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itan counterparts.

What is in store for community journalism under the new order?

The picture has somewhat changed in the same manner that the metropolitan press has.

Scanning samples of post-martial law community papers, one notices, as one does in the metropolitan press, the demise of the local society page. One also notices a format that puts the accent on what is often referred to as positive reporting. The quality and content of some articles indicate that local writers, given further professional guidance, may yet emerge as first-rate developmental journalists. In many cases, though, reporting tends to be dull on account of the uniform treatment of news stories. While there are guidelines for the media to follow, there must be a way of writing about the various aspects of community life in a lively and interesting manner.

Several papers do retain some of the more commendable qualities they had before.

The Sunday Punch has maintained its original crusading image, this time concentrating on the "enemies of change." The Naga Times is still the better edited among the Bicol papers and can compare favorably with the Sunday Punch in layouting.

In Cebu, the local papers — namely the Cebu Advocate, the Cebu Times, and the Republic News — show the same writing enthusiasm of the small-town journalists. Davao City's Mindanao Times tries to cover as many provinces in Mindanao but really ends up announcing plans and projects of a locality.

In Tarlac, two papers (The Monitor and the Luzon Star) balance between the news from Camp Makabulos, the Constabulary headquarters in that province, and the local civic clubs. The columnists have re-appeared and, with the political pyrotechnics now non-existent in the place, have turned

writing on less spicy though more better domestic subjects (boyhood memories, why the streets of Tarlac are named after so-and-so). Armando Matias, editor of the Monitor, has his version of Jean Edades's "How's Your English" and adds the qualifier "Information Editor eligible" below his by-line. One finds Mr. Matias's technical motives commendable, but as one browses over the other paper, the Luzon Star, one realizes, remembering Mr. Matias's samples of murdered grammar, that Jean Edades's Tarlac counterpart is putting one over the other paper in a petty sort of way.

A fairly common, noticeable feature of both pre- and post-martial law papers is that they have all but sacrificed wider coverage for the sake of the revenue-rising court notices. Anywhere from 70 to 90 percent of the pages of today's community newspapers are occupied by such notices.

It is fairly obvious that the community press still suffers from a number of old, recurrent ills. To be sure, some of the hazards that community journalists faced have disappeared since the institution of reforms now reaching into every facet of Philippine society. They no longer have to contend, for instance, with the old pernicious political alignments and the criminal and other malevolent forces that often placed a sword of Damocles over their heads. Today, they face new challenges, new responsibilities.

PABLO A. TARIMAN

Quiet on the campus

People had begun to sing the dirge for student activism when reports about its resurgence hit the headlines once again. "Universities watched," bannered one morning daily. "Crack-down on activism in campuses," said a one-column, below-the-fold story in another.

A concerned Education and Culture Secretary Juan Manuel sent Undersec-

retary Narciso Albaracin to Dumaguete for a look-see at developments in Silliman University, where much of the renewed activism was noted. Mr. Manuel later ordered the weeding out of faculty members abetting student activism and warned that a repetition of such incidents as were reported in Silliman would be dealt with more severely.

For all its attendant publicity, what happened at Silliman was not the first discordant note from the activist camp. But it was not typical of the country's campuses, either. Since classes resumed in October, majority of the student population had settled down to what they had gone to school for in the first place — more religiosity this time and without the distraction provided by that unlovely omnipresence of pre-martial law days: the placards and the graffiti. "Generally the campus scene is now serene," says one education official.

A tour of school campuses confirms that assessment. Gone are the red banners and the posters, the manifestoes and the microphones, the teach-ins and the discussion groups. No more boycotts and demonstrations to upturn carefully planned academic calendars. Gone too are some of the more vocal radicals. Order has returned to

what once was a chaotic campus life; a calm and subdued atmosphere envelops the nation's educational institutions. Most students now tackle their academics in dead earnest, and teachers are responding with equal determination via more readings, more term papers and more quizzes. This turn of events is being hailed by educators and parents alike.

The prevailing mood does have some variations from school to school. At the University of the East where activism did not gain a very firm foothold, students take to developments on the national scene in much the same manner as the majority of the Filipino people — that is to say, with relief coupled with a new-found feeling of confidence and security.

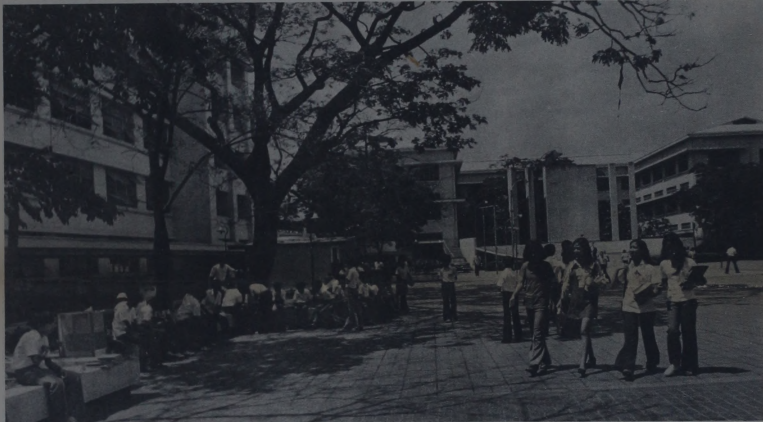
"They like it this way," says Jesus

Esprituro, UE's vice president for student affairs. "They can come to their

reforms: an end to politics, an end to official corruption and the beginning of a bright future for our farmers through land reform." But, he adds, they seem to find difficulty ridding themselves of their doubts.

It would be naive to think that the voices of doubt and cynicism have been totally stilled at this stage of the reform movement in the country. No less than the President took note of this when, in late January, he underlined the need for more effective supervision of schools, especially those where subversive forces had begun their insidious work again. A couple of weeks earlier, the President, assessing the first 100 days of martial law, warned of a reversion, a sliding back, into the undesirable and unconstructive activities of the past.

It cannot be said, therefore, that the government is unaware of what is going on in the campuses. It has al-



A university campus scene: peace at last.

classes without fear of being mugged or robbed. There are no more demonstrations, which (had) often led to the suspension of classes." As to why radicalism never took root in the country's biggest (in terms of enrollment) university, he has this explanation: "Our students come from middle- and lower-income families. They are therefore in a hurry to get their degrees and help their parents." Unlike some schools which cater to the children of the rich, he says, most UE students cannot afford a year's delay in their studies.

On the other side of the spectrum, students at the University of the Philippines seem to suffer a slight mental discomfort whenever they are confronted with the new restrictions around campus. Oscar Yabes, editor of the Philippine Collegian, official student organ of the UP, perhaps encapsulates this mood when he says: "Things are not normal yet. You cannot change the UP psyche overnight." Says Dean Armando Malay of the UP Office of Student Affairs: "Student activism is not dead. Neither is it dying. It is merely quiescent." Another educator puts it this way: "In their heart of hearts, even the radicals will admit to seeing some of their own imprints in the President's program of

ways kept a finger on the pulse of the student sector, ever sensitive to the faintest stirrings among students. And it has not been lacking, either, in the understanding of the Filipino youth's psychology.

That so far no school has been closed since the resumption of classes in October is perhaps a tribute to — or a reflection of — that discernment. It may also reflect the fact that the doubters are but a small minority of the country's vast student population, who make up a substantial portion of our young society.

Be that as it may, the majority — like the majority of the Filipino nation — have welcomed the reforms instituted the past six months. And with every announcement of a new reform measure, the government continues to gain their confidence, erasing whatever vestiges of doubt may exist in their minds. In their heart of hearts, to repeat what one educator said, they know that the changes now sweeping the cities and the countryside were the very ones they had sought, had demonstrated for, during those turbulent days preceding the historic last quarter of 1972.

It is the mood of this vast number that prevails in Philippine campuses today.