



APPENDIX 5.2

“A MAN OF HIS TIME,” A YEAR BEFORE MARTIAL LAW, 11 SEPTEMBER 1971

This piece of propaganda was published in the first (and only?) issue of *The Leader*, which focused on Ferdinand Marcos’s fifty-fourth birthday. That birthday came mere weeks after the bloody Plaza Miranda bombing and Marcos’s suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus on 21 August 1971. Marcos here is portrayed as a liberal, though one willing to use force when necessary in response to the “new radicalism” of the time; a freedom/national security paradox is mentioned, but the only resolution offered thereto is trust in the leadership of the president. Marcos, portrayed as far superior to his immediate predecessors (Carlos Garcia and Diosdado Macapagal), is doing precisely what is necessary, readers are being told, a little over a year before the declaration of martial law.

As a people, we Filipinos revise our opinions of our leaders incessantly, and in the particular case of President Ferdinand Marcos our estimate of the man has oscillated all too often between praise and condemnation as to defy analysis.

No man perhaps so dominates our times today, or so ably gathers around himself the attention and passions of the body politic, as Mr. Marcos does today. This is not merely the accident of being Chief Executive (other men, say the late Carlos Garcia and Diosdado Macapagal, serving in the same office, never carved so indelible an impression on our national life); it is rather an extension of the man himself; of who he is, what he believes in, and what these contribute to the shaping of the national directions and decisions. The familiar portrait of him sitting on a sofa in the Palace taken early in his first term—the somewhat round calm face at once genial and impervious, the still manly (military?) posture, the hair with not a single strand unmanaged—has become for us unmistakably the personification of a

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FM CELEBRATES BIRTHDAY TODAY



Southern Governors and Mayors are Special Guests

President Ferdinand E. Marcos, the first Philippine President to win a reelection, observes his birthday today.

The Filipino leader will spend the early hours with the First Lady, Mrs. Imelda Romualdo Marcos and their children Imee, Irene and Robinzon.

At 11:30 a.m. a mass will be celebrated at the Malacanang Chapel. Close relatives at friends and associates have been invited.

After the mass the First Couple will receive the members of the official family including department secretaries, under-secretaries, directors and their ladies. The President's special guests will be the provincial governors and city and municipal mayors from the Visayas and Mindanao.

At the luncheon conference, Mr. Marcos is expected to rally the people behind his renewed effort to eliminate the communist menace in the country.

The President had suspended the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus on August 21, 1971 after he was convinced of the pattern of insurrection developing in certain areas of the country.

Mr. Marcos, the most decorated Filipino soldier of World War II, said "someone must be resolute, someone must be firm, in protecting the integrity of the Republic."

"We have made the decision and come what may, we must meet the enemy. And as we have meet him in many other battles, we will survive and we will overcome them."

THE FIRST COUPLE IN MOMENTS OF TENDERNESS

A MAN OF HIS TIME

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posture, the hair with not a single strand unmanaged—has become for us unmistakably the personification of a strong will and pride of mind a thousand times more imposing than an army of militants.

It is indeed as a special instance, both of his people and of his chosen career in politics, that Mr. Marcos now presents himself to us. It would be difficult to name another political figure in recent years who has been subjected to the harsh give-and-take of criticism, analysis and speculation, as though to let him alone for just a second would be to miss the boat.

From the first, his assumption of the office of the Presidency had always been viewed with some reservation, largely because his early career as a soldier, lawyer, congressman and senator marked him as a man of drive, confidence and ability, a man who knew how to gain and wield power. No one doubted that he would be a strong President,

and although this did not jibe too well with the Filipino's penchant for moderation in politics, it was welcome at a time when we were a little weary of Presidents who were weak-willed and easily bullied by Western diplomats and politicians. This combination of drive and confidence, aided by his sure grasp of the political game, made for an exciting and eventful first term in the Presidency. Here without question, was a man of action, and the activism was matched by an aura of glamour and elegance brought in by his redoubtable wife. Malacañang flirted as it were with artists, musicians, businessmen, liberals, radicals, priests, and the beautiful people all at the same time.

His reelection was inevitable. But the chimes of new anxieties among the population broke in and blurred the air of celebration. Early in 1970, the students marched and blood was shed. What never surfaced during the first four years—his response to crisis and violence—except in isolated and insignificant cases, now became the order of the day.

(Continued on page 4)

Figure 1. A copy of the newspaper.

Source: Patricio, Mario. 1971. "A Man of His Time." *The Leader* (Manila), September 11.

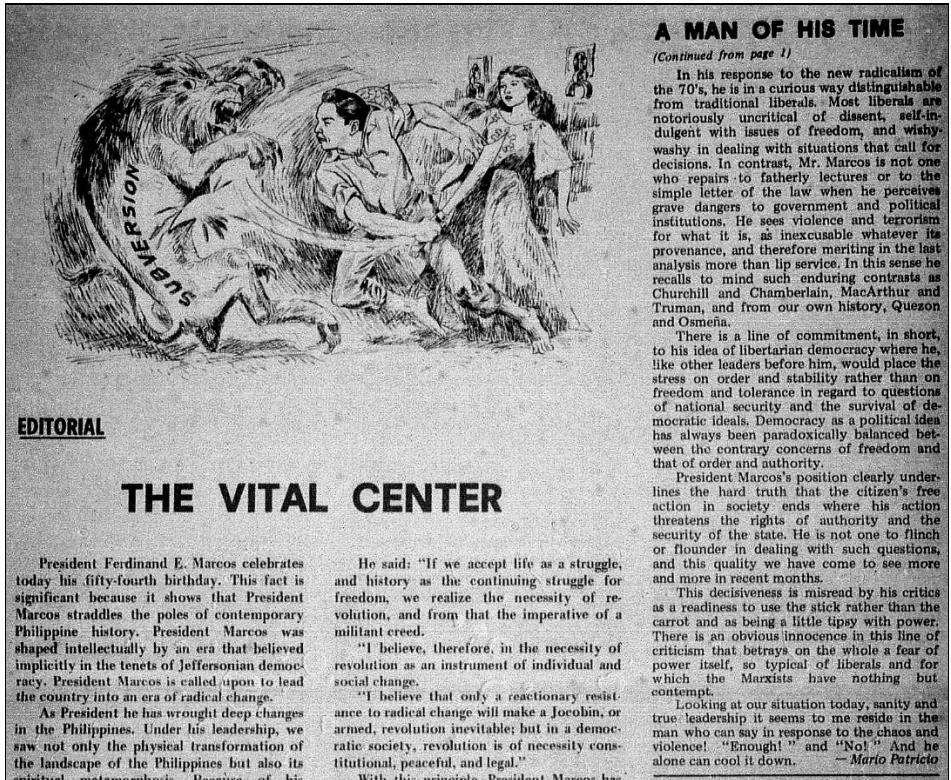


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In his response to the new radicalism of the 70's, he is in a curious way distinguishable from traditional liberals. Most liberals are notoriously uncritical of dissent, self-indulgent with issues of freedom, and wishy-washy in dealing with situations that call for decisions. In contrast, Mr. Marcos is not one who repairs to fatherly lectures or to the simple letter of the law when he perceives grave dangers to government and political institutions. He sees violence and terrorism for what it is, as inexcusable whatever its provenance, and therefore meriting in the last analysis more than lip service. In this sense he recalls to mind such enduring contrasts as Churchill and Chamberlain,

MacArthur and Truman, and from our own history, Quezon and Osmeña.

There is a line of commitment, in short, to his idea of libertarian democracy where he, like other leaders before him, would place the stress on order and stability rather than on freedom and tolerance in regard to questions of national security and the survival of democratic ideals. Democracy as a political idea has always been paradoxically balanced between the contrary concerns of freedom and that of order and authority.

President Marcos's position clearly underlines the hard truth that the citizen's free action in society ends where his action threatens the rights of authority and the security of the state. He is not one to flinch or flounder in dealing with such questions, and this quality we have come to see more and more in recent months.

This decisiveness is misread by his critics as a readiness to use the stick rather than the carrot and as being a little tipsy with power. There is an obvious innocence in this line of criticism that betrays on the whole a fear of power itself, so typical of liberals and for which the Marxists have nothing but contempt.

Looking at our situation today, sanity and true leadership it seems to me reside in the man who can say in response to the chaos and violence! "Enough!" and "No!" And he alone can cool it down.—*Mario Patricio*

