁶

The split in the PKP led to a split in its youth wing, fragmenting the KM. The majority of youth, drawn from the peasantry, stayed with the PKP and founded a new organization, the Malayang Pagkakaisa ng Kabataang Pilipino (MPKP) [Free Unity of Filipino Youth]; Sison retained hold over a substantial portion of the university-based youth in Manila, who remained within the KM; and a number of the more well-to-do and artistic layers within the KM, drawn above all to the anarchism of the Cultural Revolution, broke with the KM and founded the Samahan ng Demokratikong Kabataan (SDK) [Federation of Democratic Youth].

It was in this context of social unrest, political tensions in the ruling class, and the emergence of two Communist parties that the massive explosion of protests that later became known as the First Quarter Storm (FQS) shook the first three months of 1970. Prior to the storm the leadership of the SDK had been closer to the MPKP than they were to the KM, and they had even campaigned together in the summer of 1969. As Marcos's forces cracked down on protesters and the MPKP responded by blaming the activities of the KM, the SDK shifted to the camp of the CPP and its front organizations. The elite opposition began

⁶ The Lopez brothers should be distinguished from UP Pres. Salvador P. Lopez, who was not related to the vice president and the media mogul and was not part of their machinations.

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providing the protesters with funding, favorable press coverage, and access to television and radio broadcasts.

The year 1971 was an election year and the ruling class opponents of Marcos sought another explosion of protest to destabilize the president and secure sympathy for the opposition slate. Sison, writing his political report to the Second Plenum of the First Central Committee of the CPP in September 1970, launched a brief ultraleft policy, which lasted until August 1971 and which closely paralleled the third period policies of the Comintern from 1928 to 1934 (AB 1970).⁷ The Stalinists in 1928 declared that a new, third historical period since the 1917 revolution had begun, which would be marked by an uninterrupted upsurge of the revolutionary masses. On this basis, they split the working class, denouncing the Social Democratic parties as “social fascists”; attempted to seize control of the trade unions and split them, forming so-called red unions; and declared that after Adolf Hitler rose to power he would crush the social democrats and facilitate the rise of the Communist parties. Their slogan was “After Hitler, us.”⁸ In a similar fashion, Sison declared that the masses were in an uninterrupted upsurge, that state repression increased their resistance, and that dictatorship “can only fan the flames of revolutionary war in the country” (ibid., 14). In early February, as the barricades were erected, the front organizations of the CPP attempted to seize control of a number of trade unions — splitting them, including the union of striking jeepney drivers — and set up headquarters for its new, red unions in Vinzons Hall on the UP Diliman campus. This brief “third period” lasted until six days before the Plaza Miranda bombing, when the CPP abruptly reversed course and issued instructions that its front groups should attempt to win over the so-called middle

⁷ This political report was reprinted in the *Philippine Collegian* (Sison 1970, 4).

⁸ For a history of the Third Period from the perspective of its political opposition, cf. Trotsky 1971.

forces — conservative middle-class elements — by entering various organizations, whom they had recently decried as reactionary, including Catholic student groups. On this basis they campaigned for the Liberal Party in the November election (Scalice 2017, 591–613, 649–56). The barricades and the resulting Diliman commune were an expression of this third period policy.

As 1971 opened, Marcos approved a set of oil price hikes, and jeepney drivers responded by launching a strike. On 13 January police opened fire on the striking drivers and protesters, injuring over a hundred and killing four. Marcos declared a week-long moratorium on the oil price hike, and the strike was temporarily called off (Dalisay and Benaning 1971; PC 1971a). On 25 January Marcos delivered his State of the Nation Address. Protesters assembled, and everyone anticipated another storm akin to that of a year prior, but the day passed peacefully. Antonio Tagamolila (1971a, 6), SDK member and editor of the influential UP Diliman campus paper, the *Philippine Collegian*, wrote, “Peace has a way of beclouding the issues ... The issue to clarify once more, is that the people are still at war, a war declared and imposed by the ruling classes led by their fascist puppet chieftain.”

At the beginning of the year, the SDK reported that Dioscoro Umali, the dean of UP Los Banos, had announced that he possessed information on the group’s intent to take over the Diliman and Los Banos campuses and occupy the administration buildings. The SDK denounced Umali’s claim as a “fairy-tale” and a “fantasy” from his “ever-recurring nightmares” (SDK-UPCACS 1971). Umali’s claim was not at all far-fetched. Ericson Baculinao, chair of the UP Diliman Student Council and a leading member of KM, had threatened precisely such an occupation when presenting a set of fifty-seven demands from the students to UP Pres. Salvador P. Lopez in October 1970 (Go 1970, 7; Scalice 2017, 526). On 25 January 1971, the same day as the disappointingly peaceful

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Abbreviations Used

AB	<i>Ang Bayan</i>
AS	Arts and Sciences
AG	Artists Group
BP	<i>Bandilang Pula</i> , the publication of the Diliman Commune
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines
FQS	First Quarter Storm
KM	Kabataang Makabayan
LP	Liberal Party
MPKP	Malayang Pagkakaisa ng Kabataang Pilipino
NPA	New People's Army
NPAA	Nagkakaisang Progresibong Artista-Arkitecto
PC	<i>Philippine Collegian</i> , the campus newspaper of UP Diliman
PKP	Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas
PRP	Philippine Radical Papers
QCPD	Quezon City Police Department
SDK	Samahan ng Demokratikong Kabataan
SDKM	Samahan ng Demokratikong Kabataan Mendiola
SDS	Students for a Democratic Society
SM	Sandigang Makabansa
SMS	Samahan ng Makabayang Siyentipiko
⁴⁴ UP	University of the Philippines
UPLB	UP Los Banos
UPSCA	UP Student Catholic Action

protest in front of Congress, the Sandigang Makabansa (SM), the UP Diliman campus student political organization of the KM and SDK, which in 1970–1971 controlled the UP Student Council, published an issue of its paper, *Ang Sandigang Makabansa*, revisiting these demands, which they declared were not being fulfilled, but the final move rested with the students. In language invoking the *Internationale* the article concluded, “Matagal nang nabibinbin ang 57 kahilingan at ang gagawing nagkakaisang pagkilos ang siyang magiging huling paglalaban” (The fifty-seven demands have long been detained and the upcoming united action will be the final struggle) (SM 1971).⁹ Preparations for the occupation of campus administration buildings were in place.

The SDK was now firmly in the camp of the CPP, and its leaders followed the party's orders and abided by its discipline. The culmination of the process of its “rectification” was the SDK's First National Congress, which was held on 30–31 January at the UP Asian Labor Education Center. *Militant but Groovy*, the anthology of accounts regarding the SDK written by a collection of its own members, stated that the process of “rectification and return to mainstream were consolidated at its First National Congress ... The theme of the congress was ‘Unfurl the Great Red Banner of the National Democratic Cultural Revolution’” (Santos and Santos 2008, 11; *PC* 1971c). During the two-day event, Dulaang Sadeka staged a performance of Bertolt Brecht's *Mother*, translated by Rolando Pena and Ma. Lorena Barros and titled “Bandilang Pula,” after the red flag carried by Palagea at the end of the play (SM 1971, 4; Santos and Santos 2008, 34).¹⁰ In the aftermath of the barricades, *Bandilang Pula*

⁹ The chorus of the Tagalog version of the *Internationale* opens with “Ito'y huling paglalaban” (This is the last struggle).

¹⁰ Butch Dalisay recounted that this staging was “before Brecht had been set aside for being too bourgeois in favor of more overt Peking Opera-style tableaux.” Dalisay himself performed in this staging of Brecht, acting in

became the title of the SDK paper, and, much later, the name of the official paper of the New People's Army (NPA).

Barricades: Diliman, University Belt, Los Banos

“Amid the hubbub over the violence at the January 13 rally and the threats of violence at the FQS anniversary rally, the issue of the oil price hike got somewhat sidelined. Gasoline prices were not rolled back” (Quimpo and Quimpo 2012, 90). On 1 February, the morning after the SDK congress had concluded, the jeepney drivers launched a renewed strike and the KM and SDK launched a coordinated campaign of obstructing thoroughfares throughout the country, ostensibly in support of the strike. They erected barricades at UP Diliman and Los Banos and in the University Belt. These were the primary barricade sites, but according to the *Collegian* barricades were erected at least briefly by students in Laguna, Baguio, Rizal, Cavite, and other locations (PC 1971c).¹¹ The putting up of these barricades was a coordinated and centrally directed campaign but, because of the prominence given to the Diliman Commune, records of the barricades erected elsewhere are partial and sporadic.

While they pointed to the jeepney drivers' strike as the reason for their construction of barricades, it was but a pretext for the KM and SDK. In the wake of the disappointment of 25 January, they needed to foment street battles and provoke state repression. The KM shut down traffic on Mendiola Bridge on

whiteface (Santos and Santos 2008, 38). Wilma Austria, later Tiamzon, played the lead.

¹¹ In a similar vein, Nathan Quimpo gives us an account of the repeated attempts to erect and maintain barricades at Gate 3 of the Ateneo de Manila University in the first week of February 1971 (Quimpo and Quimpo 2012, 91).

bourgeoisie that in 1971 was looking to topple Marcos and secure office for itself.

In September 1972, Inocente Campos was acquitted on all charges. The judge ruled that Campos “acted upon an impulse of an uncontrollable fear of an equal or greater injury” (PC 1972). Campos shot Mesina in the head, the judge argued, because he feared “a greater injury” than the death that he dealt to an unarmed 17-year-old. A week later, Marcos declared martial law.

never understood historically, but simply appreciated as the great moral lessons of the past, examples of the revolutionary heroism of their predecessors. This appreciation is not entirely baseless. The youths and workers who fought in the battles of the 1960s and early 1970s were often heroic, proving themselves capable of self-sacrifice and endless labor. The best layers of an entire generation fought courageously, and many in the end were tortured and killed by a brutal dictator. But to what end? Here the only honest means of honoring the struggles of this generation is to subject to careful study and trenchant criticism the program and machinations of their leaders. Such an historical examination, to which this article is a small contribution, reveals that the sacrifices made by these youths and workers were first demanded and then dispensed with by Stalinism, which ensured that their lives were no more than grist on the millstone of dictatorship. Much of the Stalinist parties' political authority among the masses derived from their claim to be Marxist; I am challenging that claim.

On examination, the barricades, particularly the affair known as the Diliman Commune, proved to be an unmitigated defeat for the KM and SDK, which lost almost all connection with the striking jeepney drivers and a great deal of support from the student body; as a direct result of the barricades, the SM lost the 1971–1972 campus elections. The barricades were taken down without a single demand being granted. They provided yet another pretext for Marcos's declaration of martial law. At the end of nine days, at least one student was dead, another paralyzed, and many were wounded; if we include the University Belt barricades, the death toll grows to seven. The erection of the barricades was not a spontaneous expression of student anger or response to police encroachments. They were a calculated policy, an expression of the program of Stalinism, planned in advance and implemented by the leadership of the KM and SDK, with the motive of service to a section of the

30 January, two days before the jeepney strike resumed, claiming they were commemorating the Battle of Mendiola from the FQS a year earlier (Giron 1971). The state seized on the violence of the barricades as a pretext to break up the strike. On 2 February Manila Mayor Antonio Villegas, citing "suspicion of creating disorder in the city," ordered the arrest without warrant of Lupino Lazaro, secretary general of Pasang Masda, the primary jeepney driver union involved in the strike (PC 1971b; Giron 1971; SDK 1971a). With the arrest of its leader, the strike quickly died. The students at the barricades, however, continued their protests and campus occupations despite the fact that the strike, which they claimed to be supporting, had ended days earlier (AS Rooftop Junta 1971a).

On 1 February the barricades went up in earnest. According to the account in the *Mirror*, "about 60 per cent of public vehicles, including jeepneys, buses and taxicabs continued operating that Monday in Manila and the rest of the Metropolitan area" (Giron 1971, 1). The students, however, "barricaded streets, solicited strike funds from drivers of passing vehicles, stoned buses and cars that did not stop when they directed them to turn back and ... set up pickets in Manila and Quezon City for the jeepney drivers" (ibid.). The students lit a bonfire at the junction of Azcarraga and Lepanto Streets; traffic through the vicinity was shut down, and all Divisoria-bound vehicles were routed through Quiapo. "Passengers in the few buses operating pulled up the window shades to avoid stones," Giron (ibid.) wrote. The students maintained the barricades in the University Belt the next day. A street battle raged between protesters and the police in front of the University of Santo Tomas (UST). Students threw rocks, handmade bombs known as "pillboxes," and Molotov cocktails; for their part, the police fired on the students. By the end of the day, three people had been killed: Danilo Rabaja, 19, of the Philippine College of Commerce (PCC); Renato Abrenica, 24, of UST; and Roberto Tolosa, a 12-year-old sweepstakes ticket vendor, who died of a bullet

in the back. Twenty-nine others were injured. Barricades and protests continued in the University Belt throughout the first week of February; by Friday, 5 February, two more had been killed. Fernando Duque, 19, a UST student, “fleeing from police and drivers battling the students,” was hit by a pillbox explosion on the head. A “battle took place on Dapitan street when students resorted to stoning the vehicles, hurting passengers and drivers. The drivers fought back with stones” (ibid., 6).

On the Los Banos campus, we know that there were barricades sealing the main entrance to the university on 4 February and that two more sets of barricades were built on 8 February, shutting down the campus (SDK 1971c). The SDK and KM claimed that the barricades were being erected in support of the striking drivers. Most of the drivers, however, ended their strike on 6 February, while the students maintained and expanded the barricades. They “permitted the drivers to operate up to the barricades” (pinayagan silang pumasada hanggang sa mga barikada) but prevented them from continuing their routes through the campus. At least one jeepney driver, after the majority ended the strike, attempted to drive his vehicle through the barricades and the students assaulted him, throwing pillboxes at his vehicle (PC 1971f; Atos 1971).

On 7 February a large contingent of conservative civic groups — the Lions Club, the UP Student Catholic Action (UPSCA), and others — approached the barricades to request that they be taken down. The barricades were making life difficult, they said, for the residents of Los Banos. The students, led by Vicente Ladlad, refused. By 9 February it was anticipated that the constabulary would assault the barricades, and the students fortified themselves with pillboxes to “defend (ipagtanggol ang) UP Los Banos” (PC 1971f, 3). The account of the barricades at Los Banos published in the *Collegian* ends here. The anticipated battle never occurred, for the KM and SDK, on the basis of instructions from “underground,” lifted

Marcos, arranged for the play to be staged at his family’s prestigious Meralco Theater (Santos and Santos 2008, 119).²³

The play focused entirely on the events at Diliman. By the end of the year the “commune” was the only portion of the barricades remembered. As was often the case, Diliman had become the focus of attention not because the events there were more dramatic but simply because it was the elite flagship campus of the state university.²⁴ While Mesina, whose presence at the barricades was almost accidental, is now commemorated at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani, Abrenica and the others who died in downtown Manila in the street battles of 1–9 February have been forgotten.

Conclusion

There is a culture about the Communist Party of the Philippines and its affiliated organizations that is simultaneously inflected by amnesia and nostalgia. The KM, under the leadership of Jose Ma. Sison, had endorsed Ferdinand Marcos for president in 1965, but four years later they denounced him as a fascist and entered an alliance with the bourgeois opposition. They did not account for their prior support, but buried it: “Oceania had always been at war with Eastasia.” This cultivated amnesia was combined with a nostalgia for an imagined past. Young people joining the party or its front organizations learn of the First Quarter Storm and the Diliman Commune, events that are

²³ A right-wing student group, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), picketed the event, handing out a Leaflet calling on the audience to “oppose future barricades” (Concerned Families of Area Two and SDS 1971).

²⁴ Graduates of this elite university, the alumni of the Diliman Commune, had bright futures ahead: Baculinao became NBC bureau chief in Beijing; Vea, president of Mapua Institute of Technology (MIT); Taguiwalo, Undersecretary of Health in the Corazon Aquino administration; Coloma, Presidential Communications Secretary in the Benigno Aquino III administration. Of the student leadership, Tagamolila alone did not survive martial law. He was killed by Marcos’s forces in 1974 as a member of the NPA.

The August bombing of the Liberal Party *miting de avance* at Plaza Miranda provided Marcos the pretext to suspend the writ of habeas corpus. Baculinao and a host of other figures tied to the CPP had flown to China on 20 August, the day before the bombing (Lacaba 1971, 6). The KM and SDK, erstwhile communards, threw themselves with gusto into an aggressive campaign for the election of the Liberal Party slate (Scalice 2017, 673–91). When the LP won six out of eight senatorial seats, they published an article through their joint organization, the Movement for a Democratic Philippines (1971), claiming that with the election of John Osmena, Jovito Salonga, and the rest of the LP slate, the “Filipino masses” had “fully repudiated the fascist regime of Marcos.”

In September 1971, less than a month after Marcos’s suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, Gintong Silahis (1972), which had emerged out of the SDK and established itself as an independent national democratic drama group three months earlier, staged a play, *Barikada*, at UP Theater. *Barikada* was promoted as a play freely based on the events of 1–9 February 1971. The program for the event informs us that the make up for the *Barikada* performers was done by Beautifont, high fashion cosmetics, “distinctively formulated for the Filipina”; the next page was headlined “Destroy the state machinery of the ruling classes” (Gintong Silahis 1971). There was an anarchistic tone throughout the performance, calling for the destruction of the old culture and the smashing of the state, but never for the seizing of state power. Behn Cervantes staged the production, which was modeled on the style of Peking Opera, with choreography and songs entitled “Paper Tiger” (Tigreng Papel) and “The People Are What Matter” (Ang Tao ang Mahalaga). It concluded with fifty red flags waving throughout the auditorium and the singing of the Internationale. The event was sponsored by La Pacita Biscuits, and they staged repeat performances on 8–9 October (SDK 1971e, 2). Fernando Lopez, the vice president of the Philippines, locked in fierce political combat with

their barricades simultaneously at Diliman, Los Banos, and the University Belt on 9 February.¹²

The Diliman Commune

Monday, 1 February

While street battles raged on Azcarraga and provincial traffic was shut down in Los Banos, the KM and SDK erected barricades on the UP Diliman campus. The Physical Plant Office had installed loudspeakers in the Arts and Science (AS) building at the request of the UP Student Council, and the council used these speakers to instruct students to boycott their classes and man the barricades, while “groups of activists made rounds of classes being held, interrupting proceedings in the classrooms” (Committee of Inquiry 1971, 1). The campus at the time remained a public thoroughfare; you could drive its wide, acacia-lined streets from Commonwealth to Katipunan, and a good deal of traffic passed through on a daily basis. Barricades were put up across both the front entrance to the campus as well as the rear entrance at Lopez Jaena (Manzano 1971, 4). While they were initially erected to “stop public utility vehicles from entering campus,” *Bandilang Pula*, the paper which the students manning the barricades began publishing on 5 February, wrote that all vehicles, public and private, were being stopped and asked to take another route, and anyone who wished to enter the campus was instructed to get out and walk (Taguiwalo and Vea 1971; BP 1971a, 2). The students manning the barricades were armed with pillboxes and Molotov cocktails and waved a red banner. The young men on the barricades were responsible for preventing vehicles from entering the campus, and young

¹² As at Diliman, there was a vicious right-wing response to the barricades at UP Los Banos, including a vulgar leaflet denouncing the barricaders as “fascistic totalitarian congenital liars” (Fontanilla 1971).

women were assigned to solicit funds from those who had been turned away.¹³

Hearing of the disruption to traffic on campus, UP Pres. S. P. Lopez instructed Col. Oscar Alvarez, chief of campus security forces, to request that faculty vehicles be allowed to pass. Alvarez inspected the barricades and returned to report to Lopez that “everything was in order” (Committee of Inquiry 1971, 1–2). By midday many of the students wished to go to lunch, and there were not sufficient numbers to maintain the obstruction, so they knocked over a tree and placed it on the road. The security forces returned and attempted to remove the tree that was blocking traffic.

A skirmish developed, during which pillbox bombs and gasoline bombs were thrown at the UP security guards. One guard drew his side-arm and fired warning shots. The students retaliated with bombs resulting in the injury to [sic] five security guards. More students arrived and reinforced the barricades. Their number was variously estimated at two to three hundred. (ibid., 2)

At 12:30 in the afternoon, UP mathematics professor Inocente Campos arrived in his car. Campos was a known figure on campus, having on several occasions threatened students with failing grades if they participated in demonstrations; students complained that he had pulled out a gun in the classroom and menaced them with it, on one occasion going so far as to fire three “warning shots” (Evangelista 2008, 44). Campos’s abusive and violent behavior had been reported by students to the campus administration for over a year, but no measures were taken against him (Vea 1970, 3). At the barricade, Campos accelerated and attempted to drive through

¹³ The SDK (1971b) put out and distributed from the barricades a leaflet calling on the masses to “resolutely support the patriotic jeepney drivers.”

windows, tearing down curtains and stage lights, and confiscating barrels of crude oil, for example (cf. BP 1971a, 1971b). Rather than defend these actions as necessary for the defense of the barricades, the leadership disavowed them, claiming that they were carried out by infiltrators. The SDK began directly blaming the MPKP for the vandalism and theft that had occurred during the Commune, arguing that if the MPKP had manned the barricades with them there would have been sufficient forces to prevent such crimes (SDK 1971f, 10).

The criticisms, however, were not merely being raised by the MPKP. Adriel Meimban, president of the UP Baguio Student Council, wrote to the *Collegian*, assessing the pickets and barricades at the various university campuses. The issue in every protest, he stated, was “fascism, fascism and fascism” (Meimban 1971, 8). In Meimban’s assessment, far from winning over public sympathy, despite the brutality of the police, the methods of the students were alienating the public. He wrote, “What was ironical was that the students already suffered physically from pistol butts, karate chops and other manhandling tactics, yet the public opinion deplored and discredited the cause espoused by the students. ... [In the wake of the protests] our credibility with the Baguio populace has firmly registered a zero point.”

S. P. Lopez initiated a Committee of Inquiry into the causes of the barricades, which issued its final report on 17 March based on interviews with seventy-eight participants, including students, faculty, police, and university officials. Baculinao and many of the leaders of the Commune refused to be interviewed, choosing instead to assign Sonny Coloma, one of the spokesmen of the barricades, to head a Diliman Historical Committee charged with commemorating the Commune (PC 1971j). In July the KM and SDK ran Rey Vea for Student Council president, but the unpopular memory of the graffiti-festooned and vandalized campus cost them the election.

sa pagtatapos ng mga unang yugto ng pagpapasok ng militar, ang mga organisasyong estudyante ay unti-unting nabawasan sa kawalan ng mga kadre na dapat sanang mamamahala sa mga barikada. Marami ring nagsasayang ng mga paputok na ginastusan ng salapi. Dahil din dito, ang mga ibang namamahala sa barikada ay di galing sa UP. (BP 1971f, A)

after the first wave of troops entering the campus, they lost many cadres, who left, and should have been managing the barricades. Many wasted their explosives that were paid for with money. Because of this, the barricades were often run by outside forces.

The theft and vandalism, they claimed, were the work of these outsiders:

Dahilan din sa kakulangan ng organisasyon, maraming mga kahina-hinalang impilador ang nakapasok upang magsabotahe sa kaligtasan ng mga ari-arian ng UP tulad ng paglusob at pagnanakaw sa iba't ibang lugal ng kampus sa panahon ng kaguluhan. (ibid.)

Also, because of a lack of organization, many suspicious infiltrators were able to enter and sabotage the security of the properties of UP, breaking into and robbing many places on campus during periods of confusion.

We know, however, from the students' own accounts, that the "communards" themselves had broken into many of the buildings on campus and taken "university property." The literature of 1 to 9 February is replete with accounts of breaking

the barrier. "Upon recognizing the professor, students on University avenue began throwing pillboxes at his car. The left rear tire exploded, forcing the car to a stop" (Committee of Inquiry 1971, 3). Dean of Students Armando Malay (1982a, 1) described the situation: "it looked to me that the car was disabled, because its rear was jutting out of line, like a woman with an enlarged derriere." An account written by the barricaders themselves reported that when the students saw Campos, they shouted "It's Campos ... throw pb [pillboxes] at him ... he's a fascist!" (Si Campos ... batuhin niyo ng pb ... pasista iyan!) (Manzano 1971, 4). Campos emerged from his damaged vehicle wearing a bulletproof vest and a helmet and opened fire on the students with a shotgun. Malay (1982a, 6) described Campos as having "a grim smile on his face" as he shot into the crowd of students. Campos reloaded his shotgun and continued firing, shooting one of the students, Pastor "Sonny" Mesina, in the forehead.

Members of the UP Security Forces, who had been standing nearby since their attempt to remove the tree barricade, arrested Campos and took him to the Quezon City Police Department (QCPD). The students burned Campos's vehicle (Palatino 2008, 103; BP 1971a, 2). Mesina was taken to the UP infirmary and then transferred to Veterans Memorial Hospital, where he was unconscious for several days and died Thursday evening, 4 February (Committee of Inquiry 1971, 3; BP 1971a; Santos and Santos 2008, 83). Mesina was 17 years old, a first-year student at the university who had joined the SDK a week earlier and on the day of his death had opted to march with some of his friends rather than go to a movie with others. While Mesina was in the hospital, Tagamolila wrote an editorial stating, "The hero of the day is undoubtedly Pastor Mesina, a freshman activist, who was seriously wounded by an insane man we had allowed to roam in our midst," while Mario Taguiwalo wrote that "Sonny was not an activist nor a revolutionary, but he tried" (Tagamolila 1971b, 6; Taguiwalo 1971, 9). The Bantayog ng mga Bayani

monument would later inscribe that Mesina “earned the honor of being considered UP Diliman’s ‘first martyr’ ... he gave his life for academic freedom.”

S. P. Lopez had been watching events through binoculars. About fifty students angrily left the barricades and marched to the university administrative building of Quezon Hall, storming the offices of Lopez, tearing plaques off the wall, shattering windows, and throwing rocks. One student threw a piece of wood at Lopez, hitting him in the chest (Committee of Inquiry 1971, 3). Baculinao confronted Lopez, demanding to know why the latter sent security forces to the barricade without first informing him. He blamed Lopez for the actions of Campos, claiming that had the security forces not been present Campos would not have been emboldened to shoot.¹⁴ Tension mounted, and it seemed increasingly likely that a student might physically assault Lopez. To defuse the tension, as was the KM’s standard practice, Baculinao led the group in a loud rendition of the national anthem after which they left Lopez’s office.

Lopez later recounted that he was summoned that afternoon to the military headquarters of Camp Aguinaldo for a meeting of a shady cabal known as the “Peace and Order Council” (ibid., 5–6). Justice Secretary Vicente Abad Santos, chair of the council; Executive Secretary Alejandro Melchor; Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile; Col. Tomas Karingal, QCPD chief; and Gen. Eduardo Garcia, head of the Philippine Constabulary discussed how best to suppress the students at the flagship state university. The council called for the forced entry of the police into the campus, but Lopez protested, citing a prior agreement with Quezon City Mayor Norberto Amoranto to keep the city police off campus and to leave policing to campus security forces (*UP Gazette* 1971, 20). The council stated that the agreement

¹⁴ Baculinao’s argument seems highly suspect. Campos drove to the barricades in body armor and armed with multiple weapons. His assault on the students was clearly premeditated.

others (Baculinao, Pagaduan, and Coloma 1971; Baculinao, Pagaduan, and Veal 1971; Baculinao 1971). The Student Council resolution laid the foundation for the subsequent myth of the Commune, declaring that the “barricades arose spontaneously and immediately gained mass support.”

The official endorsement of the barricades did little to make them popular with the student body. Seizing the opportunity, the MPKP began putting up posters on campus attacking the KM and SDK, some of which read “Wage revolution against American Imperialism, not against UP” (KM 1971, 7). On 10 February the MPKP (1971a) issued a leaflet denouncing the Diliman Commune as “a well-planned sabotage of the national democratic movement ... Under the pretext of sympathizing with the jeepney drivers’ struggle against US oil monopolies, the KM-SDK faction ‘occupied’ the UP for 2 weeks and indulged in anarchistic and vandalistic actions that greatly undermined the fundamental interests of the movement.” The MPKP-UP (1971a) continued:

Instead of going out of the narrow confines of the university and joining the pickets set up by the striking drivers outside, the KM-SDK had chosen to barricade themselves inside UP under the illusion of securing a “liberated area” ... the KM-SDK infants however overacted in declaring UP a “liberated area,” looting the AS cooperative store, robbing the BA college of typewriters, smashing chairs and burning tables, blackboards, wall clocks and bulletin boards, ransacking the UP Press, and renaming several buildings in honor of dubious characters from whom they apparently draw inspiration.

The KM and SDK leadership, in the second and final issue of *Bandilang Pula*, admitted that

Taxi in the afternoon of 5 February (*PC* 1971e, 9). Malay, whose account is highly sympathetic to the students, wrote that the students had “commandeered” a motorcycle with a sidecar from a local driver, had detached the sidecar and incorporated it into the barricades, while the motorcycle was used by the student leaders on campus. The owner of the tricycle requested from Malay that the motorcycle and sidecar — his source of livelihood — be returned to him, and Malay (1982h, 6) instructed him to speak to Baculinao. On 8 February UP Student Councilor Ronaldo Reyes (1971) wrote a memo enumerating acts of violence and theft, which he alleged unnamed outsiders had committed behind the barricades, including the death by stabbing of an Esso security guard who lived on the UP campus.

As the barricades came down, the walls of the buildings throughout campus were found to be festooned with “revolutionary” graffiti. Taguiwalo and Vea (1971, 10) wrote on 10 February that “the slogans and caricatures that decorate the buildings were the product” of the “revolutionary artists” of the Nagkakaisang Progresibong Artista-Arkitekto (NPAA) (United Progressive Artists-Architects) and the SDK-Artists Group (AG). Across the fagades of Palma and Melchor hall “revolutionary slogans were scrawled in red paint,” the famed Oblation statue had been doused with red paint, and the walls of the Faculty Center had “Jose Ma. Sison” painted all over them (Malay 1982h, 6; Palatino 2008, 104; Vea 1971, 10).

The leaders of the barricades began to recognize just how unpopular the “commune” was with the majority of the student body now returning to campus. They undertook a two-part response, officially defending the barricades while denouncing “outsiders” for any “excesses.” The UP Student Council under Baculinao passed a resolution declaring that “barricades are fine ... the UP Student Council endorse barricades as a form of protest.” A second resolution was passed on the same day commending the “revolutionary heroism” of Mesina, Delfin, and

was not legally binding. A decision was reached, over Lopez’s dissent, that the police would enter the university and clear out the barricades, and it was further decided that if the police could not successfully carry out this action the constabulary would be deployed. Enrile warned that, if the mayor refused to allow the deployment of Karingal’s forces on campus, the constabulary would take over city hall. The council went to Quezon City Hall to inform Amoranto of the measures they were taking. Lopez’s account (Committee of Inquiry 1971) of his meeting with this junta provides a rare insight into just how advanced were the preparations for military rule. If elected leaders or democratic norms interfered even slightly in the suppression of unrest and dissent, the military leadership was poised to strip their powers away.

With the police deployed at every approach to the university, students set up new barricades on the west entrance guarding Commonwealth Avenue. Lopez continued to protest against police on the campus, but Karingal disregarded him; at 3:00 in the afternoon the QCPD broke down the barricades and arrested more than eighteen students.¹⁵ The UP Student Council issued a leaflet on 1 February denouncing the shooting of Mesina, singling out S. P. Lopez for blame for having “abetted and encouraged” the UP Security Police, who “brutally attempted to disperse the students by firing indiscriminately at the crowd” (UP Student Council and Samahan ng Kababaihan ng UP 1971). Palatino (2008, 104) correctly noted that, after the first day, “the issue was no longer the oil price hike but the interference of the military on campus” (*hindi na pagtaas ng presyo ng langis ang isyu kundi ang panghihimasok ng militar sa loob ng kampus*).

¹⁵ The arrested students were released after four hours (*BP* 1971a, 2). This account states that Baculinao was among those arrested. However, the Committee of Inquiry’s report claimed that Baculinao was not arrested but went to Quezon City Hall to protest the arrests and that he found Lopez there. This version corresponds with Armando Malay’s (1982c, 6) account.

Tuesday, 2 February

Early Tuesday morning the students rebuilt their defenses, incorporating the burned-out remains of Campos's car into the barricades (Malay 1982b, 6). Leaflets for and against the barricades circulated throughout the campus that morning. A group calling itself the "decent elements of the UP Student Council" signed a document on behalf of the entire council denouncing "student fascism." Their leaflet read, "UP vile [sic] activist Sonny Mesina was shot in the head yesterday, when in self-defense Prof. Inocente Campos fired at fascistic students who want to reign supreme in UP" (UP Student Council 1971). The Samahan ng Makabayang Siyentipiko (SMS 1971), meanwhile, issued an appeal to continue support for the jeepney strike and opposition to fascism on campus, concluding by summoning everyone "to the barricades!" This was the last mention of the strike during the Diliman Commune; after the morning of 2 February, this pretext was dropped entirely (ibid.).¹⁶

The police and the students tensely eyed one another over the barricades. According to the *Collegian*, the standoff broke when the MPKP drove a jeep past the barricades, leading an assault by the police (PC 1971f). *Bandilang Pula* described the jeep as flying a flag with a sickle on it, and the students at the barricade expected that the jeep contained reinforcements. In their own version of events, the MPKP claimed that the

¹⁶ On 3 February the various front organizations of the PKP, including the MPKP and the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation (BRPF), issued a joint statement on the strike, signed by a number of drivers and operators' associations. They called for the continuation of the struggle against American oil monopolies and called on "drivers, militant students, and the Filipino masses" to "expose and oppose the phony revolutionaries and paid agents and provocateurs who are carrying out needless violence that confuses the masses and ruins the national democratic movement while covering up the true issue against imperialism" (MPKP 1971b). These groups, however, were now operating entirely off campus. No further mention of the strike was made within the Commune.

be maintained as a permanent condition. The fascist military — of course for its own purpose — has [sic] by and large withdrawn its own force by Thursday ... The constant exactions, limited resources, both human and material, and the necessity for consolidation were circumstances that also had to be considered. (ibid.)

The communards' own account reveals that they tore down the barricades not to secure the withdrawal of the military, but because their own numbers were dwindling and because of broader, unspecified political considerations. In response to their demands, students were eventually given unspecified "reduced rates" for use of the UP Press and were allocated airtime at DZUP in "accordance with the rules of the University" (Malay 1982i 6). The initial allotment of airtime was two hours a day under some form of supervision (PC 1971i, 9). The hours at DZUP controlled by the KM-SDK rapidly expanded until they had nearly complete control of the station by the end of 1971. It was, however, the product of gradual expansion and was not the result of a demand granted in the wake of the barricades. Lopez's stations continued to rebroadcast DZUP throughout greater Manila and the surrounding provinces until the declaration of martial law. Inocente Campos was not dismissed, and in the wake of the barricades he resumed teaching math on the Diliman campus (PC 1972, 2).

Aftermath

The police filed nine charges against Baculinao, including illegal detention, malicious mischief, arson, attempted murder, and five cases of theft. A taxi driver, Pedro Magpoy, filed charges against several students for detaining his Yellow Taxi for ten hours; another taxi driver, Francisco Cadampog, complained that the students had set fire to his Mercury

that the Commune was being normalized in order to “consolidate gains,” but did not specify a single one. It claimed that the removal of the barricades was undertaken in return for the “presenting of demands.” Not one of the demands had been granted; they had lifted the barricades in exchange for the privilege of presenting them (*BP* 1971e). The demands were:

- Rollback the price of gasoline.
- Guarantee against any military or police invasion of campus.
- Justice for Pastor Mesina [not specified what this was]
- Free use of DZUP radio
- Free use of UP Press
- Prosecution and dismissal of Inocente Campos [apparently distinct from justice for Pastor Mesina]
- Investigation of the UP Security Police; prosecution and dismissal of all officials and police who collaborated with the military invasion.
- All students with connections with military or intelligence must disclose their connections on registration on pain of expulsion.

They wrote

It is not out of fear that we lifted the barricades ... We decided to lift the barricades on the basis of national democratic and revolutionary principles and primarily on the basis of tactical considerations.

The conditions of the barricades which were those of an emergency and of actual resistance, cannot

KM-SDK hurled pillboxes at their jeep, which was bearing MPKP activists and striking drivers (MPKP-UP 1971b). The MPKP carried a leaflet with them, which stated “the massing of hundreds of [Philippine Constabulary] troopers and Quezon City policemen armed with high-powered firearms in the University is a naked act of fascist repression ... However, we also see the necessity of criticizing certain elements within the student ranks who committed acts of unwarranted violence against UP personnel and property” (MPKP 1971a).¹⁷ They called on students to “sustain the struggle against American oil monopolies,” but also to “expose and oppose petty-bourgeois pseudo-revolutionary elements.” Behind their jeep came the police, who immediately began firing tear gas; the students at the barricades retreated before the onslaught. The front organizations of the PKP had played no part in the barricades until now, for they stood on the opposite side of this battle; as they entered Diliman they were accompanied by the military.

By 1:00 in the afternoon, S. P. Lopez was engaged in an argument with QCPD chief Karingal, demanding the removal of the police from the university campus. After several skirmishes between police and students, the police appeared to withdraw. At 2:00 in the afternoon the students declared that UP was a “liberated area” (Giron 1971, 6). The upper floors of the AS building were seized by a group that called itself the AS Rooftop Junta and flew a red flag from its roof. The students used the rooftops of the AS and Engineering buildings to throw Molotov cocktails and pillboxes at the police during subsequent encroachments (*BP* 1971c, 5). Barricades were set up in front of the AS Building.

But police took the road behind the building, cutting off the students’ retreat and many of them

¹⁷ The leaflet cited the March 1970 MPKP (1970) statement, “People’s Violence Against State Violence,” as the correct political line, a statement that denounced both the state and the KM.

were caught. Students battled the militarists at Vinzons Hall where activists held their meetings. Fourteen students were injured when Metrocom soldiers captured the area. At this point, Kabataang Makabayan members of Ateneo de Manila reinforced the UP students. QC Major ELPidio Clemente ordered the attack on two girl dormitories where ten male students fighting the police with bombs sought refuge. In ten minutes the Sampaguita and Camia halls reeked of gas fumes and the cries of 200 occupants resounded. Girls trapped inside broken glass windows and squirmed through broken glass, lacerating or bruising themselves. They were in tears. (Giron 1971, 6)

The students poured water on the road to dampen the effect of the teargas, shouting out to the Metrocom that they were pouring gasoline. The Metrocom began to attack from the grass, as the pillbox bombs routinely did not explode on soft impact (BP 1971c, 5). Low-flying helicopters flew over the campus, dropping teargas bombs in addition to those being thrown by the Metrocom. The students began streamlining the production of Molotov cocktails, using Coke bottles taken from the cafeteria, two drums of crude oil that were available on campus, and curtains torn down from the AS building. The exchanges between the Metrocom and the students continued until late in the night, and at some point the students set the barricades on fire. The embers of the barricades were still smoldering the next morning (Daroy 1971, 8, 9).

Wednesday, 3 February

The DZMM radio station, owned by Eugenio Lopez, sent its Radyo Patrol truck to the campus on Wednesday morning, and

with the constabulary, had carried out the bombing to frame the activists (*Tinig ng Mamamayan* 1971; PC 1971h, 2).

As the barricades were taken down, SDK leaders Tagamolila, Vea, and Taguiwalo wrote a three-part front-page editorial in the *Collegian* assessing the now finished commune. Tagamolila (1971c, italics added) stated,

The ever-growing recognition by the masses of the evils of imperialism and the fascism of its staunchest ally, bureaucrat-capitalism, has in fact been accelerated by the very violence with which the fascists sought to silence the masses. ... The more the imperialists need to exploit the masses, the more the masses protest. The more the masses protest, the more violent will be the suppression. The more violent the fascist state becomes, the more politicized and *the stronger the masses become*.

In keeping with the line of Sison and the CPP, the KM and SDK argued that the violence of “fascism” was serving a good purpose: it was accelerating the growth of revolutionary consciousness. Fascist suppression, they claimed, made the masses stronger. This political line would lead Sison and the CPP to hail the imposition of martial law in 1972 as a great advance in the struggle of the revolutionary masses (Scalice 2017, 775–79). Vea assessed what he perceived to be the errors of the Commune, which he described as the result of “the failure to concretely assess the concrete situation.” Among its errors he listed the “adoption of a purely military viewpoint,” which led to “unnecessary pillbox explosions ... Taxis were commandeered without much regard for the political significance,” a situation that was “subsequently rectified in the following days ... Taxis were all returned” (Taguiwalo and Vea 1971, 9).

On 12 February, three days after the removal of the barricades, the Malayang Komunidad ng Diliman published its second and final issue of *Bandilang Pula*. The paper announced

military and police siege, and declare assurances that state security forces should not be deployed against the university” (Sison and Sison 2008, 58). Sison’s account is entirely false. The military siege had been lifted days before the commune ended; assurances that state forces would not be used against the campus existed before the Commune was formed, and the events of early February marked a significant step toward their rescinding; and while the commune did publish a set of eight demands, only two were eventually partially granted and none were granted prior to the lifting of the barricades. According to Jerry Araos, whose SDKM played a key role in the arming of the barricades, “the barricades ended only when a decision from the underground [i.e., the CPP] ordered their abandonment” (Santos and Santos 2008, 77). The barricades in the University Belt and at UP Los Banos were lifted on the same day in a coordinated manner; evidently, they had all received the same instructions from the CPP leadership (*Tinig ng Mamamayan* 1971).

Major explosions and fires broke out on both the Los Banos and Diliman campuses as the barricades were being taken down. Whether these were carried out by provocateurs, students opposing the lifting of the barricades, or as a final action of the “communards” before their removal is unclear. At 3:00 in the morning, thirteen drums of gasoline on the Diliman campus, “set aside by students at the Sampaguita residence hall, suddenly caught fire” (*biglang lumiyab ang 13 dram ng gasolina na itinabi ng mga magaaral sa Sampaguita residence hall*), while several hours earlier, at 10:00 PM, a large explosion took place at the UPLB armory (*PC* 1971g, 9). *Ang Tinig ng Mamamayan*, the publication of the Los Banos barricades, speculated that it might have been set off by the NPA, but a week later SDK UPLB chair Cesar Hicaro said that the idea that “activists” had carried out the bombing was “laughable” (*katawa-tawa*). He instead alleged that Dean Umali, in cahoots

Dean Malay issued an appeal to the nation to provide food and supplies to the barricaded students. S. P. Lopez called on the entire university community to assemble in front of Palma Hall, where KM leader Boni Ilagan opened the assembly, recounting to the students the events of the past two days. Lopez addressed the students, stating that what was at stake in the struggle over the barricades was the militarization of the campus (Malay 1982d, 8; Daroy 1971, 9). Mila Aguilar (1971) reported that at the end of Lopez’s speech “a band of white-helmeted fascists were sighted at the corner of the Engineering building 100 meters away from the Arts and Sciences steps, where the gathering was being held.” The students grabbed “chairs, tables, blackboards” and brought them down into the street (*ibid.*). The barricade rapidly extended down the length of the AS building, and Molotov cocktails and pillboxes were distributed up and down the line. The students occupying the rooftops were given *kwitis* (fireworks) to launch at helicopters flying overhead.

A negotiating team, including the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, some faculty members, and student representatives, went to meet with the police. The “white-helmeted fascists” were the Metrocom, under the command of QCPD Major Clemente, who was chiefly concerned with the removal of blockades from the main thoroughfares so that buses could pass. Marcos gave orders directly to Clemente to have his men stand down as long as Lopez and the university administration took responsibility for the situation. Clemente and the negotiating team reached an agreement that the buses would be rerouted down Commonwealth Avenue, skirting the north side of the campus; however, as Clemente pulled out his forces, he secretly arranged to leave behind snipers at various locations throughout the campus (Daroy 1971, 9; *BP* 1971c, B).

During one of the police assaults on Vinzons Hall — it is unclear on which day — Danilo Delfin was critically wounded by a gunshot to the lung (Daroy 1971, 9). Delfin was not a supporter of the commune guarding the barricades. He was a member of

the Vanguard Fraternity, a right-wing organization opposed to the KM and SDK. Delfin later stated that he was caught in the crossfire and that the trajectory of the bullet revealed that he was shot in the back by the KM-SDK from behind Vinzons Hall (Convocation Sabotaged 1971). For a brief time after the events, Delfin was hailed by the KM and SDK as a hero and a “martyr” of the movement. When he revealed that he was a Vanguard member who had been shot in the back, he was denounced. In mid-1972 he wrote a bitter public letter:

A year and half after, I’m still confined to a wheel chair, unable to walk or stand by myself. The doctors say that in a year or two, I might finally be able to walk. I don’t know.

Last year, right after the barricades and during the early part of the campus campaign, some groups on campus, specifically those who set up the barricades, were praising me as Kumander Delfin, one of the heroes and martyrs of the barricades. Until I told the truth during the AS confrontation [in July 1971]. Since then I have been consistently denounced as a propagandist for Malacanang. In a wheel chair? (Delfin 1972)

At 5:00 in the evening, Senators Benigno Aquino Jr., Salvador Laurel, and Eva Estrada Kalaw went to and spoke on the Diliman campus, proclaiming “their concern over the military force under control of President Marcos. They called upon the military units on the edges of campus to withdraw” (ang kaniyang pagkabahala sa puwersang militar na kontrolado ni Pang. Marcos. Hinikayat nilang umalis ang hukbong militar sa kapaligiran ng kampus) (PC 1971f, 5).¹⁸ Aquino brought bags of

¹⁸ An article in the same issue of the *Philippine Collegian* (1971d, 5) stated that the senators arrived on the campus at noon and that Sen. Gene Magsaysay accompanied them.

Friday, 5 February, to Tuesday, 9 February

As the threat of police invasion receded, life on the UP Diliman campus settled into a routine. On Friday morning, the UP Student Catholic Action issued a statement that hailed the student victory over the “fascist” invasion of campus, but stated that the threat had passed and called now for the removal of the barricades (UPSCA Law Chapter 1971). At some point in the early stages of the barricades, the police, for unspecified reasons, had arrested the cafeteria workers. Food production on the campus thus fell to the students themselves. “The President of the UP Women’s Club undertook this task. Foodstuffs came in as donations; they were cooked up at the Kamia Residence Hall and brought in ration to the various barricades” (Daroy 1971, 10). A resident of Kamia, Babes Almario (1971, 4) wrote a sympathetic account of the Commune in which she claimed that an “agent ... was caught in the act of sabotaging the molotov cocktails we had neatly laid out as if in preparation for a buffet, and he was dealt the revolutionary punishment of the communards.” Almario did not specify what this “punishment” was. The number of students continued to dwindle. Kamia, which customarily housed 200 students, by Friday only housed twenty (Reyes 1971).²²

Nine days after they erected them, the students who still remained on campus voluntarily tore down the barricades, and life at the university returned to normal. In his history of the campus, Jose Ma. Sison wrote that the Diliman Commune ended “only after the administration accepted several significant demands of the students and the Marcos regime accepted the recommendation of the UP president to end the

²² The production of literature likewise began to taper off. The AS Rooftop Junta (1971b) issued a manifesto on 7 February, a slight affair which stated that “the masses who suffer most under [the Marcos] maladministration have reached a point of realization ... *en masse* As mass realization among the people gains momentum, so does American imperialism gain deceleration.”

spective. They occupied their time broadcasting explicit sexual recordings in an attempt to embarrass Marcos on behalf of a rival section of the bourgeoisie (Santos and Santos 2008, 83; Malay 1982g, 6; Gonzales 1971, 3).

By mid-Thursday afternoon, the students had broken the lock off the door of the university press, intending to use it to print a newspaper for the Commune. Expressing concern that the students might break the press, Dean Malay (1982f, 7) offered to provide them with several regular press employees: “one or two linotypists, a makeup man, and others you might need.” By the next morning the students had published a newspaper for the barricades, *Bandilang Pula*. In addition to the press and radio, the students took over the chemistry laboratory, which they used for the production of Molotov cocktails and other explosives. On 4 February Tagamolila (1971b, 6), at the head of the *Collegian*, published an editorial on the Commune, writing

The scholar turned street fighter becomes a truly wiser man. The political science professor hurling molotovs gets to know more about revolution than a lifetime of pedagogy. The engineering and science majors, preparing fuseless molotovs and operating radio stations, the medical student braving gunfire to aid his fellow-activist, the coed preparing battle-rations of food, pillboxes, and gasoline bombs, by their social practice realize that their skills are in themselves not enough — that the political education they get by using those skills against fascism is the correct summing up of all previous learning.

food for the students on the barricades (BP 1971d, 6). The senators then met with S. P. Lopez in his office to discuss the affair. While they were in conference, Marcos called Lopez and stated that he was ordering the withdrawal of all troops and that students would not be issued a deadline for the removal of the barricades (Malay 1982e, 7). Marcos, it seems, astutely decided to allow the students to tire of the barricades, which lasted for five more days.

Lopez (1971) issued a press statement calling for the resumption of classes, stating that he was “unalterably opposed” to police entering the campus, but called upon students to tear down the barricades so that classes could resume. The students continued to man the barricades, however, tearing down the stage lights from the AS theater and installing them on the top of the AS hall to serve as a searchlight. They began renaming the UP campus buildings; the campus itself they renamed the “Democratic Diliman Commune.” The accounts of the renaming are contradictory. According to various sources UP was renamed Stalin University; Abelardo Hall became Dante Hall; the Faculty Center became Jose Ma. Sison Hall; Palma Hall became Dante Hall; Gonzalez Hall became Amado Guerrero Hall (Canoy 1980, 2; Rosca 1971, 10). The only renaming that I can independently verify is Jose Ma. Sison Hall because the students scrawled Sison’s name in large red letters on the walls. By Wednesday night, essentially all police and military incursions on the Diliman campus stopped, according to the commune’s own publications. The KM and SDK occupied the campus exclusively until they took the barricades down (BP 1971e, 7).

Thursday, 4 February

By Thursday morning, the university had a “lack of students,” the streets were deserted, and the commune was “isolated.” Those who remained at Diliman were the members of the UP chapters of the KM and SDK, who had been joined

by members from other universities (Aguilar 1971).¹⁹ The majority of the student body, however, had left. Those remaining on the campus elected a provisional directorate, of which Baculinao was made head (Malay 1982c, 6).²⁰

The occupying students, now styling themselves as “communards,” broke into and seized the DZUP radio station, renaming it Malayang Tinig ng Demokratikong Komunidad ng Diliman (Free Voice of the Democratic Community of Diliman) (Gonzales 1971, 3; Aguilar 1971, 8; Baculinao et al. 1971). *Bagong Pilipina* described the “liberation” of the station: “The university radio station which used to play and cater to well-educated bourgeoisie [sic] listeners (who else could afford to appreciate Beethoven’s symphony, who else could find time to relax at night and listen to bourgeois [sic] music?) was liberated and occupied by the progressive sector” (Bebano and Castillo 1971, 3). The KM and SDK began broadcasting, receiving extraordinary assistance from the Lopez family. DZUP had a broadcast radius of 5 kilometers and, according to Armando Malay (1982g, 1), “nobody (but nobody) had been listening to it before.” ABS-CBN, the national broadcast network owned by Eugenio Lopez, announced that the station had been captured and it was being broadcast at 1410 AM. Having made this announcement, Lopez then arranged the nationwide rebroadcast of the students’ programming. The 5-kilometer campus station now reached the entire archipelago. The student operators managed to burn out the vacuum tubes of the radio station, but these were promptly replaced by a wealthy anonymous donor (ibid.; BP 1971d, 6).

¹⁹ Aguilar’s account was fiercely supportive of the Commune, but still notes that by 4 February the Commune did not have significant student support. Prominent among those who joined the barricades was the explicitly anarchist SDKM under Jerry Araos, who later stated that a member of the SDKM was present at every barricade (Santos and Santos 2008, 77).

²⁰ Some accounts say “elected,” others “appointed.” How exactly the directorate was constituted is unclear.

Eugenio Lopez did not merely supply the means of broadcast to the students, but he also supplied the content. As part of Marcos’s presidential campaign in 1969, he had commissioned the production of a film depicting what were supposed to be his years as a guerrilla during the Second World War. The film, *Ang mga Maharlika*, starred Hollywood actors Paul Burke (as Marcos) and Farley Granger. B-grade movie actress Dovie Beams played Marcos’s love interest.²¹ Throughout the course of 1969 and most of 1970 Beams and Marcos carried on a love affair and, without Marcos’s knowledge, Beams recorded the audio of each of their encounters. Imelda Marcos, stung by the scandal, arranged to have Beams deported as an undesirable alien in November 1970. Beams responded by threatening to release the recordings. Ferdinand Marcos made an offer of US\$100,000 to Beams for the audio tapes, and the US consul carried out the negotiations on his behalf. Beams refused and called a press conference during which she played a portion of her recording, featuring Marcos singing “Pamulinawen” (an Ilocano folk song) as well as the sounds of their love making. A pair of reporters broke into Beams’s hotel room and stole the audio tapes, and the tapes wound up in the possession of the Lopez media conglomerate (Rotea 1984, 132; Rodrigo 2006, 210). Much as they desired to humiliate Marcos, they could not broadcast the hours of recorded bedroom conversation and noises over their radio network. The Diliman Commune provided the ideal pretext for their broadcast, and they supplied the students with the audio tapes. The KM and SDK cheerfully broadcast Beams’s audio tapes, punctuated at times by performances of the Internationale, and the Lopez radio network carried the broadcast nationwide to the immense humiliation of Marcos. The KM and SDK had been provided with a means of addressing the entire nation, and they made little attempt to present a political per-

²¹ The story of Marcos’s affair with Beams and the scandal that followed are detailed in Rotea 1984.