

LIBERATION

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The NDFP is the revolutionary united front organization of the Filipino people fighting for national freedom and for the democratic rights of the people. Established on April 24, 1973, the NDFP seeks to develop and coordinate all progressive classes, sectors and forces in the Filipino people's struggle to end the rule of US imperialism and its local allies, and attain national and social liberation.

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liberationph@gmail.com
liberation.ndfp.org

 liberation.ndfp.info

LAYOUT

Ka Paeng Barako

GRAPHICS, ARTWORK AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Miguel Liwanag, Julia Makabayan,
Anton Guerrero, Isabela Magpantay,
Cassandra Bigwas



ABOUT THE COVER

Elections may bring about reforms and immediate relief by electing progressive candidates. But it is only through the unity and strength of the masses to push forward the national democratic revolution to victory can meaningful change be achieved. It is through the power and creativity of the masses can the people's democratic republic be established.

Artwork by **Julia Makabayan** and **Cassandra Bigwas**

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MAMAMAYAN MAGKAISA PARA SA REBOLUSYON, ANG TUNAY NA SOLUSYON

Ang bawat hayag na eleksyon sa Pilipinas ay bangayan lamang ng mga kinatawan ng mga burukrata kapitalista, burgesya komprador at panginoong maylupa; ng mga makapangyarihan, mapang-api, at mapagsamantala sa lipunan. Ito na ang kalakaran mula noong pinagkaloob daw ng Estados Unidos ang “kalayaan” natin at naitayo ang isang papet na Republika.

Sa panahon pa lamang ng “Commonwealth” sinanay na ang mga Pilipino sa demokrasyang tatak-US—eleksyong rigodon o *musical chairs*, *circus*, *magic*, *goons*, *guns*, and *gold*, at batuhan ng putik para matiyak na ang nagpapalitang mga paksyon ay mananatiling tapat sa kanilang imperyalistang amo. Sa patuloy na pagsasanay, lalo pa itong pinaunlad ng bawat kumakandidatong paksyon para mapanatili ang bulok na sistemang kumakalinga sa kanilang uri at higit na magbigay ng kapangyarihan at kayamanan sa kanila. Ngayon, naidagdag pa sa mga gimik ang mga ayudang tulad ng AKAP, ang disinformation, *fake news* at *troll farms*; at higit sa lahat, ang *high tech* na pandaraya sa pamamagitan ng Automated Election System.

Tuwing kampanya, ginagamit ng mga reaksyunaryo ang mga isyu ng mamamayan hindi para bigyang solusyon at pagkaisahin ang mamamayan kundi para hatiin—isang lumang paraang pinakinabangan ng mga mananakop ng ating bansa. Sa batuhan ng putik, inuudyukan nila ang mamamayan na kampihan ang isang panig hanggang sa makalimutan na ang mga tunay na isyu at mauwi na lamang sa kampihan. Pinakamalinaw ito sa kasalukuyang iskandalosong bangayang Marcos-Duterte na pawang mga dinastiya’t kumakatawan lang sa interes ng kapwa nila naghaharing uri.

Ang ibinabato nilang kasalanan sa isa’t-isa—korupsyon, paglabag sa karapatang pantao, pagpatay, pagpabor sa mga dayuhan, mga proyekto at patakarang pampahirap sa masa—ay kapwa naman nila ginagawa.

Ngunit kahit magkaaway ang sinumang kampon ng kadiliman at kasamaan, sa dulo ay magkakampi pa rin sila laban sa pagbabago ng lipunang mapagsamantala at mapang-api sa mamamayang Pilipino. Ngayong nagsisikap ang malawak na demokratikong hanay na magpatakbo ng mga progresibong kandidato, di-kataka-takang nagkakaisa ang mga kampon para siraan ang mga progresibo sa mamamayan at pagmukhain silang masasama.

Naipanalo ng demokratikong kilusan ang ilang mga progresibo at maka-mamamayang kandidato. Ngunit anumang munting hakbang para sa kagalingan ng mamamayan na inihapag nila sa guberno ay agad tinutumbasan ng ganting-batas para mapalabnaw o maging lampa ang mga panukala.

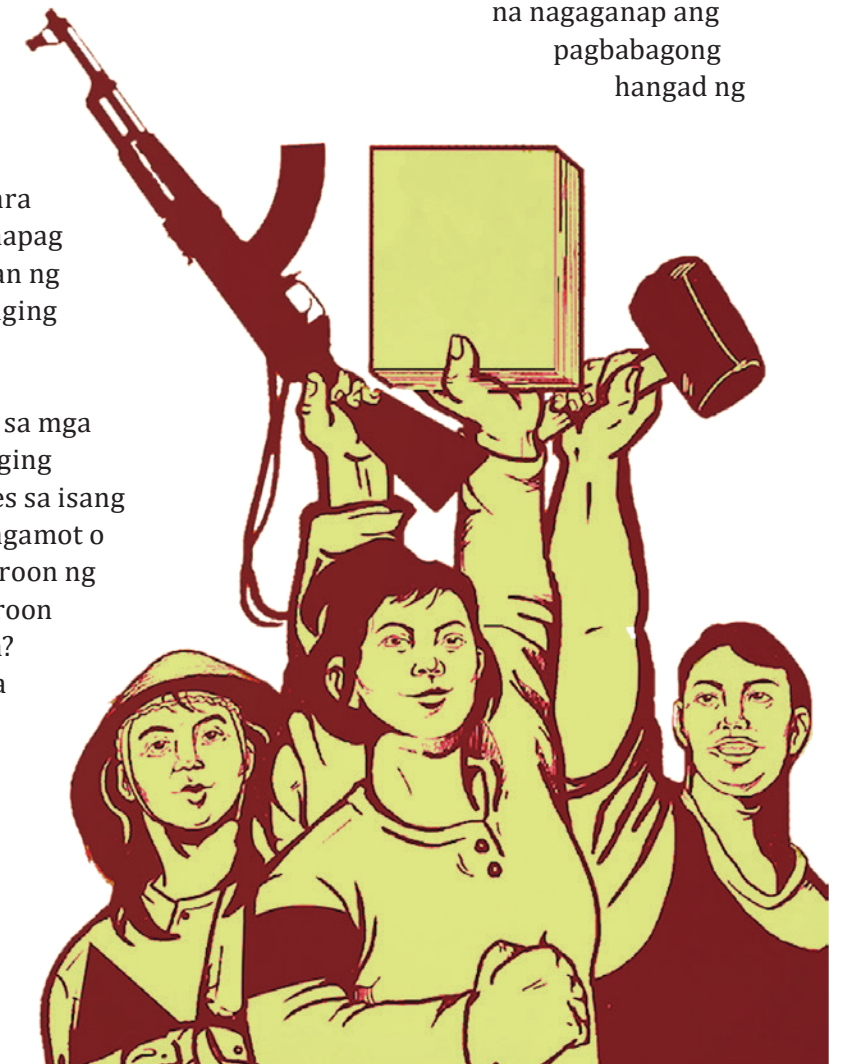
Ilang eleksyon na nga ba ang dumaan sa mga buhay natin, pero may nabago ba? Naging madali ba ang kumain ng tatlong beses sa isang araw, magpaaral ng mga anak, magpagamot o bumili ng gamot na abot-kaya, magkaroon ng sariling bahay, mag-*commute*? Nagkaroon na ba tayo ng sariling lupang sakahan? Disenteng trabaho at nakabubuhay na sweldo?

Patuloy na magsisikap ang demokratikong kilusan na magpatakbo sa eleksyon. Patuloy silang magsisikap na mamulat ang mamamayan para sa tunay na pagbabago, tunay na reporma

sa lupa at pambansang industriyalisasyon; at ang pangangailangan ng sama-samang pagkilos. Pero hangga’t di naalis ang katangiang papet at pasista ng gubernong hawak ng imperyalismo, pyudalismo at burukrata-kapitalismo, hanggang sa maliliit na kaghinhawaan lang ang maaasahan nating makamit.

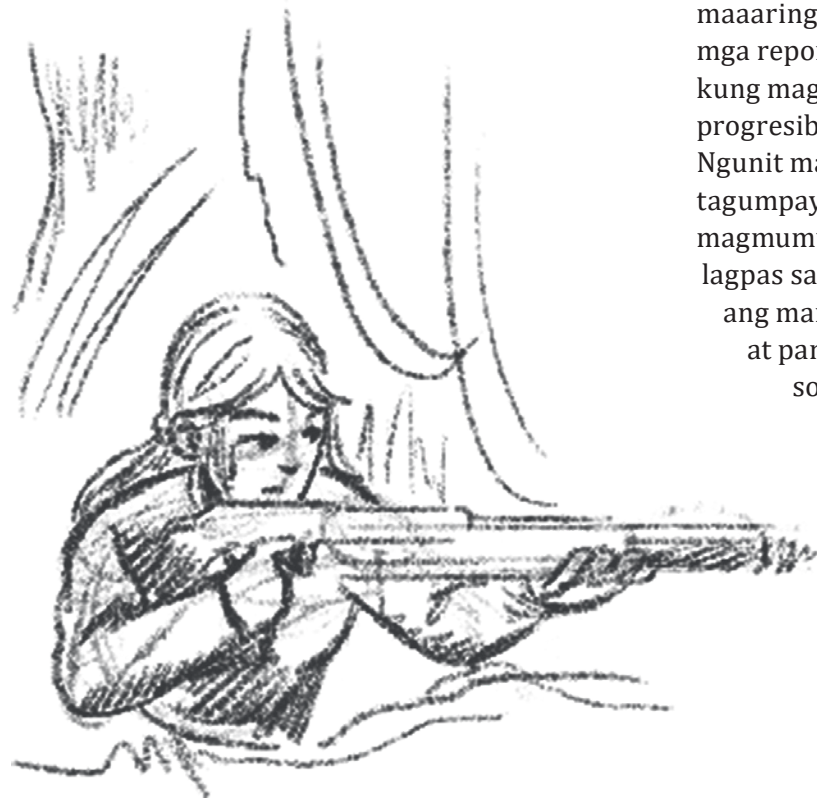
Wala na bang pag-asa?

Ang mga lugar sa bansa—sa mga sonang gerilya ng rebolusyonaryong kilusan—na pilit dinurog ng mga pwersang militar ng naghaharing uri ay mga lugar kung saan unti-unti pero tuluy-tuloy na nagaganap ang pagbabagong hangad ng



taumbayan. Narito ang mga rebolusyonaryong kilusang masa at mga organo ng kapangyarihang pampulitika ng mamamayan. Kahit maliliit pa, kalat ang binhing ito sa buong kapuluan para sa pagtatayo ng Demokratikong Republika ng Bayan sa pagwawagi ng pambansa demokratikong rebolusyon. Dito makikita ang kapangyarihan ng nagkakaisang mamamayan, kasama ang Communist Party of the Philippines at New People's Army, na sama-samang kumikilos para mula sa maliliit na pagbabago ay makamit ang ganap na tagumpay.

Dito sa mga sonang gerilya ay totoo ang reporma sa lupa. Sa pamamagitan ng rebolusyong agraryo ay napawi ang usura sa maraming lugar at napakinabangan ng libu-libong magsasaka at ng kanilang pamilya ang bunga ng kanilang pagod sa mga sakahang naging kanila.



Dito nagkakaisa ang mamamayan para pataasin ang produksyon ng pagkain, pangalagaan ang kalikasan at paunlarin ang sistemang pangkalusugan. Dito rin nagaganap ang mga pag-aaral hindi lamang para matutong magbasa at magbilang kundi para paunlarin ang mga kasanayan at kamulatan at pag-unawa sa lipunan. Dito binibigyang buhay, sa iba't ibang antas, ang mga elemento ng 12-puntong programa ng National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

Sa loob ng mahigit 50 taon, malawak na ang naipanalo ng rebolusyonaryong kilusan para sa kagalingan ng mamamayan sa kabila ng ngipin-sa-ngiping pagharap sa pandarahas ng estado. Bunga ito ng tagumpay na pagkaisahin ang mamamayan mula sa masang anakpawis, propesyunal, relihiyoso, negosyante, at ang mga katutubo at mamamayang Moro.

Sa darating na eleksyon sa Mayo 2025, maaaring magkamit ang mamamayan ng mga reporma at kagyat na kaginhawahan kung magsisikap itong maipanalo ang mga progresibong kandidato ng taumbayan. Ngunit malulubos pa ang maaaring kamting tagumpay ng mamamayan kapag sama-samang magmumulat, mag-oorganisa at magpapakilos lagpas sa eleksyon at mahamig at mapakilos ang mamamayan para sa makabuluhan at pangmatagalang pagbabago—**isang solidong pagkakaisa para isulong at ipagwagi ang pambansa demokratikong rebolusyon at itayo ang demokratikong gobyernong kakatawan sa interes ng taumbayan. **LIB****

Have you heard of the revolutionary movement's own elections?

BY ILIYA MAKALIPAY

Picture this.

Women, men and children were all dressed up in their Sunday's best, the most fashionable from their *baul* (chest or trunk used to keep clothes). "*Inilalabas nila sa baul ang magagarang damit,*" related Ka Indo, a Party cadre in the Visayas. Some women even wore lipstick and men had kept hair. Eagerness and fervor were evident on their faces.

Throughout the years, and in many regions across the country, the elections in guerrilla zones is akin to a town fiesta. Heaps of sumptuous meals may not be there, but the ambiance is definitely that of a joyful celebration. It speaks of how important elections are for the masses. For one, the establishment of a Barrio Revolutionary Council (BRC), a rudimentary form of the organs of political power of the new Republic, is a significant leap in the development of the revolutionary movement. It speaks of the strength and consolidation of the masses and their capacity to govern themselves.

The people's power to select

In one of the regions in Visayas, Ka Indo recalled how, on the day of the elections, the masses milled around the polling place—a big tent set up in an open space, surrounded by blackboards made of waterproof sheets with the names of the nominees written on it for the

final tally of votes. At the center of the polling place, the names of the nominees were flashed on a screen through a portable projector.

Coming from different *sitios* within the mountain village or *barangay*, they were mostly members of revolutionary mass organizations of peasants, women, and youth who were ready to vote for the officials of their BRC. There were also middle forces from various NDF cells. Yes, even non-members of organizations may join and vote, especially in consolidated barrios, as long as they believe in the revolution.

At stake in the elections were the positions for the chairperson and vice chairperson for the different committees, which are decided after the elections and during the first meeting of the Council. Known mass leaders and active members of the revolutionary mass organizations of peasants, women, and youth are commonly nominated for these positions because of their record of service to the community. But in some areas, there are also others who would seek nominations.

From among the elected officers, nomination for committee heads is open, usually for the committees on education, defense, health, and production and what the council would deem necessary. But a committee on women is always guaranteed.

Like most of the BRC elections, nominations in this particular election is done publicly but voting is through secret ballot. All classes and sectors are represented in the BRC. The revolutionary mass organizations, the middle forces and allies, and members of the Party each hold a third of the total number of seats. The minimum voting age is 15 years old to allow members of the *Kabataang Makabayan* (Patriotic Youth) to participate.

“Nominees were given time to introduce themselves but there was no need to campaign because the voters very well know each other,” said Ka Indo. “After the final tally of votes, the elected officers took their oath, delivered their acceptance speeches onto the highly-awaited picture taking,” added Ka Indo with a smile.

Computerized elections NPA style

Members of the New People’s Army (NPA), like Ka Indo, acted as Comelec—in what community members and NPA called “computerized election ala-NPA.”

“Actually, the computerized election is simply the use of a laptop computer and excel program projected on screen,” said Ka Indo with laughter in her voice.

Community members take delight in the use of these computers, watching excitedly how names and votes are flashed on screen as tallied. They matched the figures on screen and those written on the blackboard surrounding the hall.

“The masses prefer the NPA to facilitate the elections because it is non-partisan. Some illiterate or senior voters even choose NPA red fighters to assist them with their ballots instead of their family members or blood

relatives,” Ka Indo said. Aside from taking charge of the actual elections, the red fighters also prepare the ballots to be used. On the side, some of them babysit toddlers who came along with the mothers.

Election preps

While most BRC elections take only a day, the preparation is a long process and a product of years of hard work of arousing, organizing and mobilizing the masses under the guidance of the Party branch in the locality.

Before a BRC election can be held, the Party ensures that basic mass organizations of peasants, youth and women are established and the community is cleared of enemy assets. The masses also undergo education on the role of the BRC to prepare them to choose wisely and make the BRC function in reality.

Ideally, elected BRC officials have term limits but the conduct of elections also depends on the security situation in the guerrilla fronts, the location and the size of the gathering, and the support of both armed and unarmed members of the surrounding communities, among others.

Ka Indo elaborated, “*kahit consolidated ang communities pero sa maraming dako ng baryo manggagaling ang mga dadalo nagiging mahirap para sa security, lalo na sa malalaking baryo. Kapag ganun, mga representatives na hinalal ng kanilang mga grupo na lang ang nagtitipon* (Even if communities are consolidated but there are many areas involved, the security situation poses difficulties, moreso in big barrios. In this case, only representatives elected by their organizations gather).” But once the situation allows, general elections is immediately held.

But, Ka Indo recalled, there was a time when they were able to gather 350 people despite the reactionary troop's detachment in a nearby mountain range. This was their biggest gathering for a BRC election, she said. On occasions like this, the militia from other barrios augmented the security forces.

In case BRC elections cannot be held yet, the heads of the revolutionary mass organizations take the lead, coordinating with each other to deliver the needed services to the community such as literacy centers and other projects. They, too can arbitrate complaints or cases presented by members of the community.

Working with the indigenous peoples

Establishing revolutionary mass organizations and revolutionary councils is done with due diligence in communities of indigenous peoples considering their own traditional structures and cultural practices.

In Ka Indo’s experience, contending leaders of different clans caused long debates during council meetings, making it difficult for the council to reach agreements. To prevent this, painstaking education work among traditional leaders are undertaken. Such education is a must because the combination of traditional leaders with newly developed mass leaders, though producing a dynamic mix of revolutionary leadership, can sometimes stall development if not handled correctly.

In some areas in Mindanao, traditional leaders who are not elected are gathered in an advisory council to the BRC, enhancing their traditional leadership role in the revolutionary organizations. Younger IP leaders, who are in the line-up of succession based on their customary laws, are more often elected in

the BRC, bringing with them new ideas. The young leaders make sure their elders are consulted on important matters concerning the community, keeping the balance of modern revolutionary ideas and practices with the indigenous wisdom of their culture.

Both practices are efforts of the revolutionary movement to merge positive aspects of traditional leadership, customs, and traditions of the indigenous peoples and their revolutionary aspirations.

Revolutionary vs reactionary elections

Culling from the feedback of the masses, Ka Indo highlighted the difference between the revolutionary movement and that of the reactionary state in the conduct of elections.

“*Sinasabi ng masa na ang eleksyon sa ilalim ng rebolusyonaryong kilusan ay pinakamalinis na eleksyon, walang bayaran, bukas at walang pananakot* (the masses say the revolutionary elections are the cleanest they experience because there is no vote-buying, it is transparent and there is no harassment or intimidation),” said Ka Indo.

It is also distinguished by its transparency, “*lahat pwede magbantay, magmonitor sa panahon ng eleksyon pati na sa pagbibilang ng resulta* (everybody can monitor the conduct of the elections and its results),” Ka Indo added. There has never been an election protest, no expenses for campaigning and vote-buying.

Whenever there are signs of a barrio standing up for the people’s rights and welfare, fascist government forces rush to crush the people’s duly elected revolutionary government. Harassment, hamletting, illegal arrests, massacres and aerial bombings seek to

destroy the people's unity and force them to betray their elected officials. But the people go on secretly. In cases where the BRCs are deactivated by the arrest or killing of the leaders, revolutionary organizations just wait for the military operations to abate, review whatever setbacks had been inflicted, and hold elections once again. Many barrios all over the country have undergone building and rebuilding BRCs throughout the revolutionary movement's long history.

The building of barrio revolutionary committees are seeds planted nationwide that eventually lead to the establishment of the People's Democratic Republic of the Philippines (PDRP) upon the victory of the national democratic revolution. The creation of the BRC has brought to life the *Guide to the Establishment of the People's Democratic Government* which outlined the basic principles and structures of people's governance, a document issued by the Communist Party of the Philippines as early as October 1972. **LIB**



Have you heard of the
**revolutionary
elections?**

"Sinasabi ng masa na ang eleksyon sa ilalim ng rebolusyonaryong kilusan ay pinakamalinis na eleksyon, walang bayaran, bukas at walang pananakot. Lahat pwede magbantay, magmonitor sa panahon ng eleksyon pati na sa pagbibilang ng resulta." - Ka Indo

3 SENYALES NG NABUBULOK NA REAKSYUNARYONG ELEKSYON, GOBYERNO

NI PINKY ANG

Eleksyon na naman. Pista muli ng paasa.

Pupunta sa masa ang mga bago, luma at bagong lumang hari, reyna, dyos dyosan at marami pang iba. Gaya ng nakasanayan kada halalan, magpapasabog sila ng matatamis na pangako. Mamimigay ng munting grasya at pera. Susuyuin nila ang masa—lilibangin, haharanahin, sasayawan.

Bawat eleksyon sa Pilipinas ay pista ng kabalintunaan. Ang mga kandidato ng naghaharing uri ay mangangako ng pagbabago na sila mismo ang sisira pagkatapos ng halalan. Ang botong di nila makuha sa santong dasalan, kukunin nila sa pagbabayad ng boto at/o mga armado para gipitin ang masa na sila ang "iboto." Mismong mga paraan ng naghaharing uri para makuha ang poder, mismong mga gawi nila—korapsyon, paniniil, dinastiya, pandaraya—lahat ng pangpapanggap nila

ay katunayan na hungkag ang demokrasya at pagbabago na ipinapakalat nila tuwing eleksyon.

Para sa mamamayang Pilipino, alam nilang ang eleksyon ay okasyon para mangako ng pagbabago, ng maayos na buhay. Alam din nilang walang natutupad sa mga ito. Sa dami nang nagdaang eleksyon, ganoon pa rin naman ang kahirapan. Mas tumitindi pa nga. Sa kabilang banda, mayroon pa rin namang naniniwala sa eleksyon kaya pumipili na lang ng kandidatong di gaanong kurakot. Pero kurakot pa rin.

Pero maaring makakuha ng mga reporma sa hungkag na eleksyong ito kung sama-sama nating hahamunin ang mga boladas ng mga pulitiko. Pwede nating gamiting lunsaran ang hungkag na eleksyon na entablado ng naghaharing uri para ipakita na ang

pambansang demokratikong rebolusyon at programa nito ang magdadala ng tunay sa pagbabago—ng kaginhawahan, demokrasya at kasarinlan.

Kaya, kailangang palakasin ang rebolusyonaryong hanay kahit na sa panahon ng reaksyunaryong eleksyon. Ito ang panahong nakikita ang paghina ng salalayan ng panloloko ng naghaharing uri. Nais nilang magpista ang masa sa ilusyon ng demokrasya pero sila rin ang sumisira sa ilusyong ito dahil sa paghahabol ng poder.

Ilan sa mga gawi nilang ito ang sumusunod:



1. Nasaan ang pagbabago at demokrasya kung mga pampulitikang dinastiya pa rin ang nangingibabaw?

Ang eleksyon sa Pilipinas ay tunggalian sa pampulitikang kapangyarihan ng mga pamilya ng naghaharing uri. Ang linaw na halos

pare-parehong pamilya ang nagpapalitan sa matataas na pwesto mula nasyunal hanggang sa lokal na pamamahala.

Sa 2025 midterm election, ang malalaking nagsasabong ay dinastiya ng mga Marcos at Duterte. Sa paligid nila ay ang iba pang dinastiya na namimili ng pupustahan, depende kung saan sila mas makikinabang. Sabi ng report ng Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) noong Oktubre 2024, mismong sa Malacanang, may limang tatakbo sa pamilyang Marcos para sa Senado, sa Kongreso at sa Ilocos Norte at lima naman mula sa angkan ng Romualdez sa Leyte na kamag-anak naman ni Imelda Marcos; may tatlo naman sa mga Duterte ang kandidato.

Dagdag pa ng PCIJ, sa Kongreso raw ay walo sa bawat 10 representante ay bahagi ng dinastiya. May 142 representatives na muling tatakbo sa 2025 samantala 67 naman ay maaring palitan ng kapamilya nila. Sa kabuuang bilang ng mga congressman, 33 lang ang hindi kabilang sa political dynasties.

Ang mga political dynasty, na kabilang sa mga burukrata kapitalista, ay tiyak na gagamitin ang pondo, impluwensiya at kapangyarihan ng kanilang pwesto sa gobyerno para lalo pang magkamal ng yaman at para manatili sa poder ang pamilya nila. Isa ring paraan ito para makaiwas sa mga parusa sa mga krimeng ginawa nila. Narito ang nakakasukang katangian ng political dynasties:

Mapagpanggap na public servants, tumatakbo ang mga myembro ng pamilya para kunwari ipagpatuloy ang serbisyo ng pamilya sa masa. Ang totoo, nasa likod sila ng malalang misgovernance gaya ng korapsyon, takipan ng mga kasalanan, kawalang parusa sa kasong isinampa kahit sa mga napatunayan nang nagnakaw o gumawa ng

mga krimen, paglulustay ng kabang bayan, at marami pang iba;

Dahil naka-pwesto sa gobyerno tila mga bandido silang nasa likod ng walang habas na pag-ubos ng yaman at rekurso ng bansa; at

Mga pinuno ng kriminal na kapalpakan at kapabayaang sa taumbayan dahil mas inaasikaso ang interes ng kanilang pamilya.

Ang mismong pag-iral ng political dynasties ang nagpapakita sa mamamayan na manloloko ang naghaharing uri. Patunay ang political dynasties na ilusyon lang ang demokrasya ng sistemang malakolonyal at malapyudal.

2. Nasaan ang pagbabago at demokrasya kung mas garapalan ang dayaan?

Mula noong “manwal” pa ang eleksyon (2007 ang huli) hanggang ngayon na “automated” na, ang mga abuso ng nasa kapangyarihan para makapanatili ay patuloy at lalo lamang lumalala. Lalo lang pinapakipot ng naghaharing uri ang “demokrasya” ng iilan.

Paano nga ba nandaraya ang naghaharing uri sa panahon ng eleksyon?

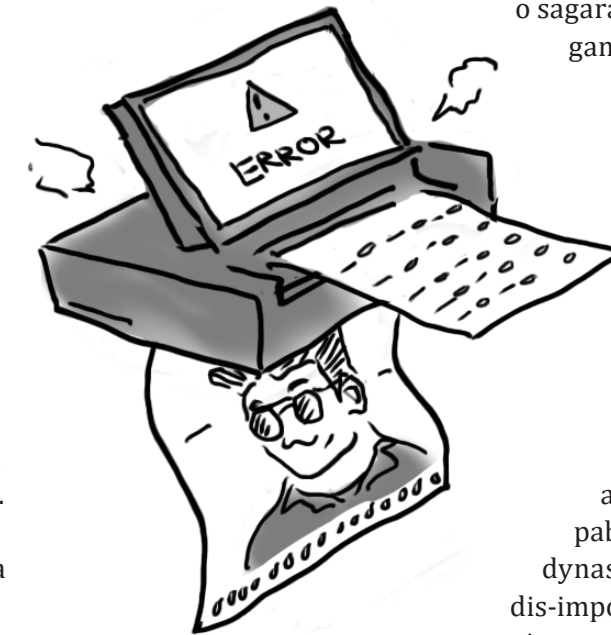
Nariyan ang pinakalaganap na vote-buying.

Gamit rin ang pera, nakapag-uutos ang kandidato ng naghaharing uri sa mga armado

(pulis o militar o paramilitary) na manakot at mamilit para sila ang iboto, sukhang i-hamlet ang mga magkakapitbahay para kunin ang boto nila (halimbawa, kukunin na lang pangalan nila at kunwa’y bumoto sila),

o sagarang terorismo ang gamitin para hindi makaboto kung hindi rin lang amo ng goons ang iboboto.

Sa social media, lumaganap din ang disimpormasyon para lokohin ang botante pabor sa political dynasty. Kasama sa dis-impormasyon ang red-tagging sa mga progresibong kandidato o mga partido.



Ibayong tumindi and kahungkagan ng eleksyon ng naghaharing uri sa pagpapaandar nito ng automated election system.

Ang mga karaniwang daya mula “Hello Garci” noong panahon ng dagdag-bawas ni Gloria Arroyo ay elektroniko nang nagagawa sa pamamagitan ng automated election system o AES. Masahol na korapsyon rin sa pagpili ng supplier ng mga makinang gagamitin sa eleksyon.

Tinukoy, halimbawa, ni Trinidad Ramirez, chairperson ng Liga ng Agham para sa Bayan (LAB, kasapi ng NDFP) na kumita mula sa COMELEC ang Smarmatic ng lagpas sa Php 25 bilyon mula 2010 hanggang 2022. Dagdag ni Ramirez, “Noong 2023, idinemanda sa korte sa Estados Unidos ang matataas na opisyal

ng Smartmatic at ang dating COMELEC Commissioner Andres Bautista dahil sa daan-daang milyong pisong suhol para matiyak ang kontrata nito sa eleksyon.”

Sa pinakahuling eleksyon noong 2022, kung saan misteryosong nanalo si Marcos Jr at Sara Duterte, nasindak hindi lang ang masa kundi mga eksperto sa Information Technology sa hindi kapani-paniwalang bilis ng pagbilang at pagtransmit ng boto.

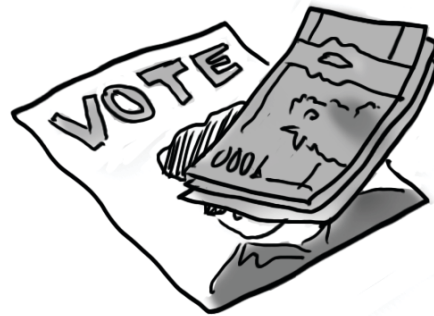
Hindi rin nasagot ng Comelec ang mga tanong tungkol sa: mga balota at SD cards na pwedeng pre-shaded at saka pre-loaded ng datos ibig sabihin may boto na bago pa ang eleksyon; walang bantay na magtitiyak na hindi pakikialaman ng logistics company na nagdeliber ng mga gamit sa eleksyon para paboran ang mga nagbayad na politiko (kilalang crony ni Duterte Dennis Uy ang may-ari ng logistics company). Kahit ang misteryosong IP address ng mga computers na nagtransmit ng 20 milyong boto ni Marcos Jr—na lampas sa kakayanan ng tatlong kumpanya ng mga telcom—ay walang matinong paliwanag.

Ang AES para sa eleksyong 2025 ay nasa anyo ng Full Automation System with Transparency Audit/Count o FASTrAC na gamit ang serbisyo ng kumpanyang Miru. “Kailan lamang, sumingaw naman ang alegasyong bilyon-bilyong pisong suhulan ang naganap sa pagitan ng Miru at si George Garcia, chairperson ng COMELEC, para paboran ang Miru. Tumanggap raw si Garcia ng pera na naka-deposito sa offshore accounts,” sabi ng pahayag ng LAB.

Smartmatic man o Miru, misteryo pa rin sa mga botante kung paano binibilang ang kanilang boto. Hindi rin maipaliwanag kung paano tumakbo ang mga computer at kung mahuhuli ba rito ang mga hacking, palit-SD,

naka programang resulta, peke ba o tunay ang resulta.

Ang dayaan ay senyales na ang eleksyon—na pista ng paasa ng naghaharing uri sa



taumbayan—ay bastos sa boto at balota. Sila-sila na nga lang ang naglalaban, sila-sila rin ang nagdadayaan at lahat sila ay walang galang sa boto ng mamamayan.

3. Nasaan ang pagbabago at demokrasya kung ginigipit, sinisiraan ang mga kinatawan at boses ng masa?

Anumang bahid ng demokrasya mayroon ngayon, ito ay magiting na ipinaglaban ng sambayanan. Hindi ito kusang ibinigay ng naghaharing uri. Sa maraming pagkakataon, ang mga naipaglaban na ng mamamayan ay binabawi at sinasabotahe ng reaksyunaryong gobyerno. Isang patunay ito na bulok ang gobyerno at hindi kailanman maglilingkod sa masa.

Halimbawa ang partylist system na naisabatas noong 1995 tulak ng reaksyunaryong Saligang Batas ng 1987 na nasulat matapos

ang people power ng 1986. Kakatwa sa gobyerno ng iilan ang partylist system. Sa isang banda, konsesyon at reporma ito alay sa nagpuprotelang masa; sa kabilang banda, ay patutoo ito na walang tunay na demokrasya. Dahil kung tunay na may demokrasya, bakit kailangan pang limitahan sa 20% ang mga kinatawan ng masa sa kongreso? Kung tunay na may demokrasya, bakit isa lang sa bawat limang mambabatas ng Kongreso ang kinatawan ng mas nakararaming masa?

Ang partylist system na konsesyon ng estado sa masang nagpupuyos sa kriminal na kapalpak, katutaan at kabulukan ng mga burukrata kapitalista ay binaboy mismo nila. Sa pagsusuma ng International Observers’ Mission sa Halalan 2022, “ang sistemang partylist ay binalahura ng mga political dynasty hanggang sa punto na iilan na lang sa mga kumakatawan sa mga agrabyadong sektor ng lipunan ang nagtatagumpay.” Ang partylist system ay naging instrumento na ng mga pulitiko para manatili ang kani-kanilang dinastiya.

Nag-unahang magbuo ng kani-kaniyang partylist ang mga pulitikong suportado o galamay mismo ng iba’t ibang political dynasty at traditional na partido. Noong halalan 2022, inulat ng PCIJ na mga 70 na partylist ang may nominadong konektado sa mga dinastiya at/o may kaanak sa mga lokal o pambansang opisyal.

Samantala, ang mga makabayang kandidato at partylist na may track record ng serbisyo sa bayan at siyang totoong oposisyon ay inaatake. Batbat sila, at ang kanilang mga taga-suporta, ng red-tagging, surveillance, pananakot at harassment, extrajudicial killings, disimpormasyon at diskwalipikasyon bunga ng mga gawa-gawang kaso.

Sabi nga ng Bayan Muna kinatawan na si Neri Colmenares na kung sa ibang karaniwang partido ginawa ang masidhing atake tulad ng ginawa sa mga partylist ng Bayan Muna, ACT Teachers, Gabriela, Kabataan Partylist, Anakpawis, at iba pa, malamang nagiba o nawala na ang mga iyun. Pero nananatili sila at patuloy na lumalaban sa loob o labas man ng kongreso. Patunay ito ng mahigpit na suporta ng mamamayan dahil sila ang nagdadala ng kanilang mensahe at palaging kasama nila.

Isinisisi ng mga reaksyunaryong pulitiko sa mga makabayang kinatawan sa kongreso, sa mga aktibista, progresibo, at kritiko ang pagyabong ng armadong rebolusyonaryong kilusan. Ngunit ang mga pahirap at krisis na bunga ng kanilang paghahari ang talagang nag-aanak ng protesta at nagtutulak sa mamamayang magsalita, kumilos, mag-organisa, mag-arms at magtayo ng sariling gobyernong bayan. Kahit ang people power at mga legal at demokratikong protesta ay dahil sa korap, mapang-api at mapagsamantalang paghahari ng iilan sa Pilipinas.

Kaya naman, kung inaakala ng naghaharing uri na lumalakas sila mentras pinasisidhi nila ang panunupil at paninira sa mga kritiko, nagkakamali sila. Laluna sa paparating na eleksyon 2025 at sa mga susunod pa, maipapalaspas na naman ng sambayanan ang pagkamuhi nila sa kabulukan at panunupil ng reaksyunaryong gobyerno. Anumang panunupil ay tanda ng matinding kaba ng naghaharing uri. Anumang pagbabalik diktadura ay tanda na nabubulok at pabagsak na ang kanilang sistema. **LIB**

(Unang inilathala noong December 13, 2024 sa CounterCurrent, www.liberation.ndfp.info)

Giving a different meaning to “marginalized, underrepresented sector”

BY PINKY ANG

Make way, dictionary updaters of the world. In the Philippine elections, the common sense meaning of the words “marginalized and underrepresented” are being refreshed with every electoral simulation of democracy.

Looking at the partylist groups linked to influential political clans or military—they could swiftly get accredited by the Comelec and figure in trending spots of surveys and ads. On the other hand, the partylist groups with consistent and documented experiences of standing for the common sense definition of the marginalized and underrepresented, are red-tagged and targeted.

The reactionary state has facilitated many unusual takes on who constitutes the “marginalized and underrepresented.” Here we list a few:

1. “marginalized or underrepresented” as yet, among established political clans

Compared to established political clans, nascent political dynasties are, in their way, “marginalized and underrepresented” in the

reactionary Philippine state.

In the face of established political clans, the likes of the Tulfo siblings were like ants. They made use of their career in broadcasting playing to the masses’ desire to avenge their injustices and heckle the perceived perpetrators. The Tulfos capitalized on the gained popularity to take elective posts via the partylist system.

They acquired the ACT-CIS partylist from former police director Samuel Pagbilao (ACT-CIS Rep 2013-2016) and joined the 2019 elections. Supporting the Duterte regime and its drug war, the Tulfos and their close friends won the maximum seats for partylist reps in 2019 and 2022 elections. Raffy Tulfo became senator in 2022, Erwin Tulfo replaced their nominated representative in Congress in 2023. Their sister Wanda Tulfo-Teo served Duterte’s cabinet as Tourism Secretary for a few years. A corruption scandal typical of bureaucrat capitalist practices (like handing government contracts to her siblings’ production on TV) prompted Teo to resign. The siblings did not return the P80 million involved in the contract. Today, a total of seven Tulfos including Teo are running for positions.

Note that their friend Eric Yap also earned his and later his sibling’s positions in the House of Rep via the ACT-CIS partylist. Yap capitalized on his position and got elected as a district representative of Benguet even if he was not from there. His brother took his slot as ACT-CIS partylist representative. The Yaps were involved in corruption issues in the Bureau of Customs under Nicanor Faeldon.

The Tulfos and their friend the Yaps are the most high profile in this ironic sort of “marginalized” political clique. The list of partylist nominees also shows small or emerging political clans in local and regional political cliques.

2. “marginalized and underrepresented” in the family, political dynasties

Political clans who have ventured to local, regional or national elections do not lack members who still seek positions even though they have suffered or anticipated defeats in their candidacy, or, they have exhausted the maximum term limits but still want to “serve.”

There are also cases where siblings, spouses, sons and daughters are “trained,” fielded to expand the family horizon and reserve the seats in their name via the partylist, to later exchange with family members with defined constituencies.

To name a few examples: the Romualdezes, Dutertes, Revillas of Cavite, Senator Grace Poe, siblings Senator Jinggoy Estrada and Laguna Governor ER Ejercito (supporting two different partylists), Chavit Singson.

Tingog Sinirangan partylist has the son and wife of House Speaker Martin Romualdez as leading nominees. Martin’s wife is their incumbent representative. The son is head of their various companies in extractive mining industry.

Another incumbent dubious partylist, the 4Ps, has links to Romualdez and to Mandaluyong’s Abalos political clan. Its first and incumbent representative will run for Eastern Samar upon Speaker Romualdez’s urging. The second nominee and incumbent 4Ps Rep is son of incumbent Mandaluyong City mayor, and nephew of another former mayor of their city and former Secretary of DILG Benhur Abalos, now running for senator.

The Duterte family endorsed a new partylist called PPP, whose first nominee is a Duterte. The Dutertes also have stakes in other partylists.

Senator Grace Poe have family members in FPJ Panday Bayanihan. Its first and fourth nominees



are Senator Poe's son and husband, respectively. Its third nominee is wife of Oriental Mindoro Governor.

The sons of ousted President Joseph Estrada are fielding relatives in partylists, too. BFF Balikatan of Filipino Families lists two Ejercitos as nominees, led by the wife of Senator Jinggoy Estrada and two surnamed Puno in the first four nominees.

The son of Senator Bong Revilla and Lani Revilla is seeking a second term as Agimat Partylist Rep, with a hotel and resort company's CEO surnamed Panlilio as second nominee. A Revilla son-in-law is also among the nominees.

The partylist elections became an additional revenue and power stream for members of political dynasties. What is not new to them is their decades of practice in trading public seats "like inheriting family heirlooms." To them the partylist race only added to the portfolio they can dip their hands into.

3. "marginalized and underrepresented" in politics as businessmen/women whose roles before were mostly as supporter/financier lobbyist.

Many nominees of Partylists listed their jobs as businessmen/businesswomen.

The biggest examples here are incumbent partylist reps who are billionaires and running for reelection in the partylist, for example the Romeros (Mikee and now the daughter, too, and Reghis IV—all in strategic businesses that include port or harbor centers). The father and son Romeros in 1Pacman are bosses of Globalport 900 while Reghis Romero IV of Gilas is in Harbour Center in Manila. A billionaire

president and CEO of heavy equipment and mining companies, Caroline Tanchay, is running for "Kamalayan" partylist but currently, she is the incumbent Sagip Partylist Rep.

The Agri partylist incumbent Rep Wilbert Lee has multi-million real estate and food businesses. His partylist now fields his wife. Among the nominees is his wife's relative and executives in their group of companies.

An incumbent OFW partylist rep aka Marissa del Mar came from a successful entertainment career and real estate business. Willie Revillame's multi-level marketer sponsor in Tutok to Win TV game segment has joined the polls, too.

They ventured into politics via the partylist race by highlighting advocacies for the marginalized. Some may indeed be doing volunteer work as a way of giving back or scoring tax breaks and *pogi* points through Corporate Social Responsibility. But often, their services borrowed tactics from traditional patronage politics. These include doleouts or donation, medical missions, distributing or promising some kind of health support, education or other services from the likes of electric cooperatives, financing, housing, assistance in facing gender violence, among others.

Ultimately they become expansion or extension of patronage politics and support to political dynasties. They launch their programs in cooperation with incumbent politicians. In the House of Representatives, they behave just like the lawmakers with "defined constituencies"—crafting laws that neither question the roots of the masses' indigence nor seek to resolve it. In fact, representatives like them have pushed tax reforms benefiting the rich and co-sponsored the likes of Maharlika Investment Fund of the Marcos 2 regime.

4 "regional" partylist groups "owned" by regional, provincial politicians

Related to the No. 2, in this no. 4 we note some of the ways they bet on themselves through partylists. They appeal to regional or provincial affiliations.

Many regional *Ako ganyan*, *Ako ganito* have surfaced in the partylist elections.

What used to be a competition between sectoral representations and issue-based advocacies now included competition of regional affiliations. There is little data showing how the Comelec settled the underlying issue of naming such and such regions as "marginalized and underrepresented." It is an admission that almost every Filipino—from north to south such as the Ilocanos, the Bicolanos, the Warays, the Tausugs of Mindanao, the indigenous peoples, and generally the probinsyano or *promdi*, are marginalized and underrepresented. But, their self-appointed reps running in Congress are hardly poor or powerless.

The following are some examples:

Two similarly named partylists are led by scions of political clans seeking to revive or maintain their presence. The son of Cebu's late former governor and businessman Emilio Mario "Lito" Osmeña is first nominee of *Promdi*. He is trying to revive the Osmeña's who are disappearing in elected positions. *Probinsyano Ako* is topbilled by the son of Rudy Fariñas Sr, from their political clan in Ilocos, followed by the incumbent mayor of Vigan, Ilocos Sur, a brother of Chavit Singson who is from the Singson political clan also in Ilocos.

Chavit Singson's sons, daughters and granddaughter are the first five nominees of incumbent partylist Ilocano *Ako*.

Ilocano Defenders is fielding three members surnamed Say. Their background straddles business, publishing and politics. Their founder wanted the Philippines to be the America of Asia. He was mayor of Aparri, Cagayan from 1966 to 1986.

Ako Bisaya's top nominees are led by its incumbent Rep, the husband of Cebu 6th district Representative Daphne Arias Lagon. The couple's twins also hold local positions (councilors) in Cebu. *Ako Bisaya's* second nominee is daughter of Cebu's incumbent governor Gwen Garcia, and sister of Liloan mayor turned Tourism Secretary under Marcos Jr.

Ako Bicol party nominees are led by its incumbent Rep, an investor and businessman in construction. His second nominee is mayor of Legazpi City who took position only in 2024 after settling the 2022 election dispute there. The rest of their nominees are lawyers or businessmen. Another incumbent Bicolano party is *Bicol Saro*, which kicked out its representative in Congress in 2023 due to disagreements. Its current second and third nominees are wife and son, respectively, of incumbent CamNorte second district Rep "Lray" Villafuerte. The latter is running for governor.

From the South, the Kusug-Tausug has family members swapping positions as incumbent Reps, nominees and candidates for local positions. The Tan family has close links to former President Duterte, Bong Go, and Celso Lobregat.

5. some "sectoral" or advocacy partylist groups are owned or controlled by rich local business groups or allied local pols or personalities in government

In this group of so-called “marginalized, underrepresented” are shifting alliances of politicians and appointed government officials who also want to become bigger businesses or political clans or both. Some have hopped from one partylist to another to score seats in Congress.

In 2022 elections, Mothers for Change (or Mocha) is a partylist formed by former PCOO assistant secretary and Duterte ally Mocha Uson. This 2025 election, Mocha fields the son of Bulacan Vice Governor Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado as first nominee. The younger Alvarado used to be the second nominee of Kapuso-PM party-list. Meanwhile, Mocha’s second nominee used to be the fifth nominee of Ang Probinsyano party-list. He is a municipal councilor of Albay and nephew of Albay Rep. Joey Salceda. As a political clan in Bulacan, the Alvarados are locked in electoral competition with the Tantocos and Domingos.

Former president Duterte fully supports his lawyer, Rodante Marcoleta, incumbent Sagip partylist Rep (formerly from Alagad Partylist) who is now running for senator. This 2025 election, the older Marcoleta is fielding his son as first nominee of Sagip.

Another Duterte-linked incumbent partylist is Dumper, which earned first seat in 2019. The first nominee and now on second term in Congress is Claudine Diana Bautista-Lim, the eldest daughter of Hugpong ng Pagbabago president and Davao Occidental Governor Claude Bautista. Her aunt is that province’s lone congressional representative, Lorna Bautista-Bandigan.

From Bulacan, the incumbent governor, Daniel Fernando, is fielding Damayang Pilipino, a partylist he founded. A surnamed Fernando is among the nominees that included lawyers, pharmacists and businessmen.

Buhay partylist, established by El Shaddai’s Mike Velarde, listed nominees led by Lito Atienza. He held positions as Manila mayor, vice mayor, and congressman. His son-in-law is one of their nominees.

A former vice-governor of Catanduanes led the TGP Partylist that had won seats in 2019 and 2022 elections. Other nominees are businessmen in construction industry with DPWH projects.

Another partylist called BH that has won seats in Congress now lists as first nominee Roberto Gerald Nazal Jr, an “agricultural entrepreneur” who almost represented Magsasaka Partylist in 2022 but was thwarted and contested by another faction of this partylist.

6. some partylist groups linked to reactionary troops or state witchhunters

Not to mention the ACT-CIS that was born and bred by a former police chief and passed on to the Tulfos whose father is a police colonel. There is a partylist called UGB led by Melvin Contapay. Endorsed by Bong Go, the first nominee is called Lt. Gen. in his social media account. He used to be with RAM Partylist and may be engaged in the extractive mining industry. Many others have nominees who are retired or reserve military officers. To be fair, not all of them are frothing-in-the mouth anti-left. The kindest that can be said about them is, they are leveraging their reactionary armed links for gains whether as part of the bureaucrat capitalist class or as part of its troops.

1-Rider Partylist’s third nominee is a retired colonel, member of ready reserve unit advisory council and an assistant Inspector General of the Philippine Army who, as an executive director also of 1 Rider Partylist, is in charge of its organization and groundwork.

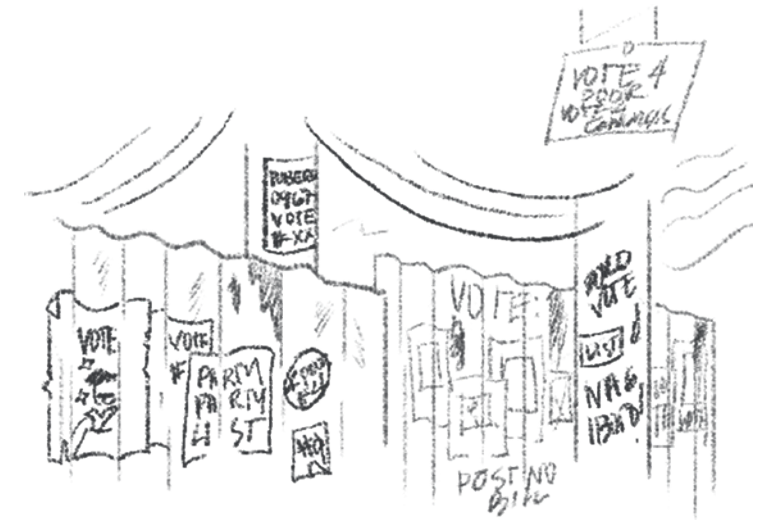
New entrant to the partylist race PBBM identifies itself as a regional party, with nominees mostly from the north. An example of the unusual crop of “marginalized,” it should also be in no. 2 and no. 4 of our list—but the presence of a former commanding officer of the reactionary troops makes it an example here. The lead nominee is an incumbent barangay captain in Abra, with many of her relatives among the nominees. The second nominee is a Philippine Army Colonel who used to be commanding officer of 24th IB 7th ID.

The Duterte Youth, another dubious partylist, is fielding as top nominee its incumbent Rep, a lieutenant colonel surnamed Cardema. Her newsworthy presence recently was her attempt to redirect the probe on Vice President Sara Duterte to attacking the New People’s Army instead. The second and third nominees are with the (Philippine National Police Academy) PNPA and a PMA graduate, respectively.

Retired police officers and a former DILG undersecretary are the nominees of Bagong Maunlad na Pilipinas.

The worst of the lot is Epanaw, the most blatant at witchhunting whose nominees include NTF-ELCAC (National Task Force to End Local Armed Conflict) redtaggers as Marlon Bosantog, Lorraine Badoy and Jeffrey Celiz whom even factcheckers in Verafiles can’t help but criticize for having no right or basis to introduce himself as “Ka Eric.” Apparently, based on VeraFiles interviews of persons close to Celiz, he has never been part of any revolutionary organizations of NPA or CPP.

All in all, these sort of “marginalized, underrepresented” that headline the partylist race totally shatter the “intent” to share space in



Congress with the actual marginalized sectors. On the one hand, they edge out the legitimate partylists. They grab more airtime in the media and more allies from traditional local, district and regional politicians. When you factor in the relentless martial law and harassment on the ground plus vote-buying and automated cheating, the legitimate partylists that could still win in this heavily biased elections are then truly the marginalized winners.

Unfortunately for them, or a challenge for them and the actual marginalized 99 percent of Filipino people, their valiant partylist reps will have to navigate a Congress that is not only 80 percent from the dynasties, the landed, wealthy and powerful, but whose 20 remaining percent are also majority controlled by the same traditional clique.

Why else would the reactionary state maintain the likes of NTF-ELCAC, and not content with that, field some of their liars in the party list race? On top of the ongoing martial law like situation in urban poor and countryside, they seek to repress and deceive the people who have no choice but protest the increasingly exploitative criminal rule of this rotting semicolonial, semifeudal state. **LIB**

Why pervert the meaning of “marginalized, underrepresented” in partylists?

Political dynasties, celebrities and rich business groups now swarm the partylist elections. With stronger, more blatant push, they continue the trend of marginalizing the marginalized in an election that is supposed to be reserved for the marginalized.

The party list system is part of the democratic reforms or concessions realized in the struggles of the masses against the Marcos dictatorship. Under Republic Act No. 7941 or the Party List System Act, party-list representatives are to constitute 20 percent of the total House members.

TIMELINE Party lists and the evolution of the “marginalized, underrepresented sectors.”

1987	Post-Edsa Philippine Constitution Art. VI mandates the election of Partylists promising to ensure participation in the House of Representatives of the “marginalized and underrepresented sectors,” or those without defined political constituencies.”
1995	Eight years in the making, the enabling law, the Party List System Act, came out.
1998	First election to include partylist groups, where two percent of total (national) votes garnered for partylists equals one seat in the House of Representatives. Partylists are allowed only a maximum of three seats, even if they get more than six percent of total votes for partylists.
2001 2004 2007 2010	Media reports said many partylist groups who made it to Comelec’s registration were from the marginalized or underrepresented sectors. After Edsa People Power 2 ousted then president Joseph Estrada, in the 2001 midterm elections, progressive mass organizations fielded their first partylist, Bayan Muna. Its success was followed in the subsequent polls by sectoral partylists backed by progressive organizations. Gabriela Women’s Party Anakpawis and Kabataan Partylist would then be known in Congress, along with Bayan Muna, as the Makabayan bloc. They garnered up to 8 seats in Congress.

	<p>Some groups with dubious representation of the “marginalized” managed to join the partylist elections. Some, like the government-backed MAD (Mamamayan Ayaw sa Droga), and Bantay Partylist led by “The Butcher” retired military general Jovito Palparan were disqualified after various groups petitioned the Comelec. Some succeeded and made it to the House of Representatives, giving rise to more petitions for disqualification and debates about who could represent the “marginalized and underrepresented sectors.”</p> <p>Meanwhile, the Makabayan bloc which garnered an increasing number of seats per partylist since it joined the election was maligned and targeted by the reactionary government, the armed forces and even by partylists formed by the military and groups justifying the reactionary troops’ dirty war against the people.</p> <p>At some point under the US-Arroyo regime, the progressive partylist representatives challenged the House of Representatives to respect their status and rights as lawmakers as they faced threats of illegal arrest right inside the halls of Congress.</p> <p>In 2010 the Supreme Court ruled that the partylist groups must come from the marginalized and underrepresented sectors.</p>
2013	<p>Supreme Court reversed its 2010 decision. From this point onward, not only the marginalized or underrepresented sectors can establish partylists, even the rich and family members of politicians or political dynasties, not to mention retired generals and mercenaries advocating military attacks on the Left, can join the partylist election if they claim to share platform and advocacies with the marginalized and underrepresented sectors.</p> <p>This allowed the previously disqualified partylists due to questionable representation of the marginalized to join. The rich and powerful joined the partylist elections in droves.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the sectoral partylists with easily verifiable legitimacy such as those with parent organizations from migrant workers, jeepney drivers, health workers’ unions and environmentalists encountered a very strict Comelec when they sought accreditation. On the other hand, the hastily formed parties linked to the rich, the political clans or reactionary troops easily got accredited for partylist elections.</p>
2016 2019 2022	<p>The influx of partylist groups owned by political clans, or linked to the police or military or government bureaucracy and corporations or to big businesses steadily edged out other partylists with record of actually representing the marginalized.</p> <p>Red and terror-tagging, extrajudicial killings, enforced abductions, focused militarization, filing of trumped up charges, different forms of vote-buying and disinformation blitz, hounded the supporters and voters of progressive partylists. A reactionary task force with billions of funding spewed fake news slandering legitimate critics of unjust government programs.</p>

	The result: While a lot of Filipinos claim to still lack knowledge about partylist elections, a growing number of billionaires, powerful political dynasty members, ran and won as Partylist Reps. This prompted calls ranging from returning the partylist system to the marginalized or doing away with it altogether.
2025	New and incumbent partylists of celebrities, political dynasties, businessmen plus some ex-military or police chiefs make up the majority of partylists in the 2025 elections. Ironically, the partylists with verifiable and consistent advocacies for the marginalized are truly being marginalized. They are grappling with their supporters against not only the machineries of established politicians, but also of the reactionary state forces.

The framers of Philippine reactionary constitution, legislators and Supreme Court were unlikely just being muddled when they phrased, asserted and reinterpreted, respectively, some time bombs in the people power-inspired provisions of the 1987 Constitution.

Serving a semicolonial semifederal state, they were not out to change it. But to effect reconciliation and “democratic” transition after Edsa, some concessions and reforms were made. They just built-in to these certain leeways to renege. From this perspective, the worsening “perversion” of the party list system in the Philippines can more clearly be seen.

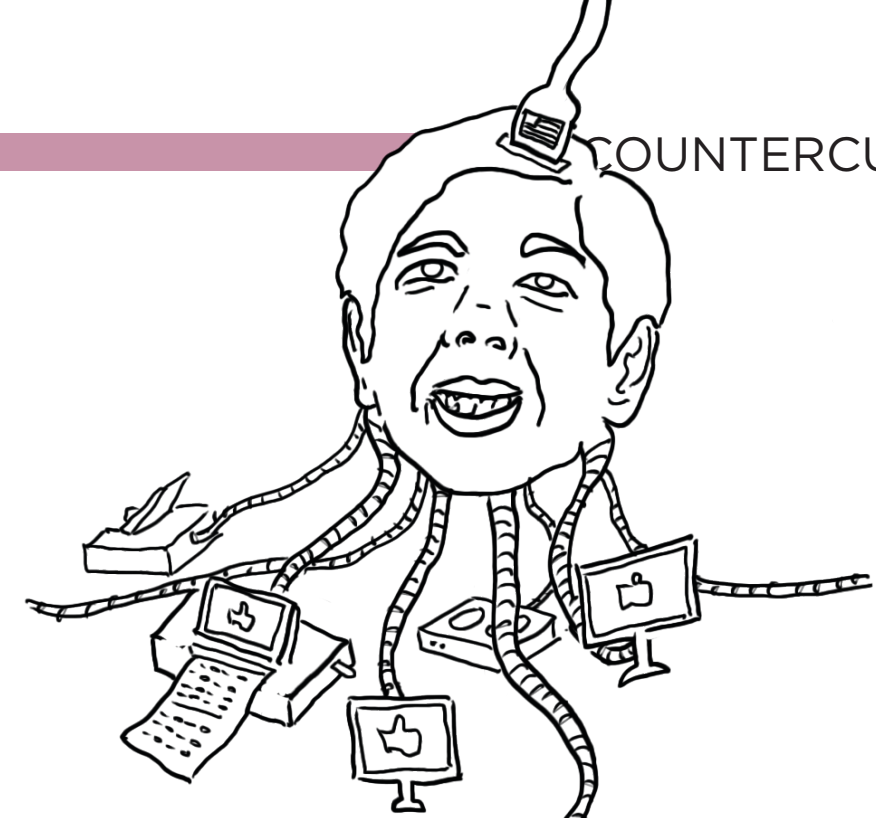
Like other concessions, this system only offers a meager slice of the vaunted democratic space. And this meager space is slippery. The masses of marginalized people and their organizations have to fight all the way to bringing their representation to Congress.

Decades after the first people power uprising ousted the Marcos Dictatorship in 1986, facts show that the democracy “restored” remains a democracy for the few ruling classes of big landlords, bourgeois compradors and bureaucrat capitalists. The real solutions to the

recurrent crises plaguing the country still lay in the national democratic revolution which is advancing a 12-point program for genuine change and development and implementing it as allowed by the conditions of civil war in the country.

In 2025 elections and in the future elections, if the situation and trend continue, the ruling cliques of the reactionary government will only make it clearer to the people that their government of a few is getting worse and worse.

The partylist system they designed is faulty from the start. It offered a very limited and emasculated representation that steadily disappeared back to the hands of the elite and their dogs. From the start it has never been about democracy but deodorizing the crisis-wracked reactionary government. It has perverted its own deodorizer. As the truly marginalized groups flex their organized strength and struggle for reforms, they can only be expected to open the eyes of the masses to the true color of the reactionary state, starkly showing in the process that the national democratic revolution is the clear and only viable solution to the recurring crises. **LIB**



FASTRAC: BAGONG PAKULO NG REHIMENG US MARCOS

NI TRINIDAD RAMIREZ, TAGAPANGULO NG LIGA NG AGHAM PARA SA BAYAN (LAB)

May bagong pakulo na naman ang Commission on Elections (COMELEC) para sa darating na reaksyunaryong eleksyon sa Mayo 2025—ang FASTrAC o Full Automation System with Transparency Audit/Count. Tiyak na isa ito sa mga pamamaraan na gagamitin ng rehimeng US-Marcos para sa pandaraya sa 2025 Pambansang Halalan.

Ang FASTrAC ang bagong mukha ng Automated Election System (AES) sa bansa. Ipinasa ang Republic Act (RA) No. 8436 o “AES Law” noong 1997, at inamyendahan noong 2007. Ginamit ang AES noong Pambansang Eleksyong 2010. Ang Pilipinas ang unang bansa sa Timog-Silangang Asya na gumamit ng ganitong sistema ng eleksyon.

Itinatakda ng AES na ang botohan sa Pilipinas ay gagawing mabilis sa pamamagitan ng paggamit ng elektronikong teknolohiya na gumagamit ng mga makina para tumanggap, magbilang ng mga boto, at magpadala ng resulta ng eleksyon gamit ang internet.

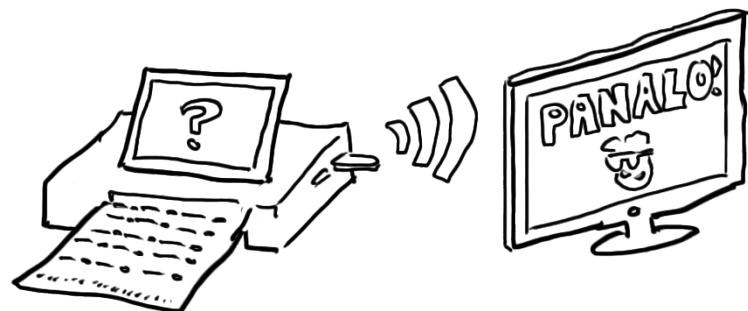
Pinayagan ng batas ang mga pribado at dayuhang korporasyon na makialam at kontrolin ang eleksyon sa Pilipinas. Tinutulan ito ng mamamayan dahil alam nilang mas titindi pa ang pandaraya sa eleksyon sa paggamit ng mga teknolohiya at makinang kontrolado ng dayuhan at pribadong korporasyon.

Matagal nang pangarap ng mamamayang Pilipino ang isang malaya, malinis, mapayapa, at demokratikong eleksyon—para pumili ng kakatawan sa kanila at sa kanilang interes o kaya’y itakwil ang mga nakaupong opisyaes na di naman nagsilbi sa kanilang mga pangangailangan.

Pero dahil ang eleksyon sa isang mala-kolonyal at mala-pyudal na Pilipinas ay nananatiling isang larong kontrolado ng mga imperyalista, malalaking burgesya-kumprador, panginoong maylupa at burukrata kapilista, hindi mangyayari ang kagustuhang ito ng mamamayan.

AES Law paglabag sa soberanya

Sa AES Law, mas pinahigpit ng imperyalistang Estados Unidos (US) ang hawak nito sa reaksyunaryong eleksyon sa Pilipinas. Mula nang ipinatupad ang automation sa eleksyon, lalong tumindi ang kontrol ng mga dayuhan at pribadong korporasyon. Ipinapaubaya sa kanila ang pagsuplay, paggamit, at pamamahala ng kinakailangang teknolohiya at makina hanggang sa paglalabas ng resulta ng halalan.



Sa ganitong disenyo, natitiyak ng imperyalistang Estados Unidos na isa sa kanyang mga kabayo at tuta mula sa mga lokal na naghaharing uri ang mananalo sa pambansang eleksyon, isang direktang pakikialam sa soberanya ng Pilipinas.

Sa darating na 2025 Pambansang Halalan, ang Miru Systems Co Ltd. ang dayuhang kumpanyang napili ng Rehimeng US-Marcos Jr na magsuplay ng gagamiting teknolohiya at makina. Binigyan ng COMELEC ng halos Php18-bilyong kontrata ang Miru. Bukod dito nagbigay pa ito ng karagdagang Php 1.4 bilyong kontrata sa kumpanyang i-One Resources para naman sa electronic transmission ng resulta ng halalan sa mga sentralisadong server. Pinagmamalaki ng COMELEC na ginagamit ng i-One Resources ang mga teknolohiyang katulad ng hawak ng US Central Intelligence Agency at ng mga institusyong militar ng US.

Ang Miru ay isang South Korean na kumpanya na kakuntsaba ng imperyalistang Estados Unidos. Noong 2018, ang Miru ang pinahintulutan ng US na mamamahala sa pambansang halalan sa Iraq, na sinakop ng US noong 2003. Pumalpak ang halos 70% ng mga makina ng Miru at nagkaroon ng mga glitch at technical failure sa panahon ng eleksyon. Naging malaking kontrobersya ito, nawalan ng tiwala ang mamamayan ng Iraq at nagtulak sa kanila sa paggamit muli ng moda ng halalan mula AES pabalik sa dating pen-and-paper na pamamaraan. Gayundin, sangkot sa mga kaso ng korupsiyon at pandaraya ang Miru sa mga halalan sa Democratic Republic of Congo at Argentina, na nagdulot ng malawakang kawalan ng tiwala sa Miru at sa integridad ng halalan sa mga bansang ito.

Korapsyon kakambal ng pandaraya

Bago ang kontrata ng Miru, ang Amerikanong kumpanya na Smartmatic Corp. ang unang nakakuha ng kontrata sa awtomatikong sistema ng eleksyon sa Pilipinas. Mula 2004, maraming mga bansa ang gumamit ng mga makina at teknolohiya ng Smartmatic sa kanilang halalan.

Sa Pilipinas, mula 2010 hanggang 2022, lagpas sa Php 25 bilyon ang nakuha ng Smartmatic sa kabila nang palpak na serbisyo at dayaan para paboran ang mga rehimeng tumangkilik sa nasabing kumpanya.

Noong 2023, idinemanda sa korte sa Estados Unidos ang matataas na opisyaes ng Smartmatic at ang dating COMELEC Commissioner Andres Bautista dahil sa daan-daang milyong pisong suhol para matiyak ang kontrata nito sa eleksyon. Kailan lamang, sumingaw naman ang alegasyong bilyon-bilyong pisong suhulan ang naganap sa pagitan ng Miru at si George Garcia, chairperson ng COMELEC para paboran ang Miru. Tumanggap raw si Garcia ng pera na naka-deposito sa offshore accounts.

Mas madayang eleksyon

Sa AES, ang mga elektronikong makina ang tumatanggap ng boto ng mga botante at naglalabas ng resulta. Ang mga makinang ito rin ang nagpapadala ng resulta mula sa bawat presinto papunta sa sentralisadong server gamit ang internet.

Dahil pag-aari at kontrolado ng mga korporasyon ang mga teknolohiya at makina, sila lamang ang nakakaalam ng elektronikong disenyo at programa nito. Walang katiyakan na ang inilalabas na bilang ng boto at ang pinapadalang resulta ng eleksyon ay tama at makatotohanan.

Naging mas talamak at mabilis ang dayaan sa eleksyon mula noong ipatupad ang AES. Noong Pambansang Halalang 2013 ipinakita ni Prof. Alex Muga ng Center for People Empowerment in Governance (CENPEG) ang padron na 60:30:10 sa resulta ng Senatorial election. Ibig sabihin, ang hatian ng boto para sa mga kandidato ng administrasyon ni Benigno Aquino III at ng oposisyon ay umuulit sa isang tiyak na proporsyon: 60 porsyento para sa mga kandidato ng administrasyon, 30 porsyento para sa oposisyon, at 10 porsyento para sa iba pang kandidato. Napansin ang ganitong regular na padron sa resulta ng eleksyon sa maraming bahagi ng bansa.



Noong 2022, naganap ang pinamabilis na dayaan sa eleksyon sa Pilipinas. Sa loob lamang ng isang oras lumabas na agad ang di kapani-paniwalang resulta ng pagkapanalo ni Ferdinand Marcos Jr at pagkatalo ni Leni Robredo. Ibinunyag ng dating secretary ng Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT) Brigadier General Eliseo Rio Jr. na malaking bilang ng boto ang “nabilang” na sa maraming lugar kahit hindi pa tapos ang botohan sa mga presinto. Libu-libo rin ang naiulat na hindi gumaganang vote-counting machine sa mismong araw ng halalan

kaya malaking bilang ng mga botante ang disenfranchised. Naghapag ng electoral protest ang grupo ni Gen. Rio, pero hanggang ngayon hindi pa rin ito nirebolba ng COMELEC.

Sabi ng COMELEC, magiging mas mabilis ang resulta ng eleksyon ngayon dahil sa FASTrAC—na mas modernong gamit ng Miru System at ng i-One Resources. Pero gaya nang pagpapatakbo ng Smartmatic sa mga nakaraan eleksyon, ganun pa rin ang disenyo at teknolohiya ng pandaraya ang gamit ng Miru at ng i-One Resource. Nananatili ang mga panganib at bulnerabilidad sa manipulasyon ng bilang ng boto at mga glitch sa transmisyon ng bawat presinto sa sentralisadong server.

Mga tradisyunal na pandaraya

Nananatiling sangkap sa pagpapanalo sa reaksyunaryong eleksyon ang mga dati nang pamamaraan ng pandaraya—vote-buying, paggamit ng flying voters, pagwaldas ng pondo ng gobyerno ng mga nakaupong opisyaes para sa kanilang kampanya, at terror tactics tulad ng pananakot at paggamit ng mga armadong grupo, pulis at militar para kontrolin o impluwensyahan ang mga botante at resulta ng eleksyon.

Karaniwang nakalalamang sa pandaraya ang mga nasa poder dahil nagagamit nila ang pondo at institusyon ng gobyerno tulad ng media, militar, pulis, korte, at mismong COMELEC. Sa kasalukuyan, ang rehimeng US-Marcos na nasa poder ang pangunahing mandaraya para manatili sa poder at kontrol sa gobyerno.

Disimpormasyon isang maruming taktika

Ang pagkakalat ng disimpormasyon sa social media ang isa sa mga bagong pamamaraan ng mga reaksyunaryong pulitiko at kandidato para lokohin ang masa at ibenta ang mga kasinungalingan. Ginagamit nila ito para mga

popular, ikalat ang kanilang pekeng imahe, at paniwalain ang masa na demokratiko, pantay, at malinis ang eleksyon sa Pilipinas.

Noong 2017 masinsin at malaganap na ginamit ito ng pangakating Marcos-Duterte para manalo sa eleksyon. Pinalaganap nilang mahusay ang pamamahala ng pasistang si Rodrigo Duterte. Sa bahagi ng mga Marcos, ginamit nila ang social media at troll army at influencers para baluktutin ang kasaysayan: walang paglabag sa karapatang pantao noong panahon ng martial law, walang korupsiyon, maunlad at “golden era” ito sa kasaysayan ng Pilipinas, may makukuhang Tallano gold, magiging 20 pesos ang bigas, atbp.

Ginagamit rin ang pekeng survey para lituhin at impluwensyahan ang mga botante para ihalal sila, o kaya’y ikondisyon ang pampublikong opinyon kung sino ang nangunguna at posibleng manalong mga kandidato. Mula 2021 hanggang bago maghalalan noong 2022, kahina-hinalang kadalasang nakapako sa higit 50-60 porsyento ang pabor daw sa tambalang Marcos-Duterte.

Eleksyon sa rebolusyunaryong kilusan

Kabaligtaran ng reaksyunaryong eleksyon ang nangyayari sa mga lugar na may mga organo ng kapangyarihang pampulitika (OKP) na itinatayo ng mamamayan sa gitna ng rebolusyon. Ang OKP ay ekspresyon ng organisadong lakas ng rebolusyunaryong mamamayan para pakilusin ang buong sambayanan at ipagtagumpay ang rebolusyon. Sa kasalukuyan, hakbang-hakbang itong itinatayo sa kanayunan. Dito nagmumula ang demokratikong kapangyarihan ng mamamayan para sa kanilang interes at mithiin—lupa, edukasyon, pang-kalusugan, atbp.

Isa sa mga pangunahing tungkulin ng OKP ang tuloy-tuloy na pagsulong ng Demokratikong

Rebolusyong Bayan (DRB) laban sa imperyalistang dominasyon ng US at lokal na naghaharing uri, ipagtagumpay ang pambansa-demokratikong rebolusyon hanggang sa maitatag ang Pambansang Demokratikong Republika ng Pilipinas.

May iba’t-ibang porma at antas sa kasalukuyan ang mga OKP batay sa lakas at lawak ng rebolusyunaryong kapangyarihan. Karaniwan itong nasa antas baryo (o mga KRB, komiteng rebolusyonaryo ng baryo) tungo sa munisipyo o distrito hanggang antas probinsya.

Ang eleksyon sa mga OKP, halimbawa sa mga KRB, tinitiyak ang patakarang “tatlong sangkatlo” o “3/3”. Ibig sabihin, sa loob ng komiteng rebolusyonaryo ay may karampatang representasyon ang Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas, mga ganap na samahang masa gaya ng Pambansang Kalipunan ng Magsasaka (PKM), Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (MAKIBAKA) at Kabataang Makabayan (KM), at ang mga panggitnang pwersa.

Mapayapa ang eleksyon sa erya ng OKP—walang gumagamit ng dahas, pananakot at panunuhol—na karaniwang kalakaran sa reaksyunaryong eleksyon.

Makisangkot sa reaksyunaryong eleksyon, palakasin ang rebolusyon

Gaya nang mga nakaraang reaksyunaryong eleksyon, malinaw na ang layunin ng eleksyon sa ilalim ng Rehimeng-US Marcos Jr ay para panatilihan ang malakoloyal at malapyudal na kaayusan sa Pilipinas.

Hindi naiiba ang 2025 Pambansang Halalan sa mga nakalipas na eleksyon—na ito ay tunggalian sa pagitan ng mga paksyon ng naghaharing uri para sa kapangyarihan. Sa 2025, ang

pangunahing manlalaro ay ang magkaribal na tuta ng imperyalismong US-Marcos Jr at pangkating Duterte. Sumasawsaw din dito ang mga reserbang kabayo ng US tulad ng Partido Liberal at mga petiburgesyang nagpapanggap na partidong kaliwa tulad ng Akbayan.

Malinaw na lamang ang pangkating Marcos. At dahil nasa pwesto, gagamitin nila ang lahat ng kasangkapang ng pandaraya, tulad ng FASTrAC/AES at pananakot para makalamang sa isa’t-isa. Sino man ang magwagi at makaupo sa kanila, tiyak na papanatilihin lang nito ang kalakaran ng paggamit sa gobyerno para mangurakot, apihin at pagsamantalahan ang mamamayan.

Gayumpaman, pagkakataon ang darating na eleksyon para patampukin ang programa at adhikain ng demokratikong rebolusyong bayan, ibayong ipanawagan at kumilos para sa mga karaingan at kahilingan ng mamamayan, mag-organisa, magpanalo ng mga progresibong kandidato at partido bilang ambag sa pagpapalakas ng rebolusyunaryong kilusan. Dahil sa ilalim ng mala-kolonyal at mala-pyudal na kaayusan, rebolusyon lang ang tangi at tunay na solusyon para makamit ang kalayaan at tunay na demokrasya. **LIB**

(Unang inilathala noong October 28, 2024 sa Countercurrent, www.liberation.ndfp.info)



AKAP, AICS ANG BAGONG MUKHA NG VOTE BUYING SA ELEKSYON 2025

NI GAEA SUMULONG

Tatak na ng reaksyunaryong eleksyon sa Pilipinas ang malaganap na vote buying o pagbili ng boto. Sa pagpayag ng Comelec na ipagpatuloy ang Ayuda sa Kapos ang Kita Program (AKAP) at ang Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) sa panahon ng kampanya sa eleksyon 2025, nagkaroon ng dagdag na anyo ang bilihan ng boto ng mga pulitikong mula sa naghaharing-uri.

Ang AKAP at AICS ay mga programa ng Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) para tulungan daw ang mga mahihirap na pamilya at indibidwal sa panahon ng krisis. Nagsimula noong 2024, ang AKAP ay para raw tugunan ang di mapigil na pagtaas ng presyo ng mga bilihan na nagsimula noong panahon ng pandemyang COVID-19. Mahigit Php 26 bilyon ang badyet para dito noong 2024 at muli para sa 2025. Samantala, ang Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation o AICS naman ay nagsimula noong 2020. Mula sa Php 8.7 bilyon sa 2020 national budget, umabot sa Php 40.9 bilyon ang badyet nito noong 2023 at ngayong 2025 ay nasa Php 44.7 na ito.

Sa maraming barangay sa buong bansa, nasa pangalan ng mga trapong kandidato ang pamimigay ng mga ayudang ito.

Vote buying na, corruption pa

Gaya ng mga political ads sa media at mga nagkalat na billboards sa mga kalsada, maaga ring ginamit ng mga pulitiko ang AKAP para magpasikat sa eleksyon.

Halimbawa, noong Nobyembre 2024, namigay ng “ayuda” gamit ang pondo ng AKAP sa isang mall tour sina House Speaker Martin Romualdez at iba pang miyembro ng Kongreso. Si Erwin Tulfo naman, dating kalihim ng DSWD na tumatakbo ngayon bilang senador, ipinagmamalaking siya raw ang nagpasimula ng AKAP.

Gaya rin ng AKAP, aktibong ginagamit ng mga trapong tulad ni Imee Marcos ang AICS para sa pangangampanya.

Bukod sa AKAP at AICS, marami pang ibang programang ayuda ang reaksyunaryong estado ang aktibong ginagamit para sa eleksyon. Nariyan ang 4Ps o Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program na tinutuntungan ng pangangampanya ng 4Ps Party-list na pinamumunuan ni Nonoy Libanan, alyado ng mga Marcos. Mayroong maliliit na ayuda gaya ng Start-up Investment Business and Livelihood Program (SIBOL), Cash Assistance and Rice Distribution (CARD) at iba pa na ginagamit din nila Romualdez.

Dahil bulok nga ang reaksyunaryong eleksyon, kahit pa namimigay daw ng “ayuda” ang mga trapo at ginagamit na pambili ng boto, mismong sila ay nagdadayaan at kanya-kayang ibinubulsa ang malaking bahagi ng “ayuda.”

Maraming pang report sa iba’t ibang lugar sa bansa na ang Php 10,000ng AICS ay Php 1,000 lamang ang totoong nakakarating sa mga tao. Ang Php 9,000 ay napupunta sa

ibang bulsa. May katulad ding ulat sa AKAP na Php 1,000 lamang ang naibibigay sa mga benepisyaryo sa halip na Php 3,000. Lahat ng pangungurakot na ito ay nangyayari sa ngalan ng mahihirap na mamamayan.

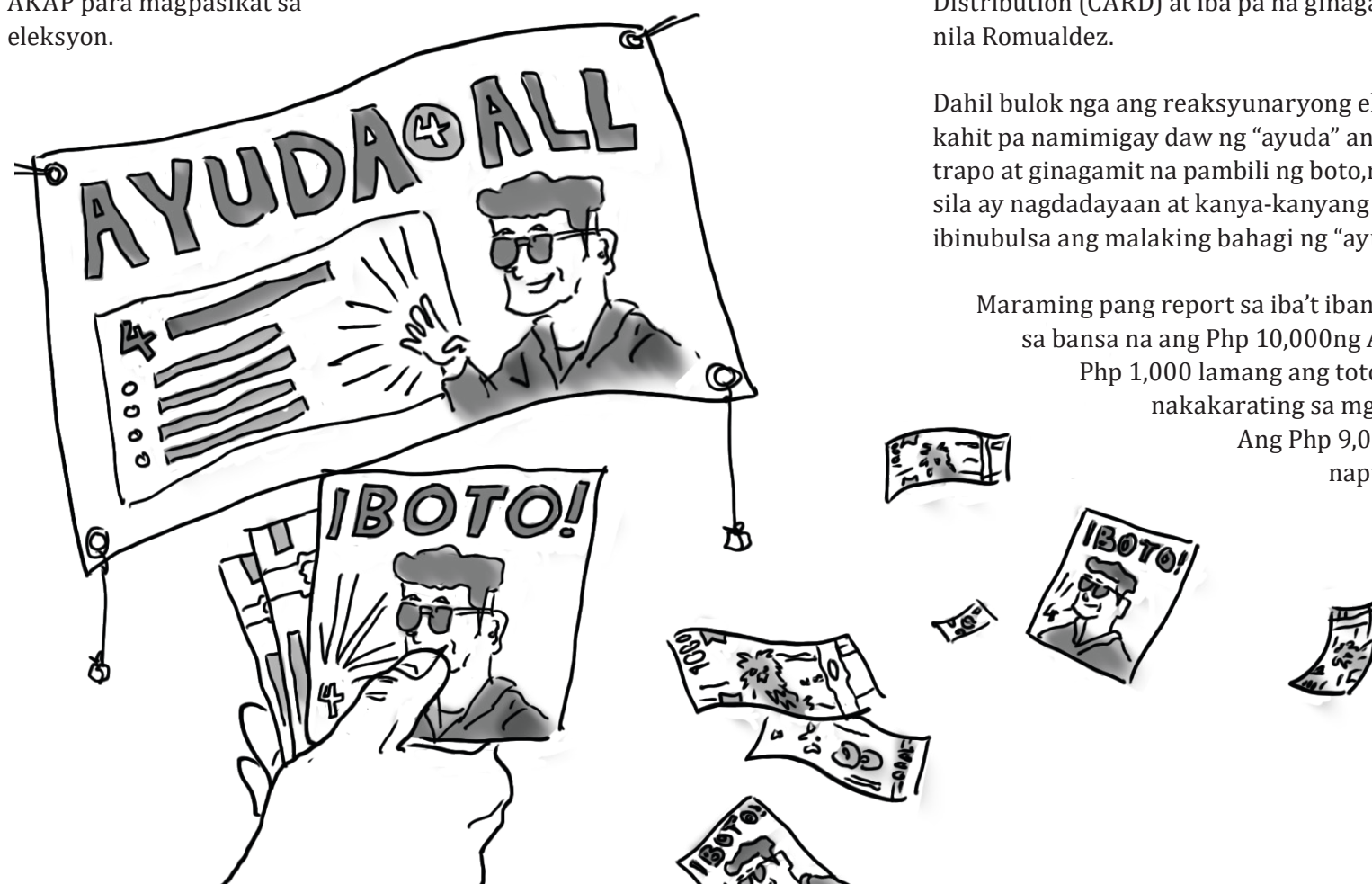
Pulitiko nakikinabang, mamamayan nalilintang

Para kay Ka Raps, isang lider-maralita sa Quezon City at kasapi ng KASAMA, ang mga reaksyunaryong pulitiko lamang ang makikinabang sa nasabing desisyon ng Comelec, hindi ang sambayanang Pilipino.

“Malinaw na yung desisyon ng Comelec ay hahantong sa vote buying,” aniya. “Hindi maiiwasan na may mga tao sa komunidad na nabubulag sa pera, na dahil nabigyan sila ng isang pulitiko ng ayuda ay maiimpluwensiyahan ang kanilang mga boto.”

Bukod rito, pinunto niya na ang karaniwang binibigay na ayuda ay sapat lamang para sa isang araw o isang linggo. Hindi totoong natutugunan ng mga programang ayuda ang mga batayang problema sa ekonomya ng mamamayan—kawalan ng trabaho, mababang sweldo, mataas na presyo ng bilihan, gutom. Dagdag pa rito, dahil sa palagi namang nasa krisis ang ating bansa, talagang umaasa na lang ang ilan sa ayuda.

Sawang sawa na ang masang Pilipino sa mga panakip-butang na solusyon o band-aid solution ng naghaharing-uri sa patuloy na lumalalang pang-ekonomyang krisis ng bansa. Pero kada taon, nakakahanap ng bagong paraan ang mga trapo at burukrata-kapitalista para bigyan ng bagong pangalan at mukha ang inilalako nilang ayuda sa halip na lutasin ang mga ugat ng kahirapan ng mamamayan.



“Sa ganitong klaseng eleksyon, nagiging matingkad ang papel ng organisasyon sa komunidad,” sabi ni Ka Raps. “Kailangan mag-organisa sa masa para maging mapagbantay at mamulat sila sa katotohanan na wala tayong maaasahan sa mga pulitiko na ‘yan pagkatapos ng eleksyon.” At pinatunayan na ito ng napakaraming nagdaang eleksyon.

Huwad na eleksyon, rebolusyon ang solusyon

Kahit na sa Mayo pa ang araw ng botohan, malinaw na ang pandaraya at kapalpakan ng hungkag na ehersisyong ito. Wala nang patago-tago pa, harapan na ang lokohan at pagbili ng boto. Dagdag pa, sinasamantala ng naghaharing-uri ang kasalukuyang krisis para gawing palaasa ang masang Pilipino sa ayuda. Hindi nito tinutugunan ang matagal nang kahilingan ng masang anakpawis bilang pangmatagalang solusyon sa krisis—ang tunay na reporma sa lupa at pambansang industriyalisasyon.



Sa bilyon-bilyong ginagastos ng mga burukrata-kapitalista sa vote buying at iba pang tipo ng pandaraya, tiyak na kontrolado nila ang resulta ng eleksyon. Habang may pagsisikap ang ilang mga progresibo at makabayang kandidato para mahalal bilang senador at kongresista, hindi na nakagugulat kung mga trapo at myembro ng mga dinastiya lang ulit ang mananalo sa parating na eleksyon.

Malinaw sa masang anakpawis na hindi kailanman makakamit ang pagbabago sa pamamagitan ng reaksyunaryong eleksyon. Kaharap ng ganitong klaseng lantarang pandaraya at kabulukan ng sistema, walang ibang solusyon kundi ang pag-oorganisa at ang pagsulong ng pambansang demokratikong rebolusyon. **LIB**

(Unang nailathala noong Pebrero 4, 2025 sa Countercurrent, www.liberation.ndfp.info)



CAST IN THE SAME MOLD

The Marcoses and Duterte are guilty of the same crimes against the Filipino people.

They are bureaucrat capitalists who, for the longest time, amassed wealth through their political positions as they rule the country like a family corporation. They only know how to serve their imperialist masters and the ruling classes to which they belong. They wallow in crime and corruption and their bureaucrat capitalist greed is insatiable. They both carry out political repression and fascist suppression using the military and police against those who get in their way and those who organize and fight for their rights. They embody the rottenness of the ruling system. Marcos and Duterte are cast in the same mold.

That Marcos Jr and Sara Duterte are at swords' point is not only because they want the biggest share of the bureaucratic loot for their own but it is also about who wields power the longest. It shows the factional splits within the ruling classes, reflective of the crisis of the ruling system. Whoever gets the upper hand will not change the suffering of the majority of the Filipino people. Currently, the Marcos Jr regime remains the face of bureaucrat capitalism, fascism, and the semicolonial, semifeudal state.

These contradictions will be at play in the coming 2025 midterm elections and in the 2028 Presidential elections.

At present, Marcos Jr is definitely on a higher ground especially because Duterte's crimes are highlighted. And, until Marcos Jr's major mistake or scandalous action or deal

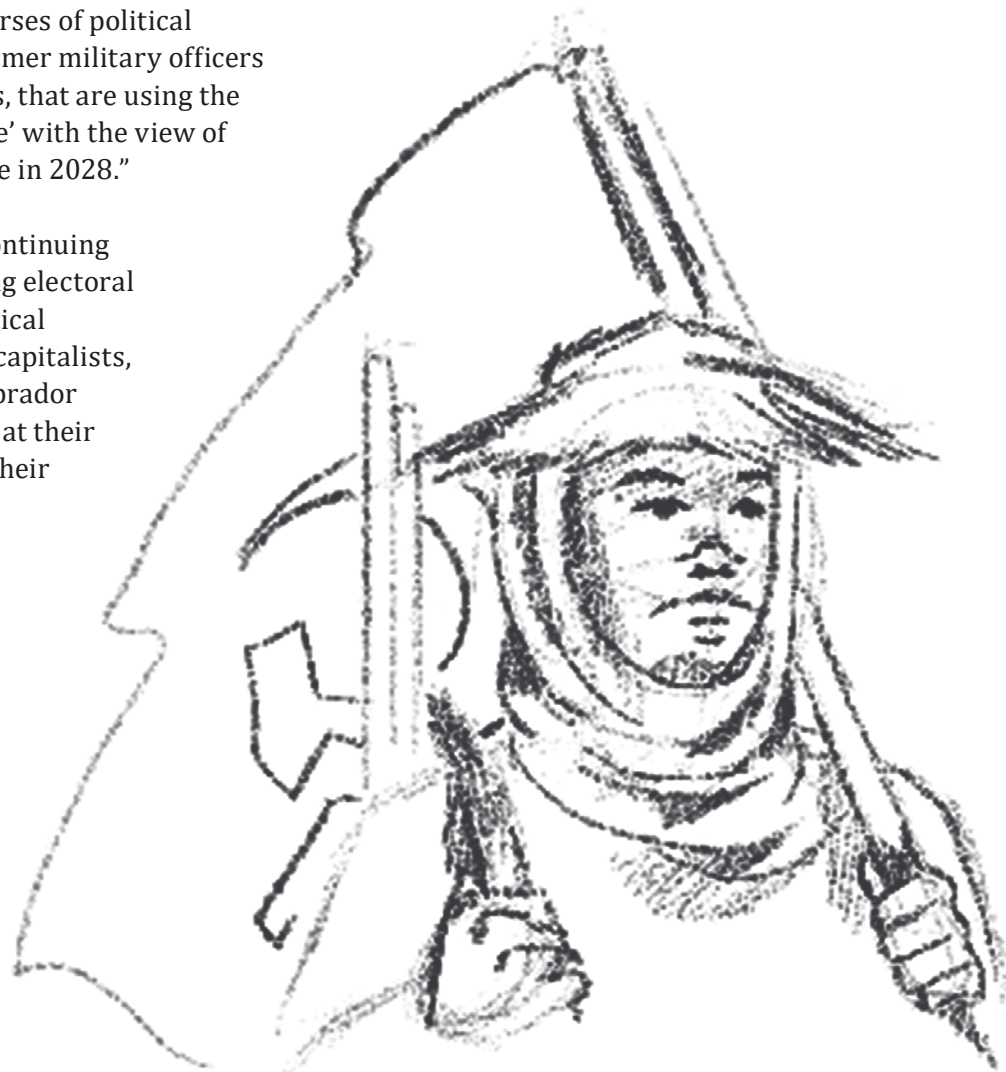
committed is exposed, it will remain so. Aside from the billions of plundered funds to back up their electoral campaign super-spending, the Marcos camp has, comparatively, more reserve presidential aspirants e.g. Martin Romualdez or his sister Imee than the Dutertes. Except for the Dutertes, there is no prominent personality yet in the gravely weakened traditional political opposition for their presidential candidate in 2028. More importantly, Marcos has ensconced himself as veritable US imperialism’s puppet-partner, compared to Sara’s undetermined status in the eyes of US imperialists as their prospective puppet-partner. The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) noted that as early as now, “the US imperialists are busy preparing their reserve horses of political groupings composed of former military officers and anticommunist groups, that are using the slogan of ‘clean governance’ with the view of replacing the Marcos clique in 2028.”

This situation spells the continuing hopelessness of the existing electoral system dominated by political dynasties, the bureaucrat capitalists, the landlords and big comprador bourgeoisie who only look at their own interests and that of their capitalist masters.

The current rotten system holds no future for the masses. The electoral system is not the solution to attain palpable changes in governance that would pave the way for the long-awaited tangible and sustained improvement in the people’s lives, now and in the near future.

Hence, the people’s hope can only come from their unity, to muster their own strength to end hunger and poverty, resist exploitation and fascist repression, and support unrelentingly, in whatever ways they can find and create the revolutionary movement’s sustained pursuit of victory—through armed struggle, to seize political power, and to establish the people’s democratic government. **LIB**

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No to continuing either Marcos or Duterte dynastic rule

BY ILIYA MAKALIPAY

Right from the start, it was obvious that the Marcos Jr and Sara Duterte’s “Uniteam” was all about a unity of convenience—characteristic of the elite-dominated politics and a corrupt and bankrupt electoral system. By now, the public knows that their “unity” (for whatever to get votes) was a product of transactional politics, of wheeling and dealing, to ensure victory and subsequently protect the interests of each of their dynasties, both representing the corrupt and felonious ruling classes.

For Marcos Jr, the goal is to fully rehabilitate his ousted dictator father’s public image and perpetuate the Marcos brand of politics and governance—brutality and chicanery, theft and corruption. And, like his father, he is out to monopolize power, too. Separately, Marcos Sr’s crude copycat former president Rodrigo Duterte aspires to get his daughter Sara to become president immediately after Marcos Jr to regain his previous hold in power. Through Sara, the older Duterte hopes he could maintain his economic interests and criminal operations, and his influence in the military. Sara is also Duterte’s protection against any move from Marcos Jr that would lead to his



prosecution by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Standing on a sham unity and considering their own agenda, Marcos Jr, naturally has been wary of Sara Duterte and considers her a threat. Marcos Jr denied Sara of the vital defense post much to Sara’s chagrin that she continues to froth at the mouth with rage to this day.

In less than two years after their highly questionable win, the conflict between the Marcos and Duterte dynasties has intensified. The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in a statement issued in September 15, 2024 said, “The façade of unity, however, crumbled just after a year because the greed for wealth and power of both sides is boundless and cannot be equally satisfied amid the crisis of

the ruling system and the decreasing resources for sharing.”

Recently, Marcos Jr has allowed his minions in Congress to investigate Sara Duterte’s misuse of “intelligence funds” and Duterte’s “war against drugs” via the Lower House’s quad-committee which includes political turncoats who hailed and supported Duterte while he was president. It remains to be seen though if this Marcos Jr show off will eventually lead to the arrest and trial of Duterte before the ICC (or will Marcos just keep off for fear of suffering the same. Afterall, he and Duterte are two peas in a pod). When and if it happens, the Duterte clique will definitely not take it sitting down. The Duterte dynasty will gather and mobilize what remains of their political and economic resources to defend their interests.

It will be recalled that as early as the second half of 2023, rumors of destabilization plots circulated and calls for Marcos Jr’s resignation were heard during Duterte-sponsored rallies.

Kadiliman vs Kasamaan?

When the conflict between Marcos Jr and Sara escalated and became apparent to the public, social media had been abuzz with memes and jokes, letting netizens choose between *kadiliman* (darkness, gloom) and *kasamaan* (evil), a follow-up from *shiminet* and *shuminghot*. Though people laughed at this, it also speaks of the sick state of Philippine politics where the choice has been, for decades, limited to the rotating political families who reign the country; that once temporarily out of power, the other dynasty assumes the role of the “opposition” despite their likeness of being. Both Marcos and Duterte are bureaucrat capitalists, representing both *kadiliman* and *kasamaan* of the rotten semifeudal, semicolonial system.

By now, Duterte’s so-called drug war and its thousands of victims and the expanse of his connections with “POGO” operations and other syndicates have been confirmed in the hearings by both houses of Congress. The CPP, in the same September 15 statement wrote, “... Duterte’s so-called drug war was a sham and that his anti-drug rhetoric was a hoax to establish himself as the drug megalord.”

Clearly, Duterte as bureaucrat capitalist used his political power to expand his criminal syndicate with his Chinese connections. He used the police and military not only to protect his drug trade and other criminal activities but also to suppress and even kill his competitors and political opponents, including members of the revolutionary movement. During the Duterte regime, the POGO hubs gained legitimacy through government contracts. Some of the personalities associated with these hubs and drug trade were given top positions, even as high as presidential advisers like Michael Yang.





Duterte typifies one of bureaucrat capitalism's features—the involvement of those in power in criminal activities such as smuggling, drug trade, gambling, kidnapping for ransom, bank robbery, prostitution, gun-for-hire and a host of anti-social activities—either directly or as protectors or both. But Duterte's "war against drugs" is just one among the many crimes he committed against the Filipino people and the revolutionary movement. While in power, Duterte militarized the civilian bureaucracy, weaponized the laws, and criminalized dissent.

Ridiculous as it seems, Rodrigo Duterte's brazenness and Sara's bratty ways have made Marcos Jr look like a statesman. But while trying to distance himself from the Dutertes by claiming his "drug war" is bloodless, the CPP argued that according to its news monitor, the number of people being killed by police and vigilantes continues to rise..." under the Marcos Jr regime.

On March 21, 2024, a news article "Under Marcos, the Philippines drug war drags on said, "from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023,

multisectoral group Dahas, a Project of the University of the Philippines' Third World Studies Center has recorded 342 drug casualties or an average rate of 0.9 deaths per day, a tad higher than the 0.8 daily average during Duterte's last year in office." As of October 31, the number rose to 827 (<https://dahas.upd.edu.ph/sources/>).

There was only a shift from Duterte's men to Marcos Jr's, from China-based drug syndicate to the US-Mexico Sinaloa drug cartel according to the CPP, adding that the trade goes through the Clark Air Base, which was a US military base.

Without pretensions, Marcos Jr is an all-out puppet of US imperialism. Marcos Jr immediately earned the political and economic support of the US when he approved the expansion and increase of US military bases in the country, under the guise of protecting the country from China's economic and military agenda in the Asia-Pacific region. Marcos also cancelled contracts for infrastructure projects granted by the Duterte regime to China, a

source of Duterte's huge amounts of *tongpats* (kickbacks). For this, Marcos was promised support by the Japanese Import-Export Bank and World Bank, which could be his own source of big bucks.

Like Rodrigo and Sara Duterte, Marcos Jr is not free from corruption cases. Least of all. Aside from the unreturned billions of stolen money by his family, Marcos Jr now controls billions of pesos of confidential and intelligence funds and unprogrammed funds which is essentially audit-free. He has the Maharlika Investment Funds (MIF) to dip into. He is a jet-setter, a party animal who spends hundreds of millions of people's money to sustain his and his family's lavish lifestyle in complete disregard of people's welfare. Marcos friends and cronies such as Ramon Ang, Enrique Razon, the Villars—all big bourgeois compradors and big landlords who are also bureaucrat themselves are favored by Marcos for which they are able to expand their economic empires as they get

most of government contracts. Of course, not for nothing. **LIB**

(First published on January 29, 2025 in Countercurrent, www.liberation.ndfp.info)

** "Shiminet" came from "She may not," a phrase lifted from Sara Duterte's abrasive response during the Congressional hearing on the her Php 125 million 2022 confidential funds spent in only 11 days. "She may not like my answer. She may not like how I answer. She may not like the content of my answer, but I am answering," was Duterte's answer when pressed by representatives of the Makabayan bloc on the issue. "Shiminet" became viral online memes, poking fun at the vice president. In retaliation, Duterte supporters tried to popularize "shuminghot" (sniff) referring to the video which earlier made the rounds in the internet where Duterte supporters claimed it was Marcos Jr sniffing cocaine.



Trends for you

Trending in Philippines
Shiminet
 1,397 posts

Trending in Philippines
Pusit
 3,740 posts

Shiminet
 / shi-mih-net /
 png.

Since the “unity” of the Marcoses and the Dutertes resoundingly shattered this year, their word wars and maneuvers have become increasingly messier. They throw mud at each other as if their rivals were much dirtier. But, even as we get entertained and disgusted by their spectacle, let us keep in mind that in our country’s semifeudal, semicolonial condition:



1. They are the same, though as rival bureaucrat capitalists themselves, they race against each other to take as much power and loot from government positions.
2. Occasionally they would “unite” for benefits, but this never lasts.
3. While in power, the ruling clique would top them all in exploiting and oppressing the people, serving the interests of the big landlords and compradors, and their imperialist masters.
4. When out of power, the former ruling clique would seek to protect its loot, evade liability for their crimes and abuses, and try their darn best to come back to power.

The ex-ruling clique of Rodrigo Duterte has yet to answer for his horrid crimes.

Yet, his clique is aiming for a comeback not just in the mid-term 2025 elections but more so in the 2028 presidential elections. At the forefront are his children, the current vice-president Sara Duterte, and his two sons (a city mayor and a congressman).

Duterte managed to score the presidency in 2016 by riding on the people’s discontent with the exiting regime of Benigno Aquino Jr. This time around, the Duterte clique is using the same game

Lest we forget: Duterte’s Crimes vs the Filipino people

BY PINKY ANG

plan—riding on the people’s disgust with the incumbent US-Marcos Jr regime.

The people owe it to themselves to remember that, among others, the Dutertes should be made accountable for the following:

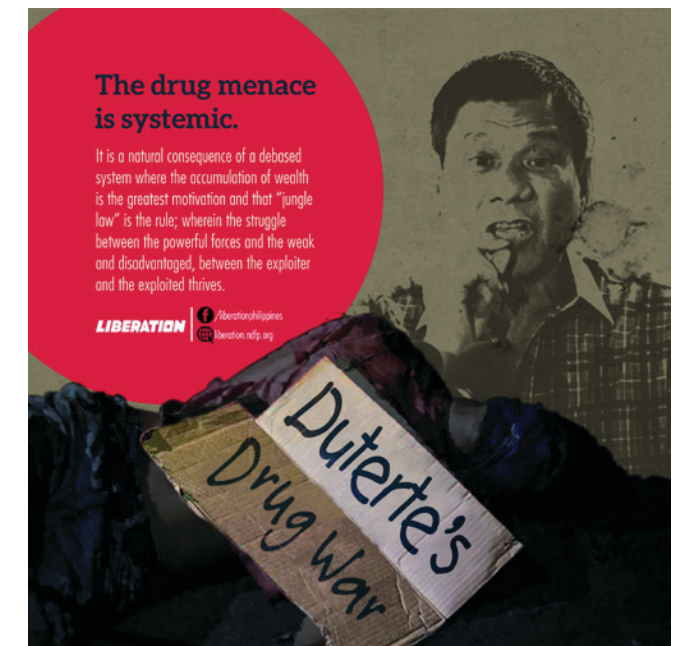
Mass murder under the “war on drug” campaign

Duterte raised the culture of impunity in the country to a new level with thousands of extrajudicial killings. From 2016 to 2022, he shocked the country and the world with left and right vigilante killings coupled with his brash and profane way of shielding the police, the military and the paramilitary groups. The kin of the victims brought the case to the International Criminal Court (ICC). In 2018 Duterte removed the Philippines from the ICC to evade its probe on his war on drugs.

By 2024, the ICC has finished the first series of investigations confirming the “systematic and mass killings” under Duterte’s “war on drugs.”

While the Marcos 2 regime announced it is reconsidering re-entry into the ICC, it also said it is not honoring the ICC warrant of arrest. However, Marcos Jr’s minions in the House of Representatives went ahead to create a “mega-panel”, called the quad committee, to probe the interconnection between the extrajudicial killings, illegal drug trade and Duterte’s drug war, the Philippine offshore gaming operators (POGOs), and Chinese syndicates. Also, as of this writing, Marcos’ Justice Secretary Jesus Remulla said his Department “will not hinder the Interpol from executing its duties if the International Criminal Court (ICC) orders the arrest of certain individuals in the country.”

Two years after Duterte left office, there is little legal reckoning for the victims of his



The drug menace is systemic.

It is a natural consequence of a debased system where the accumulation of wealth is the greatest motivation and that “jungle law” is the rule; wherein the struggle between the powerful forces and the weak and disadvantaged, between the exploiter and the exploited thrives.

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[liberation.ph](#) [liberation.ph.org](#)

regime’s bloody killings, estimated to be tens of thousands. Only eight police officers (mostly low-ranking, never the mastermind) in only four cases were so far convicted.

Martial Law, whole-of-nation terrorism

Duterte was mayor of Davao City in Mindanao for decades before he assumed the presidency. Yet, it was Mindanao that he trampled on first and most grievously.

He pounded Marawi for 147 days with the excuse of hunting alleged fighters and allies of ISIS, and then declared Martial Law throughout Mindanao. He caused the evacuation of half a million Moro residents of Marawi and soon, of Lumad also. He ordered relentless killings and brutal military rule, including massacres and closure of Lumad schools, to force the Lumad to give up their right to their ancestral lands.

Duterte’s real purpose then was to clear opposition to the expansion of plantation and mining and logging operations in the mineral- and coal-rich Mindanao. Duterte shamelessly

bragged about selling even the ancestral domains of the indigenous peoples to foreign investors.

With Martial Law in Mindanao, Duterte in November 2017, ordered through Executive Order No. 32 a more intense militarization of Negros, Eastern Visayas, and Bicol. He also launched Oplan Sauron and the Synchronized Enhanced Managing of Police Operations (SEMPO) that escalated killings, abductions, and attacks against the legal democratic movement and peasant communities. EO 32 came on the heels of the Duterte regime's unilateral termination of the peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in August 2017.

Subsequently, Duterte issued Executive Order No. 70 in December 2017 creating the notorious National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) and placing the entire government machinery with its resources "at the behest of Duterte and his military gang junta for their whole-of-nation terrorism," said Ka Oris, the spokesperson of New People's Army-National Operation Command in 2018. The "whole-of-nation" approach is patterned after the United States Counter-insurgency Guide of 2009, the same framework used by the previous regimes of Gloria Arroyo and Benigno Aquino Jr in their "counterinsurgency" campaigns against the revolutionary movement led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

In 2020, while the people were hard-pressed with lockdowns during COVID-19 pandemic, the Duterte regime railroaded the passage of the Anti-Terror Act. Under this law, anyone who dares to air protest or grievance against the regime is automatically tagged as a "communist terrorist" or "supporter of communist terrorists."

The law contains provisions on arbitrary proscription and designation of individuals and organizations as "terrorist." It removed safeguards on human rights such as warrantless arrests and detention. It violates even the reactionary state's own Constitution. The "Anti-Terrorism" Law (ATL) became the most questioned law before the Supreme Court with 37 petitions for its nullity.

Using the law, the regime persecuted activists, leaders of people's organizations, lawyers, human rights workers, even humanitarian organizations. The Philippine UPR Watch (Universal Periodic Review) cited 112 individuals charged with ATL and Terrorist Financing (Republic Act 10168) with 53 organizations/individuals whose Bank Accounts and Assets were frozen.

Corruption

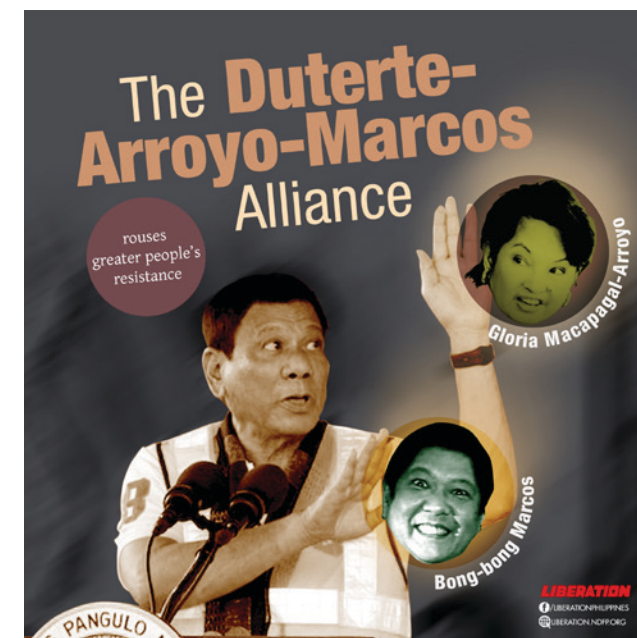
Duterte has yet to answer for his regime's militaristic rather than health-oriented response to the COVID-19 pandemic. On top of that, his clique has yet to be held accountable for the gargantuan fund mismanagement of the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation or PhilHealth, the agency co-financing Covid-19 testing and treatment. In 2021, illegal or invalid fund releases were estimated at Php15 billion.

Philhealth only comes second to the Pharmally scandal, Duterte's biggest money-making venture during the pandemic through his long-time friend and former economic adviser Michael Yang. With less than Php 600,000 capital, Pharmally bagged 13 contracts from the government on Sept. 2, 2019 worth Php 11 billion for overpriced medical supplies.

Aside from Philhealth and Pharmally, there is no closure yet to revelations of mafia-like corruption in the Departments

of Public Works and Highways, Health, Education, Transportation, Information and Communication, Bureau of Correction, and Bureau of Customs. A 2021 report by the inquirer.net ("COA red flags reach nearly every corner of Duterte bureaucracy") said many government agencies have irregularities in finance handling.

Duterte gained favor from the military by intensifying the corruption here that were introduced by his predecessors, for example the so-called *pabaon* (pocket money) for retiring AFP officials. With Duterte's NTF-ELCAC, AFP generals and police commanders have grown more addicted to war-and-profit. The NTF-ELCAC's Barangay Development Program (BDP), called by the CPP as the money pit of corruption, is among the milking cows of military leaders with its billions of peso budget. Most projects were white elephants and unaudited. Military and police officials also line their pockets through the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP), the regime's "surrender" program that offers payment for every "surrenderer."



Rehabilitation of the Marcoses

Given that the Marcoses and the Dutertes are the biggest political dynasties contending in the upcoming reactionary elections, it seems ironic that among Duterte's legacies is his regime's contribution to the rehabilitation of the Marcoses.

Duterte is an unabashed fan of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, who was notoriously known for plunder, puppetry, cronyism, and tyranny. Indeed, Duterte also imposed martial law in Mindanao and held the entire country captive through various executive orders and repressive laws

One of Duterte's earlier "achievements" during his term was helping former chiefs of bureaucrat capitalists such as Ferdinand Marcos and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo evade punishments for corruption and war crimes. The Marcoses sought to grandly rehabilitate themselves during the Duterte presidency when the late dictator was buried stealthily at the *Libingan ng mga Bayani*. Also, decades-long graft and corruption charges filed against the Marcos heirs and beneficiaries were dismissed.

Sellout of Philippine sovereignty and dragging Philippines to US-China conflict

As an editorial of CPP's *Ang Bayan* once wrote in February 2021, Duterte is treating Philippine sovereignty like a commodity. Duterte smooched China to fund his Build Build Build (BBB) projects then looked the other way when fisherfolk reported China's building of military facilities in the West Philippine Sea. This was in exchange for loans from which Duterte got bribes and favors.

Yet, Duterte's puppetry also gave more benefits to the imperialist US. In 2017,

Duterte promised then US President Trump he would terminate the peace negotiations with the NDFP; that he would crush the armed revolutionary movement; and he would push charter change to allow foreign capitalists to fully own landholdings, businesses, and other resources in the Philippines. He lifted the suspension of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) and came out with a more pro-US proposal called EDCA (Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement) which, among other things, allows the US to store missiles and weapons in Philippine territories, in exchange for weapons and military aid.

Later that same year, the “Operation Pacific Eagle–Philippines” agreement with the US was set which considered the country as a second front of the US “war on terror”.

Economic collapse

Arguably, each puppet president contributes and achieves the worst during his or her own time. But under Duterte, even without or before the pandemic, the economy was already on a downward trend, worsened by his epic failure of coronavirus pandemic response. Agricultural production went down even as rice importation reached 15 percent from 5 percent in 2016. When Duterte’s term ended, the number of unemployed Filipinos grew to 3.7 million from 2.4 million. Inflation was 4.9 percent in May 2022 compared to 1.3 percent in June 2016. Duterte ramped up borrowings, leaving behind almost Php 13 trillion in debt.

Duterte’s boasts could not erase the fact that he bankrupted and pushed the Philippines deeper into poverty.

Duterte as butcher-in-chief must pay for IHL violations, war crimes

Duterte has so far “bested” other post-Marcos presidents in delaying and evading calls for justice for his sins against the people. At least, former presidents Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Joseph Estrada got charged in court. One got ousted while the other got arrested and had to wear neck braces while in jail (hospital). Benigno Aquino III got slapped with corruption cases related to pork barrel. Only Duterte has so far escaped reckoning more than two years since leaving the presidency. Worst, he is running for another public office in an attempt to evade answering for his crimes like the following:

Sabotaging Peace talks

Under Duterte, the greater the promise the greater the disappointment describes what happened to the peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines



(GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

On his first year in power, the peace negotiation was active and fast in crafting draft agreements specifically on the more vital parts of the Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (CASER)—on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development and on National Industrialization and Economic Development. It excited positive forces in the country with its promised social and economic reforms. But from the fifth round of negotiation, Duterte unilaterally terminated the peace negotiation with the NDFP through Proclamation 360 in November 2017 and, two weeks later, issued Proclamation 374 declaring the the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and New People’s Army (NPA) terrorist groups according to the Human Security Act, the precursor of the current “Anti-Terrorism” Law.

He lambasted the people and the revolutionaries with so much profanity to justify scuttling the peace talks. But the crux of the matter was, ultimately he cannot endanger the self-interests of the ruling classes he represented—the big landlords, bourgeois compradors, and their imperialist master. After his bragging, he cannot sign an agreement that would offer better packages of social and economic reforms for the majority of Filipinos.

From thereon, Duterte’s crimes against the



people started piling up, as listed here and in Part 1: Lest we forget: Duterte Crimes vs the Filipino people. Duterte vowed to finish off the national democratic revolution. Like all the regimes before him, he failed in all his self-imposed deadlines. However, Duterte must answer for the dirty war, the bombings and strafing, hamletting, killings, and all other rights violations and grievous crimes he committed in the course of meeting his deadline.

Dirty war

Duterte ordered and instigated summary killings of unarmed civilians, hors de combat, and retired or sickly/recuperating senior members of the CPP and the NPA. Since his term, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has killed in brutal rubouts senior or



veteran revolutionaries aged 60 and older, captured Red fighters, unarmed peace consultants of the NDFP, and abducted civilians who simply happen to have relations to persons involved in the national democratic revolution.

For someone who wooed voters by claiming, among others, intimacy with the Left, Duterte violated international humanitarian laws and rules and conduct of war, allowing the reactionary troops to engage in overkill operations.

The Duterte presidency made the nanlaban (literally means the target fought back) narrative an infamous excuse for summary killings. To meet his regime's target of crushing the national democratic movement, he deployed reactionary troops in great numbers in focused military operations as well as in the civilian bureaucracy like the NTF-ELCAC that did not distinguish between combatants and non-combatants. Aerial bombings and artillery shelling/strafing and other fascist attacks led to forced evacuation and massive dislocation of hundreds of thousands of people in the countryside.

Some of these cases were the combined used

of police and military operations that resulted in the massacre of nine farmers in Sagay, Negros Occidental in 2019; 14 civilians in Negros island in 2019; the Tumandok massacre in 2020 and in what is now known as the Bloody Sunday in Southern Tagalog in 2021.

Duterte's regime shopped big time for exorbitantly priced warships, warplanes and helicopters, vehicles, arms and ammunition even during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. These weapons were procured and operated with the aid of imperialist US forces. Also reports of

manufactured encounters kept on coming and justified the killing of ordinary civilians and hors de combat.

Gender-based crimes and violence against women – “shoot them in the vagina”

Duterte has been described as a madman, a person suspected to have been crazed by drug use. Indeed, he shot himself in the foot in blithely issuing tirades against women when most politicians were going through the motions of courting women's support and advocating for gender-based reforms. He told his reactionary soldiers they could go all-out shooting the revolutionaries, including the genitals of women Red fighters. Among post-dictatorship presidents, he alone was blatant and unrepentant in encouraging the police and the military to commit gender-based crimes and abuses in the conduct of war.

Trumped up cases, weaponization of laws

Under Duterte, the country's courts became sources of “legal attacks.” Using false testimonies of soldiers and fake witnesses,

they filed cases against activists and known legal progressives while at the same time misrepresenting revolutionary struggles as criminal cases. They issued arrest and search warrants with inexplicable bases, justified (planted) guns, explosives and other ammunition, claimed personalities from people's and non-government organizations as “terrorists” or NPA. However, in some instances, there were judges who were quick to dismiss military allegations as preposterous.

Duterte railroaded the passing of the Anti-Terror Act, which became a law during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns. From thereon, trumped up cases against activists and progressives piled up under the Anti-Terror Law.

“The authorities can act with impunity because the ATA assures them of far lesser penalty for abusing its provisions than the penalty of maximum life imprisonment for supposed acts of terrorism. Besides, as in Oplan Tokhang, the commander-in-chief no less publicly assures his armed agents of impunity and brazenly advises them to frame up their victims,” said Prof. Jose Maria Sison in his 2020 article “The anti-terrorism act in the Philippines in relation to the CPP and the revolutionary movement.”

Terrorist Tag

Under Duterte, vilifying revolutionaries and progressives was systematically ramped up. The reactionary troops shamelessly, and goaded by cohorts in the local governments and the civilian bureaucracy, would attach the tag “terrorist groups” to revolutionary organizations and suspected individuals.

Duterte has indeed mastered the production of fake news. Despite 37 petitions submitted to the Supreme Court against the Anti-Terror Law, Duterte's Anti-Terrorism Council established in 2020 through Resolution No. 12, he had already declared the CPP and the NPA as “terrorist organizations”. This was followed by Resolution No. 17, which proscribed 19



CBCP List of Websites “carrying fake or unverified contents,” based on the CBCP Pastoral Guidelines on the Use of Social Media issued on January 30

- Classified Trends - <http://www.classifiedtrends.net/>
- Definitely Filipino - <http://definitelyfilipino.com/>
- Duterte News Info - <http://www.du30newsinfo.com/>
- Extreme Readers - <http://www.extremereaders.com/>
- FilipiNews PH - <http://www.filipinewsph.com/>
- Get Real Philippines - <http://www.getrealphilippines.com/>
- Guardian - <https://theguardian.com/>
- Kalye Pinoy - <http://www.kalyepinoy.com/>
- Leak News PH - <http://www.leaknewsph.com/>
- Media ni Duterte - <http://www.dutertedefender.com/>
- Minda Nation - <http://mindanation.com/>
- Netizens PH - <http://www.netizensph.com/>
- News Media PH - <http://www.newsmediaph.com/>
- News Titans - <http://www.newstitans.com/>
- OKD2 - <http://okd2.com/>
- Pinoy Freedom Wall - <http://www.pinoyfreedomwall.com/>
- Pinoy Trending - <http://pinoytrending.altervista.org/>
- Pinoy Trending News - <http://pinoytrendingnews.net/>
- Pinoy Viral Issues - <http://www.pinoyviralissues.net/>
- Pinoy Viral News - <http://pinoyviralnews.com/>
- PinoyWorld - <http://www.pinoyworld.net/>
- Public Trending - <http://www.publictrending.net/>
- SocialNewsPH - <http://www.socialnewsph.com/>
- TahoNews - <http://www.tahonews.com/>
- TheVolatilian - <http://www.thevolatilian.com/>
- Thinking Pinoy - <http://www.thinkingpinoy.net/>
- TrendingBalita - <http://www.trendingbalita.info/>
- Trending News Portal - <http://www.trendingnewsportal.net.ph/>
- TrendTitan - <http://trendtitan.com/>

individuals allegedly members of the CPP Central Committee, as “terrorists” and ordered to freeze their accounts and properties.

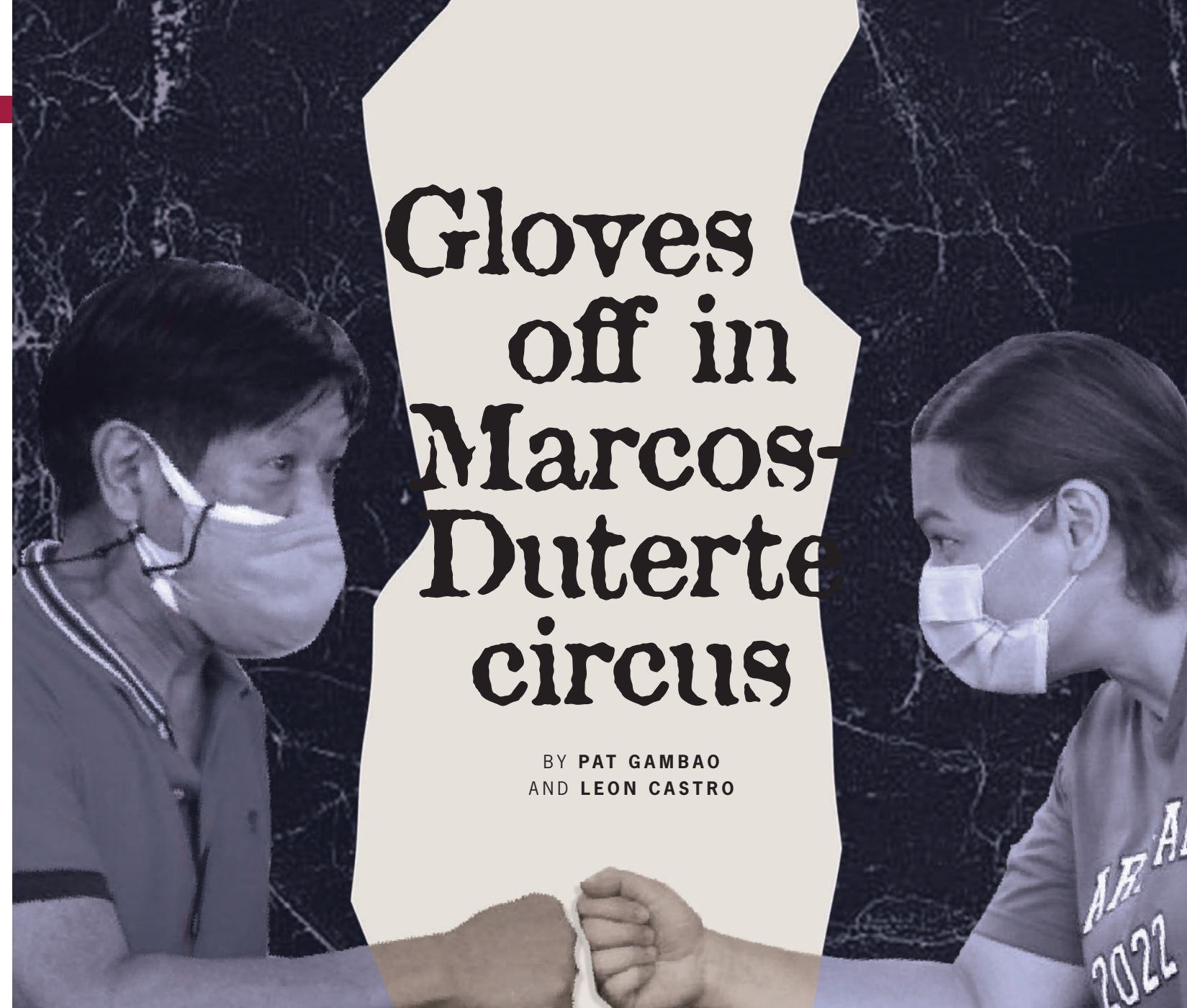
The practice of terrorist tagging is copied from the US “counterinsurgency” strategy and US-led “war against terror.” It attempts to isolate and separate the revolutionaries from the masses, making it easy for reactionary state forces to justify attacks against the revolutionaries and brutally violating their rights.

Bureaucrat capitalists like Duterte and his minions will continue to trample people’s rights and promote the culture of impunity as long as they are not punished, said the CPP’s Ang Bayan October 21 editorial. Already, this culture of impunity is “now being used by Marcos to

establish his own tyranny based on sowing violence against the people.”

The CPP, in solidarity with the families of the victims and survivors of Duterte’s “war on drugs” and “counterinsurgency” program has called on the Filipino people to relentlessly work for the indictment, prosecution and, eventually the punishment of Duterte and his minions for the grave abuse of power against the Filipino people. And now that the rift between the Marcoses and Dutertes are in full play, the people must pounce on Marcos to do the same. **LIB**

(First published on August 26, 2024 and on September 11, 2024 in Countercurrent, www.liberation.ndfp.info)



The Marcos and Duterte camps have split and the divorce did not take long to happen.

What once looked like a formidable “uniteam”—purportedly to entrench the Duterte dynasty at the national level in traditional politics and attain the Marcos family’s overarching goal of complete political rehabilitation from its ignominious ouster from Malacanang in 1986 by a peaceful popular uprising—is now exposed as just another alliance of bureaucrat capitalists that can easily dissolve due to corrupt self-interests and innate contradictions.

One might be forgiven for having expected that the alliance would last at least until the midterm elections next year. Cobbled together by the sly political operator Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the alliance included a slew of groupings from Lakas-Christian-Muslim Democrats (Lakas-CMD), Partido Federal ng Pilipinas (PFP), Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino (PMP), Hugpong ng Pagbabago, and Partido Demokratiko Pilipino–Lakas ng Bayan (PDP-Laban). All are now participants in what can be kindly described as a political freak show.

Ironically, it was Macapagal-Arroyo who got hit by the first punch thrown in the ongoing and still escalating public brawl. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, apparently Bongbong Marcos' most favored cousin, maneuvered to snatch the speakership of the House of Representatives (HOR) that the former president had wanted for herself after the 2022 elections.

Romualdez created the position of senior deputy speaker for Macapagal-Arroyo, with several deputy speakers. A surprise move, since he distrusted her because of her history of ousting the long-term sitting Speaker Jose de Venecia during her presidency, as she likewise did with Pantaleon Alvarez during the Rodrigo Duterte presidency.

After just a few months, however, Romualdez unceremoniously stripped her of that post. Vice President Sara Duterte, Arroyo's ally, reacted swiftly by resigning as chairperson from the Romualdez-controlled Lakas-CMD party, spitefully coining the Visayan word *tambaloslos* (wide-mouthed) to describe the two allied women's new nemesis.

Those swift moves and countermoves became the signal fires of an unravelling rarely seen even among the most rotten of political opportunists the country has ever had.

Fight over funds

Quick as always to switch sides to whoever they think holds the purse, many HOR members promptly jumped from the PFP, Hugpong, and PDP-Laban parties into Lakas-CMD, rendering the latter to amass a "super-majority" in that chamber.

The party switchers opportunistically hijacked the progressive Makabayan bloc's exposure of and staunch opposition to Sara's demand for—and quick spending of—huge confidential funds for her two offices (VP and education secretary). They used this as ammunition to fire broadsides at her, seeing her as a potential foil to Romualdez's 2028 presidential ambitions.

Sara got the comeuppance after she admitted having spent the Php 125-million confidential funds she had requested from and was granted by Marcos Jr—all of it in just 11 days in December 2022.

Sara had to accept the consequence: there would no longer be a Php 650-million windfall in the form of confidential funds for her two offices in this year's national budget. Marcos Jr approved and signed the 2024 national budget law affirming that fact.

So devastating a hit was this to the Duterte dynasty. As face-saving excuse, former president Rodrigo came out with the canard that his vice president daughter, as concurrent education secretary, only intended to use the confidential fund to revive the Reserved Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program in basic education.

Similarly effete was Duterte's counter punch against the House of Representatives. Speaking on the hate-speech TV channel SMNI, the

former president described the HOR as "the most rotten of all government institutions." In a classic pot-calling-the-kettle black scenario, Rodrigo urged that Speaker Romualdez's discretionary funds be audited, alleging that the latter was buying off all HOR members. Doubling down on the counter-attack on SMNI, drug-personality-turned-red-tagger Jeffry Celiz alleged, without showing proof, that Romualdez spent Php 1.8 billion in travel funds in 2023 alone.

Romualdez's counter move was swift. House committees, in November, started investigations on SMNI's tandem anchors Celiz and Lorraine Badoy. For making statements that couldn't be verified, the duo were ordered arrested and detained in the HOR premises for several days in December. Upon their release shortly before Christmas, the HOR investigations quickly shifted to SMNI's real ownership, replicating the Senate investigations on alleged sex offender Apollo Quiboloy, Rodrigo's so-called spiritual adviser.

Aside from directly responding to the tirades from Davao, Romualdez completely stripped Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of any position in the HOR, along with Duterte ally and Davao City 3rd District Rep. Isidro Ungab who was also removed as deputy speaker. On the same day, close Romualdez ally and HOR appropriations committee head, Rep. Elizalde Co, alleged that Rodrigo's son, Davao City 1st District Rep. Paolo "Pulong" Duterte, had accumulated Php 51-billion pork barrel funds over just three years (2019-2022).

Refusing to back down, Rodrigo tried to rally former and current military officers who he thought were his loyal backers to be on guard against what he claimed as Marcos Jr's dictatorial tendencies. He even warned the latter that he may suffer the same fate as his

dictator father. Moreover, Rodrigo blurted that he wanted Mindanao to secede from the rest of the Philippines. To his dismay, even his close allies such as national security adviser Carlito Galvez Jr. and Senator Ronald dela Rosa sought to distance themselves from such proposition.

In an event aimed at countering the current regime's launching of a *Bagong Pilipinas* (New Philippines) campaign in January 28, 2024, Duterte repeated his pre-election accusation that Marcos Jr was a cocaine addict.

Normally silent on attacks against his person, Marcos Jr countered by citing an earlier admission by his predecessor about regularly taking fentanyl, a highly-addictive pain killer now wreaking havoc in many parts of the world as the new narcotic of choice among drug dependents.

Irascible, as all Dutertes are, Davao City Mayor Sebastian "Baste" Duterte (Rodrigo's younger son) did not wish to be left out of the political fisticuffs. In the same event, he accused Marcos Jr of being lazy, lacking in compassion, soft on criminality and, ludicrously, cozying up to Communists. In his outburst, the younger Duterte son called for Marcos' resignation (which he later withdrew).

Resumption of GRP-NDFP peace negotiations

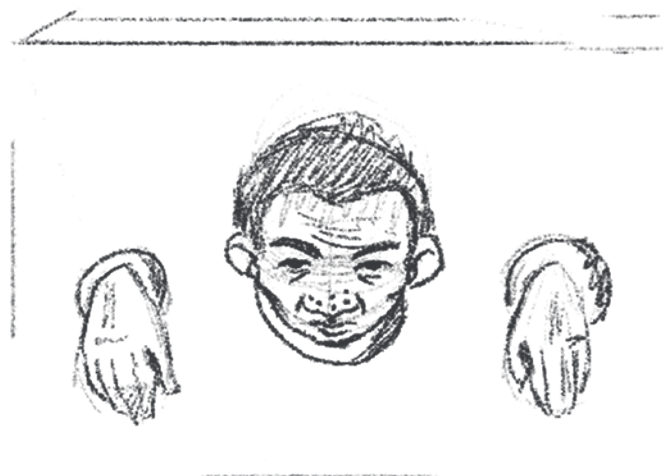
On her part, after avoiding direct conflict with her former "Uniteam" partner, Sara Duterte seized the opportunity to manifest her first-ever public disagreement, with censure to boot, over what she deemed an unacceptable Marcos Jr. policy decision to resume the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations that her father had arbitrarily suspended in 2017.

The issue arose from a simultaneous public announcement, at the end of November 2023, by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). A joint statement said the two sides had reached a consensus to resume formal peace negotiations on social, economic and political reforms towards attaining a just and lasting peace and the ending of over five decades of armed conflict.

The brief joint statement embodied the meeting of minds between representatives of the two parties during several informal and formal discussions held in Oslo, Norway, facilitated by the Royal Norwegian Government, since the first quarter of 2023.

Having taken a hard line opposing the continuation of the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations, Sara chided Marcos Jr for having initiated or acceded to resume the peace talks. Scurrilously, she declared that negotiating with the revolutionaries would be like dealing with the “devil”.

The idea of resuming the peace talks have rankled within the Duterte camp since November 2017, when then President Duterte arbitrarily suspended the GRP-NDFP formal peace negotiations. Fact is that at the start of his term in August 2016, he proudly resumed the peace talks and vowed to complete them in order to fulfill his electoral campaign promise to do just that.



When he suspended the peace talks, the negotiations were proceeding close to adopting the final draft on a comprehensive agreement on social and economic reforms (CASER). Had he not suspended the talks and the final draft was signed, it would have hugely benefitted the Filipino people.

Instead, adopting the hardline stance of the militarists, Rodrigo Duterte vowed to pursue the total defeat of the revolutionary forces through military means.

Impending ICC warrant of arrest

On another controversial issue, former senator Antonio Trillanes IV joined the fray.

Announcing his bid for the Caloocan City mayorship, the former military puchist disclosed that International Criminal Court (ICC) investigators had already been allowed into the country. He added with relish that a warrant of arrest against the former president and his cohorts, including VP Sara, was not far behind.

It is commonly believed that Trillanes made the disclosures at the behest of the Marcos camp.

And it produced the intended effect as his revelations obviously riled the Dutertes and their remaining allies such as Senator “Bato” dela Rosa.

Ramping up the quarrel, more legislators filed resolutions in both

houses of Congress urging the government to cooperate with the ICC in its investigations on Duterte’s probable crimes against humanity committed in the course of the killings of tens of thousands suspected drug users by his “war on illegal drugs”.

Instead of sticking to his original line that the Philippines is no longer a signatory to the Rome Statute and would not cooperate, Marcos told reporters he wanted Congress to study the possibility of the Philippines’ rejoining the ICC. Solicitor General Menardo Guevarra and Justice Secretary Jesus Crispin Remulla were forced to drop their outright opposition to rejoining the ICC and echoed the new line of possible cooperation.

Not a few pundits have said, not incorrectly, that the ICC issue is the biggest cause of the dissolution of the Marcos-Duterte partnership. However, it’s much more palpable that the combination of all the foregoing incidents and issues, which the people have witnessed, collectively drove the quickest meltdown of what once appeared to be a formidable tandem

Dancing the Cha-cha again

The revived attempt to change the 1987 Constitution, however, has practically become the biggest dispute between the warring camps. Initiated and bankrolled by Romualdez, the charter change drive was initially presented as a “people’s initiative” and promptly challenged by majority of the senators, including those identified to be in the Duterte camp such as Senator Imee Marcos.

The Dutertes now also parade long-time Marcos Jr friend and former executive

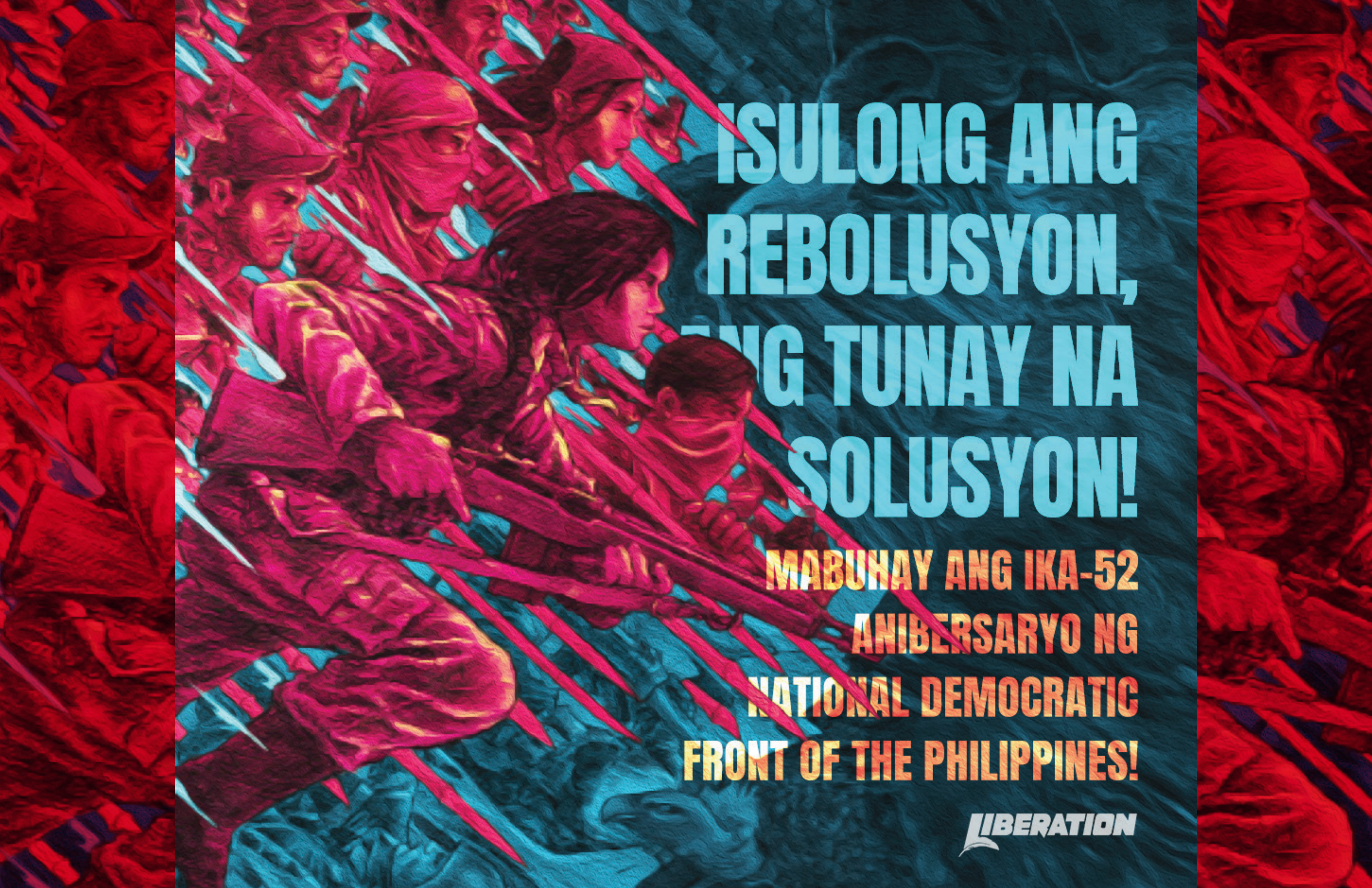
secretary Vic Rodriguez, who goes around the country speaking against ongoing moves to change the constitution.

Rodrigo, who during his presidency had himself attempted charter change, has made known his opposition mainly because it was Romualdez who started the “cha-cha” drive and would benefit the most should term limits of elected public officials be lifted or the current government be changed into parliamentary form to suit Romualdez’s agenda to become Marcos Jr’s successor. It would then prove more difficult for the Dutertes to politically maneuver to pursue their own ambitions.

Meanwhile, both camps have virtually taken over the local social media landscape with their paid vloggers slinging mud to no end at the other camp with mutual accusations of smuggling, drug abuse, corruption, sexual deviancy, puppetry to China or to US imperialism.

And while it is sometimes fun to watch the bureaucrat capitalists going at each other’s throat, the growing section of the Filipino people committed to fundamental political and social change is not keen to find out which faction of the ruling classes would prevail in the reactionary electoral contests. They have long been waging the historical national democratic revolution to bring about the oppressive and exploitative ruling system’s defeat and collapse and pave the path for their own liberation. **LIB**

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