

## PHILIPPINES:

## AQUINO ON TRIAL

On August 27, 1973, Senator Benigno 'Ninoy' Aquino made a dramatic appearance before a military court. The full text of Aquino's statement:

'For the last eleven months, I have been separated from my wife and my children, deprived of freedom and my basic liberties. For the last six months I have been in almost complete solitary confinement. I have suffered loneliness and endured many indignities. I have had a lot of time to think and pray, and my desolation has purged me of all hatred, bitterness, and rancour.

'I have tried very hard to understand Mr. Marcos' decision to rule this republic by martial rule. I have placed myself in his shoes, giving him every benefit of the doubt. I must confess, I cannot find any justification whatever for his dictatorship. That despots should resort to the old device of bogus plots and fake conspiracies to convict their opponents is as old as recorded history.

'Coercion, violence, human degradation, the total suppression of civil liberties, censorship of the mass media, the wholesale disparagement of politics and political processes, the imprisonment and execution of political enemies, abolition of Congress, and the rule by decree, have been resorted to by dictators on the pretext that such measures are necessary to destroy a powerful enemy that threatens the people.'

'But, as in all cases, if I may borrow the words of Shigalev in Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*, starting from unlimited power ends in unlimited despotism.'

'Mr. Marcos is not the first man to impose a one-man rule in the history of the world. He has many predecessors and many models to imitate and surpass, from Herod to Stalin, From Mussolini to Hitler.

'Mr. Marcos has grabbed almost

# NEW BLACKS ON CAMPUS

THIS WEEKS  
SPOTLIGHT IS ON...

## JAMES KING

by Jimmie Cannon

James King is an instructor in Black Studies. His office is in the Black

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'I understand my lawyers have stated before the Supreme Court why a Military Tribunal cannot assume jurisdiction over criminal cases against civilians in times of peace. The whole civilized world recoils at thought of civilians being dragged before military courts and tried as ordinary criminals.'

'But there is something that transcends all other considerations, something that is unique in the case against me. Two years ago, on August 24, 1971 three days after the horrible massacre in Plaza Miranda I was accused and pronounced guilty of the same charges by the President himself, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. He could have ordered the charges against me filed with the civil courts since 1971 but he did not. He waited for his own brand of martial law and ordered the creation of military tribunals. With due respect to all of you, how can this Military Commission reverse the President? Even if you want to because of your sense of justice, nonetheless under Presidential Decree No. 39, the President has the power in any case to change or reverse your decision.

'Sirs, I know you to be honorable men. But the on unalterable fact is that you are the subordinates of the President. You may decide to preserve my life, but he can choose to send me to death. Some people suggest that I beg for mercy. But this I cannot in conscience do. I would rather die on my feet with honor, than live on bended knees in shame.'

'I have therefore decided not to participate in these proceedings: first, because this ritual is an unconscionable

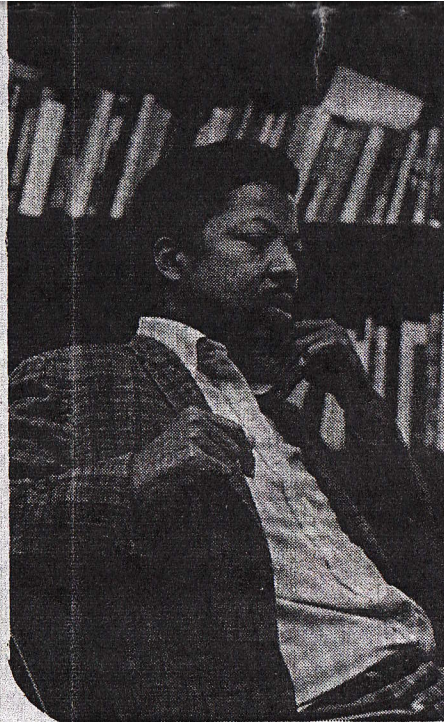
Mr. Marcos has grabbed unlimited power because he claims the democratic methods bequeathed to us by our heroes and Founding Fathers have become ineffective. He has embarked on the ambitious programme of fashioning a New Society where the people must be held together with military discipline and led as if they were a bunch of sheep, too stupid and too blind to be allowed to proceed in the direction of their own choice.

'I take it as an article of faith that truth will not come to light in the governance of public affairs without a free press and a free market of ideas. It is my belief that martial rule can only cripple the Filipino: his lofty spirit, his initiative and originality, his moral courage and mental energy, his genius and industry all the forces that make a nation great and strong. At best, martial rule can only bring about collective mediocrity.

'To arrest a man and imprison him in some army camp unless he submits to a life in which he receives no choice of his goals; to close every door to him but one, no matter how great the promise upon which it opens, or how noble and benevolent the motives of those who planned it, is to sin against the truth that he is a man, a being with life of his own to live.

'Some leaders take the people as fools lacking morals' and intellectual resources with which to face their responsibilities as free men, preferring security to the abstract notions of freedom and liberty.

'I cannot share such view. I have faith in the Filipino. I believe that with all the



resources at his disposal and given the facts and the truth, the Filipino can resolve any difficulty and achieve his vision of a good and just society.'

'I believe that the Filipino will respond to the call to greatness not by coercion but by persuasion, not by intimidation but through the ways of freedom.'

'All that I hold sacred, the inherent

dignity and worth of every human being, his freedom of thought and speech and press, his liberty to choose without fear or pressure the public officials of his own choice, and the great principles of democracy handed down to us by our forebears, have all been set aside for the convenience of one man's continued stay in power.'

Studies. His office is in the Black Studies Department, fourth floor of the A.O.B. building.  
Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, he later moved to Pennsylvania where he attended Ben Franklin High School. After graduating he came to California where he attended Oakland City College then after his town years there he went on to U.C. Berkeley where he obtained his B.A. degree in History in 1970. Moving on in his educational background in 1971 he got his M.A. degree in history at U.C. Irvine. He also was a PH.D. candidate at U.C. Irvine in 1973. His field was the History of Race Relations in the Americas.

James has been active in community action groups since 1963 in California. He enjoys traveling and the outdoors. He is now living in Davis. James enjoys living in Davis because of its quiet atmosphere. He believes Davis is better for married life because of its conservative views. This brother is aware and understanding to his student needs and outstanding in his field.

because this road is an unconscionable mockery; and second, because every part of my being my heart and mind and soul yes, every part of my being is against any form of dictatorship. I agree we must have public order and national discipline, if the country is to move forward. But peace and order without freedom is nothing more than slavery. Discipline without justice is merely another name for oppression. I believe we can have lasting peace and prosperity only if we build a social order based on freedom and justice. My non-participation is therefore an act of protest against the structures of injustice that brought us here. It is also an act of faith in the ultimate victory of right over wrong, of good over evil. In all humility, I say it is a rare privilege to share with the Motherland her bondage, her anguish, her every pain and suffering.

'On September 23, Mother Filipinas once again was led back to her dark dungeon in chains. Her sons and daughters lie prostrate and defenseless, ruled by decrees and governed once more by the hated law of the mighty namely, that might makes right.'

'Mr. President, Honorable Members of this Commission, I fully realize the consequences of my decision. You have your duties to perform I have my sad fate to meet. I have chosen to follow my conscience and accept the tyrant's verdict.'

'May God have mercy on all of us!'