

AT ODDS AND ENDS:

EXPOSING LAPSES IN COMELEC'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2010 ELECTIONS

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PAULINE GIDGET ESTELLA

Eight UP Los Baños (UPLB) students, including Student Regent Charisse Bañez and Perspective Editor-in-Chief (EIC) Arbeen Acuña, appealed to UP President Emerlinda Roman in December to reverse the suspension order issued by the Student Disciplinary Tribunal (SDT) against them, calling the SDT's decision "unjust."

The SDT released the 6-month suspension order on December 9, after Office of Student Affairs (OSA) Director Vivian Gonzales formally charged the UPLB University Student Council (USC) officers for AY 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 with "violat[ing] the provisions of the 1984 UPLB-USC Constitution."

Some of the students also appealed to UPLB Chancellor Luis Velasco and the SDT.

The decision is unfair because "the [hearings] proceeded without our presence and our legal counsel," according to Acuña's letter of appeal addressed to Roman and signed by Bañez.

The other suspended students also appealed separately for Roman to reverse the SDT's decision. No definite date has been set for the release of Roman's decision.

If Roman denies the appeal, the suspension order will take effect immediately.

If suspended, Acuña will be forced to resign as Perspective EIC. The Perspective must hold special editorial exams to select a new EIC who will serve for the rest of the current term.

Meanwhile, the suspension of Bañez would not affect her post as SR because she only needs to be "a student currently enrolled at the time of his/her nomina-

tion," according to Art. III Codified Rules on Student Regent Selection.

Lack of jurisdiction

Bañez was UPLB-USC chairperson for AY 08-09, while Acuña was UPLB-USC councilor during AY 07-08. The other students included in the suspension order, also officers of the UPLB-USC for AY 07-08 and 08-09, are former USC Chair Leo XL Fuentes, Councilors John Mark Violeta, Rye Brozula, and Zeus Fernando, and college representatives Ma. Perpetua Escario and MC Delos Santos.

All of the respondents are members of the progressive political party Samahan ng Kabataan Para sa Bayan, which won all UPLB-USC positions during that 2-year period, except for one slot in 2008 and five slots in 2009.

Gonzales said the USC members failed to release a financial statement by April 7 last year.

The USC should submit to the OSA an audited financial report either for the entire term or for the semester, according to Art. 4, Sec. 9 of the USC constitution. The report should also be "published in any publication widely circulated," according to the same provision.

Also, Gonzales required the USC to release a financial statement in response to rival political party Buklod's complaint, which states that the council violated the UPLB USC constitution when it failed to draft a budget at the start of the term. At the start of the term, the council "shall formulate a budget...[which will] be sent to the [OSA] director for notation," according to the UPLB USC constitution.

However, Bañez said the USC under her term had already released the

report on June 18, before their term ended June 26, 2009. The USC was charged with "failure to release a financial statement, not with the delay in the release," she added.

Also, the SDT has "no jurisdiction over the UPLB-USC since the council's constitution has its own disciplinary measures and processes stipulated therein," Acuña added.

"It is the USC, not the SDT, that should deal with the case because it is [an alleged] breach of the UPLB USC constitution," said Fuentes.

"By breaching the autonomy of the USC, the SDT only showed what measures it could take to cripple progressive student institutions," said Bañez.

Paralyzed operations

The administration issued Acuña's suspension order at a time when the Perspective, which "has always been critical of the UPLB administration," is struggling to resume operations, said Fuentes.

Last semester, no student fees were collected for the operations of the Perspective and the UPLB-USC.

The non-collection was based on a May 8 memorandum issued by Gonzales, who said that the administration would cease collection of student fees to ensure the "full [fiscal] autonomy" of these student institutions.

The collection of fees resumed this semester upon the directive of UP Vice President for Legal Affairs Theodore Te. However, the Perspective has not received the funds because the OSA has yet to approve its budget proposal, said Acuña.

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Walang bago



Abalang nagluluto ng pananghalian si Ruel Pumargoloran, 33, para sa kanyang pamilya sa kahabaan ng V. Mapa St. sa Sta. Mesa, Manila. Ayon sa mga pinakahuling datos mula sa Social Weather Stations, 9.4 milyong pamilya o 54% ng kabuuang bilang ng mga pamilya sa Pilipinas ang itinuturing ang sarili nilang mahirap (Self-Rated Poverty rate). Kaugnay nito ang patuloy na pagtaas ng bilang ng mga walang trabaho (14 milyon, 1Q 2009) at ng mga nagugutom (3.7 milyon, 1Q 2009). "Kahit pa kararating lang ng bagong taon, parang wala pa ring magbabago sa taon na ito," ani Pumargoloran. *Chris Martin Imperial*

Congress ratifies 2010 budget

Student and other groups condemn low social spending

PAULINE GIDGET ESTELLA

Congress ratified last December 18 the P1.5406 trillion national budget for 2010, 400 million less than the P1.541 billion budget originally proposed by Gloria Arroyo, amid criticisms that the budget prioritizes foreign debt service at the expense of basic social services.

The government is operating on a reenacted 2009 budget for January because Arroyo has not yet signed the proposal. On January 17, the budget approved by Congress will take effect with or without Arroyo's signature.

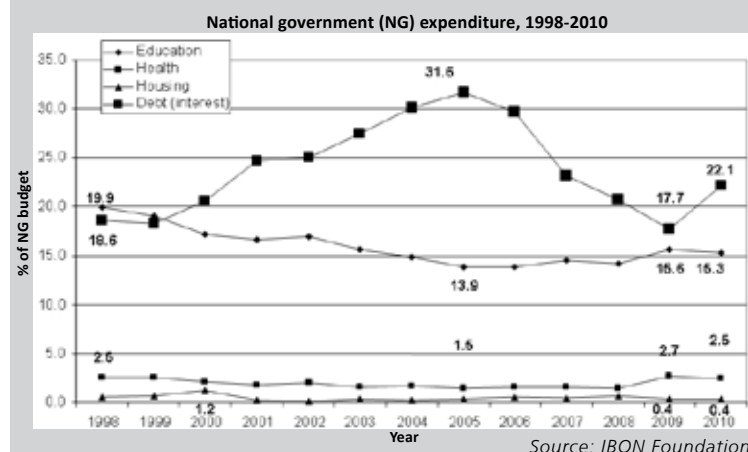
"The 2010 national budget is

designed to stimulate the economy through massive human capital development," said Sen. Edgardo Angara, chairman of Senate Finance Committee, in a December 19 statement.

However, "absolute priority is given to debt service, [taking up] around 20 percent of the total budget, while the percentage for health, education and other services is only around 17 percent," said Sonny Africa, chief economist of independent think-tank IBON Foundation.

"High debt service and low social spending has always been the trend under Arroyo administration since 2001 (see sidebar 1)," he added.

Sidebar 1: Percentage of national budget allotted for debt service and social services from 1998 to 2010



Nominal increase

The P400 million slashed from the 2010 budget represents the Priority Development Assistance Fund or "pork barrel" of Senators Panfilo Lacson and Jamby Madrigal, who waived the allotment during the Senate budget hearing.

The bicameral conference committee also increased the allocations proposed by the House of Representatives (HOR) for the departments of education, public works and highways, land reform, health and social welfare and development (see sidebar 2).

Sidebar 2: Departments with the highest allocations in the 2010 national budget

Department	Allocation (in billions)
Education	185.5
Public works and highways	126.9
Defense	57.7
Agriculture	37.8
Health	30.4
Agrarian reform	20.8
Social welfare and development	15.3

Source: National Expenditure Program Fiscal Year 2010

Although education appears to have the biggest allocation, "the poor state of education with chronic shortages" in classrooms, books and teachers shows how the allocation is inadequate, said Kabataan Partylist Rep. Raymond Palatino.

The increase in the education budget from P169.5 billion in 2009 to P185.5 billion in 2010 is only "nominal" because the national budget also increased by P115 billion, said Vanessa Faye Bolibol, chairperson of the National Union of Students of the Philippines-National Capital Region.

The percentage of the budget allocated for education actually decreased from 15.6 percent in 2009 to 15.3 percent this year, she explained.

Also, the budget allotted for the 112 state universities and colleges (SUCs) in the country decreased by 13 percent, from P24.23 billion last year to P21.03 billion for 2010.

The allocation of capital outlay (CO) for SUCs, or the funds used for infrastructure building, decreased by 99 percent, from P2.93 billion in 2009

to P24.12 million for 2010. UP will not receive any budget for CO for 2010.

The budget allotted for debt servicing, meanwhile, was reduced from P340.8 billion in the HOR version to P276.2 billion. But the "Senate's supposed cuts in debt service are [only] paper cuts...since debt service remains automatically appropriated," said Africa.

Arroyo will only use her veto power to restore the amount deducted from debt service because the administration "wants to please foreign lending institutions," said Africa. The President has "the power to veto any particular item or items in an appropriation," according to Sec. 27 of the constitution.

Last year, Arroyo vetoed the P50 billion realignment by Congress from debt service to infrastructure and social services funds.

"Habang nananatiling misguided ang priorities ng Arroyo administration, the majority of the people will always be at the losing end," said UP Student Regent Charisse Bañez. □

Roman denies Raymundo's appeal for tenure

ABIGAIL C. CASTILLO

UP President Emerlinda Roman denied the appeal for tenure of Sociology Assistant Professor Sarah Raymundo, refusing to reverse Chancellor Sergio Cao's verdict and upholding Sociology Department's decision, despite some faculty members describing the verdict as "cowardly" and "unjust."

Raymundo appealed to Roman on November 16, 2009, after Cao denied her earlier appeal in October 2009 because he found her academic qualifications "insufficient."

Following Roman's denial, Raymundo's last recourse is to submit an appeal to the Board of Regents (BOR), the highest decision-making body in the university.

If the BOR rejects Raymundo's appeal in its next meeting on January 29, she will be officially dismissed as a professor of the Sociology Department.

Roman denied Raymundo's appeal based on the results of a December 16 referendum by the Sociology Department, held at the UP President's request, on the question "Do you recommend the grant of tenure to Prof. Sarah Jane Raymundo?" The tenured faculty voted 4-6, with the majority against granting tenure.

"Considering the consensus of the Sociology Department as expressed [in the referendum] and in the interest of upholding the autonomy of the department," Roman said in the De-

partment 18 memorandum denying Raymundo's appeal.

"The implications of asking the [UP] President and the Board of Regents (BOR)... to substitute their judgment for that of the members of the faculty of a department... may transform a purely academic function into a political exercise," Roman added.

However, the "departmental autonomy" defense raised by Roman was merely justification of the Sociology Department's "flawed decision," said Prof. Michael Andrada, co-convenor of the Alliance Rights of Untenured U.P. Faculty (RUUP Faculty).

It is not the duty of the UP President to uphold a departmental decision if it is "unjust," Andrada said.

Inconsistencies

The referendum ordered by Roman was the Sociology Department's third vote on Raymundo's tenureship.

Raymundo garnered a decisive majority in the first vote, held on May 2008, with 7-3 votes in favor of her tenure. However, the minority who voted against tenure sent a report to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (OVCAA), and VCAA Lorna Paredes returned the department's tenureship recommendation to the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy (CSSP).

The department held another meeting on March 2009 to vote again on Raymundo's application. Five voted in favor of tenure, four against it, one abstained and one waived the decision

for a year.

Based on the second vote, the department could not recommend tenure because Raymundo's application failed to garner two-thirds of the votes cast, said Dr. Randolph David, chairperson of the Sociology Department.

The "sudden surfacing of a two-thirds rule is questionable," said Akbayan party list representative Walden Bello, also a former tenured faculty member of the Sociology Department. "In my more than 10 years of teaching in the department, when the majority [supports a] person, that is enough to [secure] tenure," he added.

Raymundo sent a letter of appeal to Chancellor Sergio Cao in June 2009, questioning the decision of the department not to uphold the results of the first voting, where she garnered two-thirds of the total votes.

Cao denied her appeal, saying that her academic qualifications are not enough to "tip the balance" in her favor.

'Insufficient qualifications'

The CSSP adheres to the minimum requirements for tenure in the UP Faculty Manual: a master's degree, a satisfactory teaching performance, and sole or lead authorship of a published work. Other colleges may impose stricter requirements, according to the UP Faculty manual.

Raymundo exceeded the CSSP's academic requirements for tenure. She "fully satisfied the academic requirements for tenure implemented in her own department and college, a fact that [has] never [been] questioned," said the Rights of Untenured UP Faculty (RUUP) alliance in a statement.

In his October 28 memorandum, however, Cao compared Raymundo with a College of Science (CS) faculty member, whose denial of tenure by the CS Department he reversed because of the CS professor's "exceptional academic qualifications." Raymundo's qualifications are not at par with those

of the CS faculty member, Cao said.

"There should have been no comparison, unless the chancellor is of the view that the CSSP's standards are inferior to those of the CS," Raymundo said.

Cao's decision only shows that the "issue of [Raymundo's] tenureship [has been] politicized," said Bello.

"The allegations of breach of professional ethics and the use of technicalities are only attacks [against] my progressive political commitments and organizational affiliations," said Raymundo.

Raymundo is the Secretary-General of the Congress of Teachers/Educators for Nationalism and Democracy, which Andrada described as an organization known for its "progressive" advocacies.

The decision-making in Raymundo's tenure application shows that "academic freedom in the university is really a myth [and that tenureship] boils down to parochial politics," Andrada said. □

Angeles, Roman delay appointment of PGH director

Sectoral regents slam 'abuse of power'

MARJOHARA TUCAY

Despite his election on December 18 last year by the Board of Regents (BOR), the highest policy-making body of the university, the appointment of incoming Philippine General Hospital (PGH) Director Jose Gonzales was delayed due to a pending protest filed by one of the regents.

On January 5, UP President Emerlinda Roman issued a memorandum delaying the official appointment of Gonzales and appointing UP Manila Chancellor Ramon Arcadio as officer-in-charge of PGH, citing concerns about the BOR selection process raised by Regent Abraham Sarmiento.

The memorandum was rescinded after a January 6 meeting between BOR Chair Emmanuel Angeles, Roman, Gonzales, Staff Regent Clodualdo Cabrera and some All-UP Workers Alliance officers, where Angeles announced that Gonzales would be appointed without further delay.

Angeles also apologized for the confusion caused by the delay of the appointment, said All-UP Workers Union National President Noli Anoo.

The BOR had selected Gonzales, who served as a senior surgeon of the PGH Department of Surgery, over Dr. Carmelo Alfiler, who has served for two terms as PGH director, from 2003 to 2009.

The board's vote on the PGH directorship was split 5-5. Five voted for Alfiler, namely: President Roman, Regents Francis Chua, Nelia Gonzales, Sarmiento, and Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar.

Meanwhile, five regents voted for Gonzales, namely: Cabrera, Student Regent (SR) Charisse Bañez, Alumni Regent Alfredo Pascual, Sen. Manuel Roxas II, and Faculty Regent Judy Taguiwalo.

Commission on Higher Education and BOR Chair Emmanuel Angeles broke the tie by voting for Gonzales. The BOR chair only participates in the voting when there is a draw.

After Gonzales garnered the majority of the board's vote, Sarmiento asserted that he would file a protest challenging the participation of Regent Bañez in the selection process.

Student participation

In the December BOR meet, several regents questioned Bañez's eligibility to participate in the selection process, said Taguiwalo.

In a December 15 letter to Roman, UP Los Baños Chancellor Luis Velasco had noted that Bañez cannot be considered a student as she has neither enrolled nor applied for residency.

"Considering the information given by the UPLB... that the incumbent SR is not enrolled during the second semester, even for the purposes of residency... would be a ground to declare the position vacant," said Vice President for Legal Affairs Theodore Te in a December 17 memorandum.

However, Bañez said she has already completed all the units required for her course, and will be filing a leave of absence (LOA) from UPLB this week.

Article IX Section 2 of the Codified Rules for Student Regent Selection states that "the Student Regent-select is advised to file an LOA to devote his/her time [to] the fulfillment of his/her duties and responsibilities."

According to Cabrera, Roman suggested that Bañez be given "observer status" for the December BOR meet, letting her join the session without allowing her to vote. However, the regents voted 5-4 in favor of granting Bañez voting powers.

'Abuse of power'

It is customary for the BOR to release its appointments right after each meeting, but no appointments were issued on December 18, including that of the new PGH Director, Taguiwalo said.

On January 4, the BOR's new appointments were released, but Roman said that Angeles advised her to delay Gonzales' appointment pending the board's discussion of Sarmiento's protest. She also consulted with the other regents, Roman said.

In her January 5 memorandum withholding Gonzales' appointment, Roman explained that the delay would "...allow the Board to consider Chairman [Angeles'] advice and to be able to deliberate on Regent Sarmiento's protest."

In a statement released on the same day, the three sectoral regents ques-

tioned Roman's memorandum, saying, "This memorandum cannot supersede a BOR decision and is therefore in direct defiance of the BOR. President Roman cannot fill up a position that is not vacant."

"Ang isyu dito ay ang usapin ng demokratikong pamamalakad sa loob ng unibersidad at kung paano ginagamit ng mga nasa pudes ang kanilang kapangyarihan para ibalewala ang desisyon na hindi consistent sa kagustuhan nila," Taguiwalo said.

Appointment still uncertain

On January 7, as hospital employees and students protested Roman's memorandum, the formal appointment papers for Gonzales arrived. Later that afternoon, Arcadio administered the oath-taking of Gonzales as the new PGH director.

"It's sad to say that politics is clearly affecting us. But that's water under the bridge now... We need to work together," Gonzales said. He will begin working on the hospital's financial system audit once he is formally installed as PGH director, he added.

The annual allocation for PGH has remained at P1 billion since 1998, leading to nearly P160 million debt in unpaid bills alone last year — P127 million for electricity with Meralco and P32 million for water with Maynilad.

"Hindi kailangan ng PGH ng dagdag na pasanin ng pamumulitika. Ang kailangan natin ay bagong lider na makatutulong na gawing tunay na ospital ng bayan ang PGH," Anoo said.

The BOR is set to deliberate on Sarmiento's protest in their meeting at the UP Open University on January 29. □

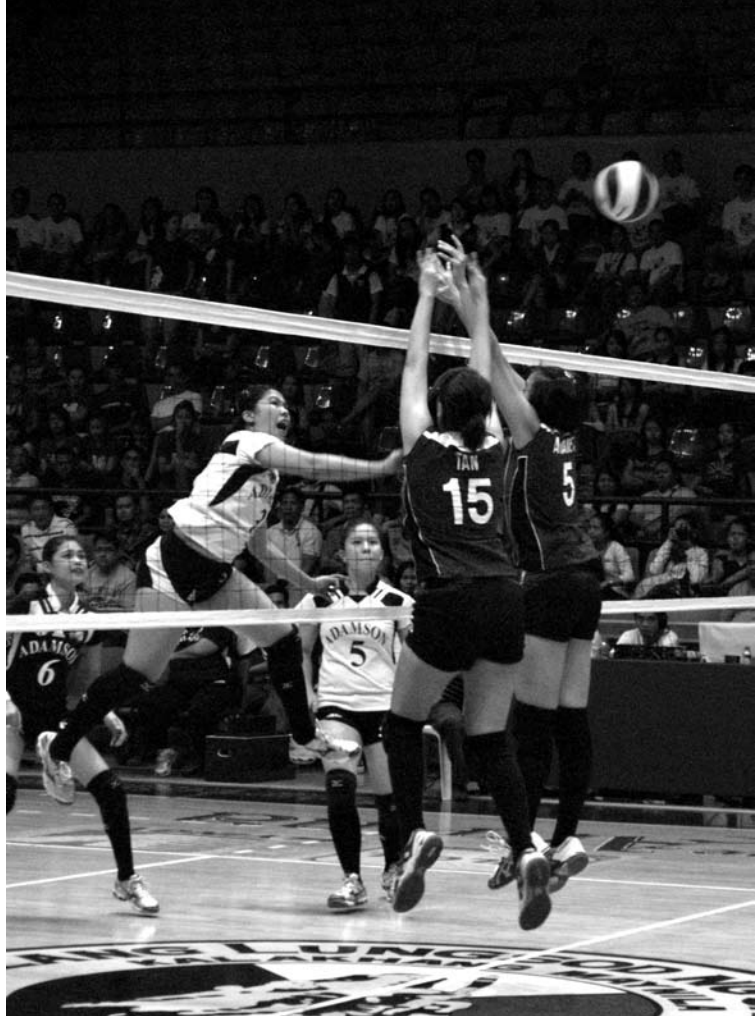
SR... from pg 2

According to Te's August 23, 2009 memorandum, the Perspective and UPLB administration should first draft an interim agreement before OSA signs the publication's budget proposal. No agreement has been reached yet.

The Perspective may not afford to hold examinations to select a new EIC given the lack of finances, said Acuña.

"The UPLB administration has again crafted policies of student repression. The students should assert their democratic rights [despite such] policies," said Bañez. □

Wiped out



□Lady Maroons Toni Tan and Angeli Araneta attempts to block a spike made by Jill Gustilo from the Adamson Falcons at a Women's Volleyball match held at the FIOIL Flying V Arena in San Juan on January 10. The match ended within 3 sets, 19-25, 25-27, 18-25, with AdU handing UP its 5th loss in the season. *Chris Martin Imperial*



PAOLO C.
BALAJADIA

Walang Katapusan

Nararamdaman ko na, bilang na mga araw ko bilang estudyante sa Unibersidad. Bukod sa mga batchmate kong nauna nang umalis at mga kaklaseng kasabayan ko ring dapat nang lumisan sa pagtatapos ng semestre na ito, sumama na ang nanay ko sa pagtatanong kung sa wakas ay gragradweyt na nga ako.

Gusto niya raw umuwi dito sa Pilipinas, at ang tanging maipapaalam niya para payagan siya ng kanyang amo sa Amerika ay ang pagdalo sa martsa ko sa graduation.

At kung hindi man nang-aasar ang nanay ko, dinagdagan pa niya ang pang pressure sa akin na makatapos ngayong Marso. Ako ang kauna-unahan niyang anak na magtatapos, at hindi rin pwedeng maliitin na sa UP pa ako nag-aaral. Wala na raw siyang ibang hihilingin pa kung hindi makita ang produkto ng pinaghirapan niya ng higit sa 15 taon, mula sa pagtungtong ko sa elementarya, hanggang sa pagtatapos ko ngayong kolehiyo.

Sapat na raw ang pagmartsa ko bilang bayad sa lahat ng hirap na dinanas niya para mapag-aral ako.

Sa totoo lang, wala naman akong problema na ibigay ang kahilingan na ito sa nanay ko. Minsan ko na nga lang siya mapasaya, ipagkakait ko pa. Kung ako lang ang masusunod, gusto ko ring magtapos at magmartsa ngayong Marso. Ang kaso, katulad ng maraming bagay na nagbabago, batbat ang prosesong ito ng kawalang katiyakan.

Hindi ko alam kung anong grado ang ibibigay sa akin ng mga propesor ko. Hindi katiyakan ang hindi paglagpas sa anim na pagliban sa klase, pagpasa ng mga iilang exams at requirements para mabigyan ka ng pasadong marka.

Wala ring katiyakan kung matatapos ko ang thesis o kung may kakayanan nga ba talaga akong matapos ito. Malaking oras at pera ang kailangang ilaan para dito, at parehong wala ako noon dahil hindi ako pwedeng umalis sa trabaho kong kasalukuyang bumubuhay sa akin. Magawan ko man ng paraan na mapagsabay ang paggawa ng thesis at pagtrabaho, halos wala na akong mapipiga mula sa maliit kong kinikita para ipanggastos sa gagawin kong thesis.

Mismong ang pagtatapos ay lumilikha ng mga tagpo na walang katiyakan. Saan ako pupunta pagkatapos kong grumadweyt? Gusto ko nga ba talagang magtrabaho? Kung oo, may trabaho nga ba talagang naghihintay sa akin na mapapasukan ko? Sabagay, hindi pa naman nawawala ang mga opening sa mga call center. Di na baleng engineering ang tatapusan kong kurso, madali lang namang kalimutan at purgahin mula sa utak ang lahat ng natutunan tungkol sa kasamaan ng kasalukuyang kalakaran.

Kung ano man ang aking kahahantungan, wala itong ibang isisiwalat maliban sa mga umiiral na kontradiksiyon sa paligid ko. Pagtuklas na lamang ito ng kung ano ang magtatagumpay. □

Demolisyon sa Pook Ricarte sinimulan na

18 kabahayan giniba, 80 iba pa nakatakdang isunod

ABIGAIL C. CASTILLO

Matapos ang mahigit isang dekadang pagpapaliban at tatlong taong negosasyon, sinimulan na ang demolisyon sa Zone C Pook Ricarte, Brgy. UP Campus, kaugnay ng C-5 Road Extension Project.

Simula Enero 2, labingwalong kabahayan ang giniba, habang 80 iba pa ang nakatakdang isunod sa humigit kumulang 5,000 metro kuwadrong lupain.

Nag-alok ng kabayaran ang Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) para sa halos 100 pamilyang maaapektuhan ng demolisyon. Babayaran umano ang mga residente batay sa halaga ng materyales na ginamit sa pagpapagawa ng kanilang mga bahay.

Ayon sa DPWH, nagkakahalaga ng halos P19 milyong ang lahat ng kabahayan na masasama sa demolisyon. Ibibigay ang kabayaran sa mga residente sa pamamagitan ng Northern Builders, ang kompanyang nakakuha ng kontrata sa pag-sasaayos ng kalsada.

Patuloy namang humihiling ang mga apektadong residente sa lokal na pamahalaan na magkaroon ng isang medium rise building sa Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System bilang relokasyon, subalit hindi pa rin ito ipinagkaloob sa kasalukuyan.

Giniba kaagad sa loob ng limang araw ang mga bahay ng mga residenteng piniling tumanggap ng kabayaran, subalit hindi pinahintulutan ang mga residente na kunin ang mga natirang materyales mula sa ginibang mga bahay, ani Leonardo Cruz, tagapangulo ng Ugnayan Kapitbahayan sa Pook Ricarte.

Binayaran na umano ng DPWH bilang "replacement cost" ang mga materyales ng mga ginibang bahay, kaya nararapat na kunin ito ng kagawaran upang mabilang at maisumite sa Commission on Audit, saad ni DPWH Regional Director Edilberto Tayao sa isang liham.

Dagdag ni Cruz, tinatayang 70 porsyento lamang ng kabuuang halaga ng istrukturang giniba ang natanggap ng mga pamilya, habang nakabinbin pa ang 30 porsyento ng kabayaran.

Tiniyak naman umano ng DPWH na matanggap ng mga residente ang 30 porsyentong nalalabing kabayaran sa oras na matapos ang demolisyon sa lugar, ani Isabelita Gravides, punong

barangay ng UP Campus.

Sa pulong noong Enero 5 sa pagitan ng mga residente ng Pook Ricarte, opisyal ng DPWH at lokal na pamahalaan, ipinahayag umano ng DPWH na itutuloy ang paggiba sa mga bahay kahit wala pang tiyak na plano hinggil sa relokasyon, ani Lulubelle Gaan, kalihim ng Samahang Area for Priority Development.

Aniya, nararapat na habaan pa ng lokal na pamahalaan ang palugit sa mga residente sapagkat hindi pa naipagkaloob ang kanilang mga kahilingan hinggil sa relokasyon.

Sapilitan namang gigibain ang mga bahay ng mga residenteng hindi tatanggap ng kabayaran at mananatili sa lupang kinatitirikan ng kanilang mga kabahayan, ani Tayao.

Ayon sa Republic Act No. 7279 o Urban De-

velopment and Housing Act of 1992, nararapat na magkaroon ng relokasyon o pansamantalang malilipatan ang mga residenteng maaapektuhan ng demolisyon. Kailangang bigyan din ng 45 araw na abiso ang mga residente bago gibain ang mga istruktura.

Nagbigay umano noong 2009 ang Department of Budget and Management ng Special Allotment Release Order (SARO) na nagkakahalagang P100 milyon para sa pabahay ng mga residenteng maaapektuhan ng demolisyon, ani Cruz.

Aniya, kailangan munang i-"realign" ang SARO upang magamit, sapagkat nagkaroon ng pagbabago sa plano kung saan hindi kasama ang mga taga-Zone C sa makikinabang sa SARO.

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Urging on



Members of different sectors and media groups hold a protest action in front Camp Crame in Quezon City on January 13. Demanding justice and calling for continued vigilance as the trial of Andal Ampatuan Jr. drags on, the protesters also demanded for a live coverage of the trial to ensure transparency and dispel fears of a cover-up. *Om Narayan Velasco*

Bisperas ng palabas

Tala ng paghahanda sa halalan

MARJOHARA TUCAY

Maingay. Magulo. Marahas. Nagsimula na ang palabas. Sa dyaryo, radyo at telebisyon, walang patid ang panawagan ng mga kandidato sa saliw ng samu't saring tugtugin at sayaw.

Nakikisabay din sa indayog ang Commission on Elections (Comelec), na patuloy pa rin ang pagproseso sa mga listahan ng rehistradong botante, mga kandidato at pagsubok sa mga gagamiting makina para sa kauna-unahang automated elections sa bansa.

Simula pa lamang ng election period, may mga biktima na ng pandarahas. Patuloy din ang pag-akyat ng bilang ng mga napapaslang dahil sa halalan. Pinakamalala dito ang Ampatuan Massacre noong Nobyembre 23.

Ipakikita ng mga sumusunod na numero kung anong uri ng halalan ang maaasahan sa darating na Mayo:

Botante

Kabuuang bilang ng Pilipinong may edad 18 pataas, batay sa pagtaya ng National Statistics Office (NSO) gamit ang resulta ng 2000 population census: **mahigit 57 milyon**

Bilang ng mga rehistradong botante noong halalan 2007: **mahigit 45 milyon**

Bilang ng mga rehistradong botante hanggang Oktubre 31 2009, ayon sa tala ng Comelec: **mahigit 50 milyon**

Bilang ng araw na dapat idagdag sa registration period bilang pagtalima sa kautusan ng Korte Suprema: **26**

Bilang ng araw na aktwal na idinagdag ng

Comelec para sa voter registration:

lima

Bilang ng opisina ng Comelec sa buong bansa kung saan maaaring magparehistro: **mahigit 200**

Bilang ng botanteng pinayagan ng Comelec na makapagparehistro sa bawat araw ng extended registration: **150 hanggang 200**

Bilang ng mga botanteng humabol sa pagparehistro sa limang araw na extended registration: **258,691**

Bilang ng karagdagang balotang ipapaimprenta ng Comelec para sa mga huling nagpatala: **wala**

Bilang ng Pilipinong nasa legal na edad na hindi nakapagparehistro bagaman nagkaroon ng extended registration, batay sa datos ng Comelec: **halos pitong milyon**

Tinatayang bilang ng kabataang first-time voters na nakapagparehistro para sa halalan 2010: **mahigit tatlong milyon**

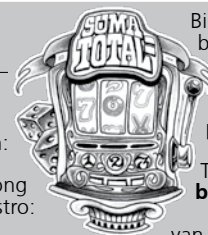
Tinatayang bilang ng kabataang first-time voters na hindi nakapagparehistro para sa darating na halalan, ayon sa Kabataan Party list: **mahigit apat na milyon**

Bilang ng presintong pinagdadausan ng mga nakaraang halalan: **342,075**

Bilang ng botante sa bawat presinto sa mga nakaraang halalan: **hanggang 200**

Bilang ng presinto na itatalaga sa buong bansa matapos pagsamahin ang ibang mga presinto para sa automated polls: **75,471**

Bilang ng botanteng itatalaga sa bawat presinto: **hanggang 1,000**



Bilang ng PCOS machine na ilalagay sa bawat presinto: **1**

Bilang ng PCOS machine na binili ng Comelec mula sa Smartmatic-TIM para sa halalan: **82,200**

Halagang ibinayad sa Smartmatic-TIM para sa mga PCOS machine: **P7.2 bilyon**

Bilang ng PCOS machine na kasalukuyan nang nasa bansa: **7,200**

Panahon na nalalabi sa Smartmatic-TIM upang maipadala ang lahat ng PCOS machine sa bansa: **halos isang buwan**

Oras na itatagal ng baterya ng isang PCOS machine sakaling mawalan ng kuryente, ayon sa Smartmatic-TIM: **16**

Bilang ng generator na ilalaan ng Comelec para sa Halalan 2010 sakaling mawalan ng kuryente at maubos ang baterya ng PCOS machine: **isa sa bawat lungsod at bayan**

Bilang ng balotang hindi nabilang ng PCOS machine sa unang pagsubok dito noong Enero 6: **570 sa 600 sample ballots**

Bilang ng Pilipinong walang alam sa paggamit ng PCOS machine o ng kahit ano ukol sa poll automation, ayon sa Pulse Asia: **isa sa bawat lima**

Bahagdan ng Pilipinong may alam sa poll automation na naniniwalang hindi nito masasagot ang pandaraya sa eleksyon, ayon sa IBON Foundation: **halos 57 porsyento**

Kandidato

Kabuuang bilang ng posisyon sa gobyerno, lokal at pambansa, na bukas para sa eleksyon: **17,888**

Bilang ng nagpasa ng Certificate of Candidacy

Sundan sa pg10

The clock seems stuck on 11:45 pm. Around me, the world whirrs in anticipation. The past year for me unfolded like a train at full speed, bouncing off the rails at every increasingly massive hitch. Bridges were burned, relationships damaged, promises were broken. If there was ever a time for looking back and regretting, that would be now, in between the dying year and the one yet to be born, but I've decided to drown that moment in cups of spiked New Year's juice.

11:47 pm. The last handful of minutes scrape by, desperately hanging on to 2009.

I choose instead to leave the past in the past and look forward to the future. The magic of New Year's Eve is in its potential. Through the fireworks, the barrage of noise and smoke, 365 days' worth of possibilities stretch out in front of me. I make a mental list of resolutions for the coming year—starting with not repeating the mistakes I made in the past.

As 2009 draws to a close, so does the first decade of the new millennium. Endings always necessitate beginnings and beginnings present an opportunity to forget the past.

No matter how bad the past years have been, and although no one knows what the next ten years will hold, we start every new year hoping for the best.

Depression begins to settle while I gradually get drunk and watch the local news channel list the best and worst of 2009. Most of the year's events fall under the latter category. Caught in between sobriety and the other side, my mind throws up an uninvited quote from long-dead Italian political theorist Antonio Gramsci: "This crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear."

I remind myself of what periods of interregnum are: strictly speaking, it happens when a king or regent has died and the next one has yet to claim the throne. In a world almost rid of monarchies however, the word can refer to a change in both politics and culture. I could not help but agree that these are moments of uncertainty. No one is sure of the shape of the immediate future.

In the past year, I saw many symptoms of the coming change. Early last year, Barack Obama became the first black man to helm the world's sole remaining superpower. World leaders have intensified the discussion on climate change. Across the globe, lesbians, bisexuals, gays, and transgendered are experiencing more freedom than ever. All around the world, viewpoints are shifting, priorities are changing. This is the bright, shiny future science fiction writers have promised us, sans the hover crafts.

As we await the future, we saw 2009 end a great many things. 1970's American icons Michael Jackson and Farrah Fawcett both died, ending the spirit of the hippie era in my mind. Locally, the Eraserheads performed their final concert after rapper Francis Magalona's death—closing a chapter of my 1990's power OPM youth. The former president Corazon Aquino also died, triggering a surge of People Power nostalgia.

In the wake of these endings, we say goodbyes to our idols and look to each other for someone who can take their place. We claim still-living personalities as the spiritual successors of so-and-so, wallowing in collective nostalgia and denying the future a chance to prove itself. The power of the past is in our recollection, in how we behold these icons as products of their own time, de-

finied by their own struggles. At the same time, the past serves as the foundation on which we can build the future.

Easing into the future, however, is neither simple nor painless. On the wall, the clock is stubbornly on 11:53 whereas I have lost count of my drinks. The old system clings tenuously, unwilling to give way to the new without a fight.

Minutes before 2010, the TV continues to list down the notable events of 2009, nearly every month pockmarked with national she-

stand against the passing of the Reproductive Health bill. Until the future stabilizes with a clearly defined system, we will all be stuck in the space between, in a never-ending period of interregnum.

Presently, the future remains unclear. At the heart of this period of upheaval is a populace engaged in a waiting game, choosing to stay stationary while the old systems and new values struggle for dominance. However, for as long as only a percentage of people choose

The power of the past is in our recollection, in how we behold these icons as products of their own time, defined by their own struggles

nanigans. A montage sequence of last year's headlines flash onscreen: the arrest of the Alabang Boys for drug possession, alleged rape victim Nicole's recantation of her testimony, the Hayden Kho sex video scandal, the H1N1 flu pandemic, typhoon Ondoy and Pepeng's back-to-back thrashing of Luzon, the Maguindanao Massacre, and the imposition and lifting of Martial Law in Maguindanao.

If Gramsci is to be believed, the unstable nature of society is due to the clashing of the old and new—old systems and new values, the dominant and the emergent. For every Filipino aspiring for change in the nation, there is a presidential candidate whose campaign strategies are oiled by the same traditional politics. For every woman seeking to be the masters of their own bodies, there is a minister who will

to actively shape their future, the interregnum overstays its welcome, drawing out more and more morbid symptoms of the times.

The minutes turn into seconds. In a moment, it will be 2010. Outside the house, the street is already filled with noise, people celebrating, and fireworks ready to shoot skywards. The reporters on the TV are counting down to midnight. It is a waiting game and I'm well on past tipsy.

Tomorrow, when the smoke clears and the street sweepers curse the piles of firecracker litter, I will be no better than I am tonight. Even perhaps after the 2010 elections, and a new leader takes the place of the old, nothing will ever truly be new. No real change can be achieved overnight. But we hope, because it's the thing to do on New Year's Eve. □



Hiatus and Limbo Between Transitions

Article: Mix Villalon
Illustration: Miguel Punzalan

AT ODDS AND ENDS:

EXPOSING LAPSES IN COMELEC'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2010 ELECTIONS

*** ARTICLE: MIRA POLINAR *** ILLUSTRATION: NICO ZAPATA ***

Democracy necessitates that political power must reside with the people. With the country's current conditions wherein the people are rendered powerless, however, elections may be the only option left for them to reacquire power. Elections become the only opportunity for the people to exercise the power to govern themselves.

The Commission on Elections (Comelec), the institution tasked to protect the right to vote, must then ensure that elections run smoothly and cleanly, from registration of voters, canvassing of results, to the declaration of winners.

Track record

Created after a constitutional amendment in 1940, the Comelec was established after claims that its predecessor, the Executive Bureau, held favors with the incumbent administration. The Bureau was under the Department of the Interior and the close ties between its secretary

and the president at that time triggered suspicions of political patronage.

As an independent institution, the Comelec supposedly favors no one, thus giving fair chances to all parties. The scandals Comelec officials were involved in under the Arroyo administration, however, imply otherwise.

voters as possible. Comelec limited the number of new registrants to 200 per day in some areas such as Iloilo city. Also, only first time voters were accommodated during the registration, to the detriment of many voters seeking transfer or renewal of registration. In effect, the number of late registrants only amounted to 258,691.

Recently, Comelec has issued another imprudent statement that late registrants will only be "chance passengers," that is, they can only vote if extra ballots are left. According to KPL, the Comelec's reluctance in conducting the extended registration and the new registrants' "chance passer status" lowered the turnout.

A petition was also filed by absentee voters to extend voters registration by 28 more days as the length of their registration was short of four months compared to the Philippines. The petition is currently being reviewed. However, according to Commissioner Armando Velasco, if the petition was approved, it will be difficult to implement such changes since "the national registry of absentee voting has already been finalized," he reasons. Of the 50,086,054 registered voters this election, 589,930 are absentee voters.

Behind schedule

As election day nears, the Comelec continues to encounter logistical problems related to automation. For instance, only ten percent of the 82,200 precinct count optical scan (PCOS) machines have arrived as of December 30 when, according to the Comelec schedule, 17 percent of the machines should have arrived by now. Comelec has also been advised by House Speaker Prospero Nograles to resort to partial automation as training and orientation for the teachers who will help in the automated elections have not yet been launched.

Also, the actual ballot size of 8.5 by 30 inches has not yet been tested, explains Prof. Pablo Manalastas, research fellow at the Center for People Empowerment in Governance, in a forum. Comelec also disregarded Section 7 of Automated Elections System law saying that the PCOS machine should "provide the voter a system of verification to find out

MORE THAN COLLATERAL:

THE TRAGIC COST OF THE MAGUINDANAO MASSACRE

*** ARTICLE: SAMANTHA KING *** ILLUSTRATION: MIGUEL PUNZALAN ***

His face is a mask of apathy; exhibiting no remorse as the string of murder changes is read out to him.

Last January 5, Andal Ampatuan Jr., one of the prime suspects of the November 23 massacre in Maguindanao, appeared for his first day of trial in Camp Crame, Quezon City. During the trial, Ampatuan pleaded not guilty to all accounts of his involvement in the carnage. Unable to make any progress because of Ampatuan's denials, the hearing was adjourned until January 13.

Though the senior Ampatuan and several other relatives have also been accused of involvement in the massacre, they are yet to be incriminated, and have likewise denied any part in the incident. Furthermore, reports of special treatment for the detained Ampatuans reveal that despite the charges against them, the Ampatuans are still granted amenities like the use of mobile phones and catered meals, which are prohibited for detainees facing murder raps.

Meanwhile, families of the victims as well as members of the media continue to seek social justice for this gross violation of human rights. Indeed, for Reynafe Momay—daughter of slain Midland Review (MR) photographer, Reynaldo "Bebot" Momay—the swift hand of justice cannot strike fast enough.

Reminiscent

The fifth of six siblings, Bebot was born in Iloilo on January 18, 1948. Shortly after his birth, Bebot's fam-

PNP crime lab—suggested a DNA test to verify the body once and for all. Last November 28, DNA samples from Bebot's siblings were sent to the crime lab, with the promise of results after 20 days.

Though more than 20 days have passed, however, Reynafe and her relatives have yet to receive conclusive results about the corpse's identity.

Unrestrained

Bebot's story is echoed by the many others whose lives have been shattered by the entrenched culture of political warlordism in Mindanao. Aside from the civilian casualties, 30 journalists and their staff were murdered in what is considered the world's deadliest single attack on media workers. Indeed, where wealth and power are monopolized by the ruling clan, political authority has less to do with protecting people's welfare than using violence to stay in power.

"In Muslim Mindanao, political authority is a terrain that needs to be seized to ensure control" writes Prof. Francisco Lara Jr. of the London School of Economics Crisis States Research Center. "Political office also enables the power to extort money from those engaged in the lucrative business of illegal drugs, gambling, gun-running, and smuggling, among others."

According to a paper by policy think-tank Center for People Empowerment in Governance, the Ampatuans are only one of the 300 or so political clans in the country, with

Indeed, where wealth and power are monopolized by the ruling clan, political authority has less to do with protecting people's welfare than using violence to stay in power

lahat ng balahibo ko 'nun."

The following day, Reynafe and her relatives set out for Koronadal, South Cotabato, where the first batch of cadavers had arrived. "Pinasukan ko ang mga funeral homes, tiningnan ko lahat ng katawan," says Reynafe. "Hindi ko alam kung mai-

warlordism extending from the lowest levels of the barangay to the highest stations of office in Malacañang.

The implications of the massacre in Maguindanao reveal the link which nurtured this culture of impunity in the first place. As a close ally of the Arroyo administration, the Ampat-

For instance, Virgilio Garcillano, Comelec commissioner in 2004, was implicated in rigging the election results for Gloria Arroyo. In 2008, Benjamin Abalos, former Comelec chairman, allegedly helped in the negotiations for the anomalous ZTE Broadband deal along with Gloria and Mike Arroyo. The president's selection and appointment of the seven commissioners is also hounded with suspicions, as only two of them have conducted national elections.

The people's right to vote is further violated as numerous cases of electoral violence are unresolved. In 2007, 224 incidents of election-related violence occurred,

according to the Institute for Political and Electoral Reform. Fraudulent acts such as vote-buying and candidate violations of the election code are also often not investigated.

"We are not aware of anyone who has successfully been prosecuted," says Atty. Carlos

partylists claimed that Comelec used "double standards," calling the decision unjust.

The Comelec received more criticism as it disenfranchised seven million new voters for setting the deadline of voters' registration to October 31, instead of 120 days prior to the elections as prescribed in the Voters Registration Act of 1996.

As such, Kabataan Partylist (KPL) filed a petition for the extension of voters' registration to January 9, which was upheld by the Supreme Court. The extended registration, however, was held for only five days

because the Comelec insisted that the rest of the days be allotted for preparations related to registration.

Furthermore, the shortened extension period was not maximized to accommodate as many

whether or not the machine has registered his choice."

Moreover, critics of the automated elections speculate that numerous forms of cheating could surface during election period. For one, the computers receiving the election returns might be stolen during the transmission. Security keys provided to operate the PCOS machines can also be subjected to tampering. Finally, failure of elections could result in areas where election results fail to reach the designated computers because of clogged transmission lines.

Aside from the technical preparations, the voting population has to be oriented on the automated elections, something which the Comelec has not yet conducted. Orientations are necessary as not all the voters are familiar with the PCOS machines. Indeed, more preparations such as the printing of ballots, training of Comelec officers and conducting more field tests are yet to be done.

Four months are left before election day. The Comelec's unjust policies and flawed

preparations for the 2010 elections and its unresolved string of scandals in the previous years show the institution's failure in fulfilling its mandate as protector of the ballot. Its insistence to hold automated elections under loose preparations shows that for the sake of the speedy counting of election returns, it is willing to sacrifice the people's right to

vote. □

ily relocated to Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat, where his father worked as a driver, and where the Momay family has resided ever since.

Mild-mannered yet adventurous, Bebot was the constant crowd favorite, even in adulthood. "Lahat halos close kay Papa," says Reynafe. "Siya ang buhay ng grupo, ng pamilya." Reynafe shares that even though her parents have long been separated, her father has never forgotten their birthdays, and would always make it a point to call.

"Hindi siya perfect father, maraming siyang pagkukulang... iniwan niya kami ni Mama, hindi rin siya ang nagpalaki sa akin," says Reynafe. "Pero marunong siya magpakumbaba. Alam niyang nagkulang siya."

Over the years, after investing

ans were crucial in securing the contentious votes needed for Arroyo to win the 2004 elections. In exchange, the Ampatuan's have seen a phenomenal rise to power, residing in luxury amidst an environment of poverty, and having amassed caches of firearms and a private army—seemingly under Malacanang's nose.

As long as the hold of political clans remains unbroken, the vicious cycle of violence in the country will continue, with more people like Bebot and his family caught in the crossfire. Though the events of November 23

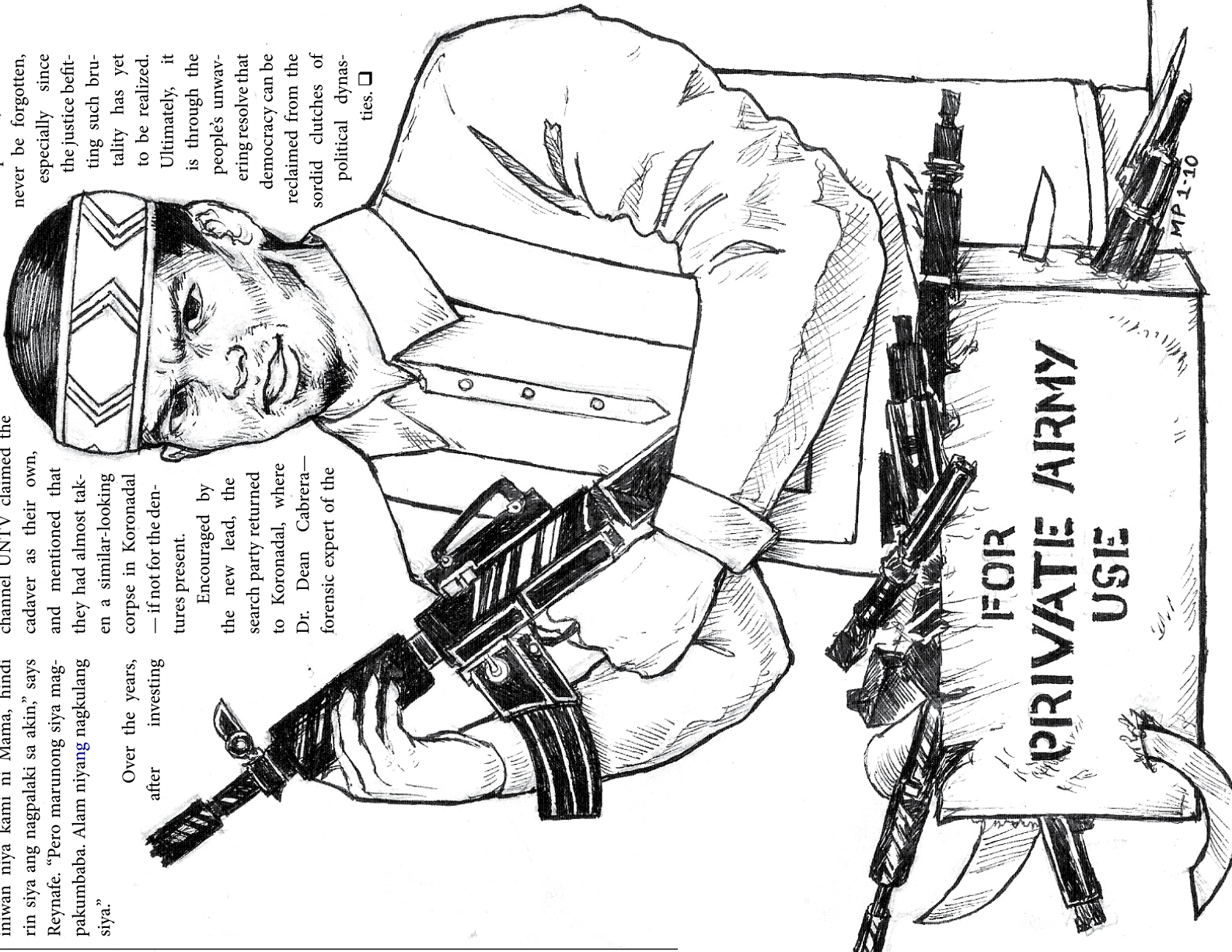
have since passed, it must never be forgotten, especially since the justice befitting such brutality has yet to be realized. Ultimately, it is through the people's unwaivering resolve that democracy can be reclaimed from the sordid clutches of political dynasties. □

iyak ako sa awa o magagalit dahil sa kasamaan ng sistema."

On November 25, while continuing their search, Reynafe received a lead that Bebot's body had been identified by one of his media friends in Tacurong City. The discovery proved to be a false alarm, however, as the corpse had no dentures—Reynafe's identifying marker for her father.

"Sa sandaling 'yun, nawalan na ako ng lakas," says Reynafe. "Halos nagwawala na ang mga pinsan ko... pero hangga't 'di ko pa nakikita si Papa, ayokong umiyak." Minutes later, a crew from Mindanao news channel UNTV claimed the cadaver as their own, and mentioned that they had almost taken a similar-looking corpse in Koronadal —if not for the dentures present.

Encouraged by the new lead, the search party returned to Koronadal, where Dr. Dean Cabrera—forensic expert of the





Trip mo bang magliwaliw? Hindi ka ba pinatatahimik ng makati mong mga paa? May nunal ka ba sa talampakan? Tara at sumama sa kakaibang biyahe. Sa isang iglap, mararating mo mula Luzon hanggang Mindanao. Paalala: Hindi problema kahit walang pera. Walang tiket, basta't kami ang iyong kasama.

Pumapatak ang huling mga sandali ng taong 2009. Paunti-unti ngunit walang patid ang pag-ungos ng mga kwitis sa kalangitan. Ganito ang eksena sa kalunsuran tuwing sinasalubong ang bagong taon—sinasabuyan ng ilaw at kulay ng paputok ang hatinggabi. Tila 'di na ito mawawala sa kulturang Pilipino. Ayon sa mga Tsino na unang nakagawa ng pulbura para sa paputok, swerte ito sa pagtaboy ng mga masasamang ispiritu at kamalasan upang 'di makapasok sa bagong taon.

Patok na mga paputok

Sa pagpasok ng Disyembre, mas nagiging abala ang komersiyo ng Santa Maria sa probinsiya ng Bulacan. Dito ginagawa ang mga paputok tulad ng kwitis, five-star, fountain at lusing, na ibinebenta sa iba pang bayan sa Bulacan at maging sa labas ng probinsiya.

Mahigit 70 taon na ang industriya ng paputok sa bayan ng Santa Maria. Taong 1938 nang magbukas dito ang Santa Ana Fireworks, isa sa mga unang pagawaan ng paputok sa Pilipinas. Nang magsara ang pabrika matapos ang ikalawang digmaang pandaigdig, tila kabuteng nagsulputan ang ibang mga pagawaan sa mga karatig bayan tulad ng Norzagaray, San Rafael, San Ildefonso, Angat, Bocaue at Baliuag.

Kung hindi yero, tolda ang nagsisilbing bu-bong ng mga maliliit na pagawaan. Itinayo gamit ang mga posteng kawayan, walang mga pader at lupa lamang ang sahig ng mga ito. Bukod dito, mayroon ding mga bahay-gawaan -- tipikal na bahay ang itsura ngunit puro manggagawa, sangkap at materyales sa paggawa ng paputok ang makikita sa loob.

Sa mga pagawaan, nakahilera ang mga lamesa at upuan para sa mga manggagawa. Kung hindi kwitis, five-star ang karaniwang ginagawa sapagkat ito ang pinakamabenta. Maliban sa mga menor-de-edad, maaaring magtrabaho ang sino man na nangangailangan ng kita. Gayunman, laging may naka-ambang panganib sa araw-araw na hanap-buhay ng mga gumagawa ng paputok.

Sapagkat walang pader ang mga pagawaan, bukas ang mga maseselang materyales nito sa hangin, ulan, at init ng araw. Malaking saku-

na ang maidudulot ng padaskol na pagpitik ng upos ng sigarilyo sa pagawaan. Maaari ring matangay ng hangin ang pulbura at masinghot ng mga tao sa paligid. Sa kabila ng mga ito, tila hindi alintana ng mga manggagawa ang mga posibleng sakunang dulot ng kanilang hanap-buhay.

Nailalagay din sa panganib ang mga kapitbahay ng mga pagawaan. Subalit, dahil mataagal nang naitatag ang katanyagan ng Bulacan sa paggawa ng paputok at marami sa mga taga rito ang umaasa sa trabahong naibibigay ng industriya, kinasanayan na lang nila ang ganitong kalakaran.

Eksenang five-star

Karaniwang paputok na five-star ang ginagawa sa Santa Maria sapagkat ito umano ang pinakamabenta. Sa Malabon kinukuha ang mga sangkap sa pulbura na inaangkat mula sa ibangbansa gaya ng Inglatera at

Tsina.

Isa na rito ang *colorato*, na gamit din sa paggawa ng dinamita. Kabilang din ang devil o pinulbos na uling at sulfur na ipinagsasama upang magkaroon ng malakas na pagputok at usok ang five-star. Aluminum powder naman ang inihalalo upang magbuklod ang mga sangkap ng paputok.

Handa na ang pulbura. Nakahanda na sa mga lamesa ng mga manggagawa ang iba pang materyales. Kabilang dito ang tupi na tila matigas at makapal na manila paper na pinaglalagyan ng pulbura.

Nakabukod ang mga manggagawang nag-aasikaso nito. Sa bawat 100-piraso ng tupi

Sapagkat marami sa mga taga rito ang umaasa sa trabahong naibibigay ng industriya, kinasanayan na lang nila ang ganitong kalakaran



MITSITA

na magagawa, piso ang bayad. Kapag nilagyan na ng pulbura at mitsa ang tupi, isasarado naman ang lahat ng awang nito gamit ang pandikit.

Tila makina ang bilis ng kamay ng mga nagmamadaling manggagawa. Sampung piso ang bayad sa 1000 pirasong five-star na matatapos. Wala silang suot na uniporme maliban sa pulburang nakabalot sa kanilang kamay at damit. Nagmamadali rin ang mga may-ari ng pagawaan sa pakikipag-agawan sa ibang pabrika para sa mga maminili. Hinahabol din nila ang mga araw dahil mataas na buwis ang kailangan bayaran para sa patuloy na pagtakbo ng kanilang pagawaan.

Mataas na buwis din ang dahilan kung bakit maraming ilegal na pagawaan ang hindi nagbabayad nito. Bagaman patung-patong ang pangamba sa paggawa ng paputok, ito na ang

hanap-buhay na kinamulan ng mga taga-rito na tiyak na pwedeng pagkakitaan.

Halaga ng panganib

Isa si Aling Beth* sa mga stay-in na gumagawa ng paputok sa isang pagawaan. Mahigit isang dekada na rin siya sa trabahong ito, at nakailang lipat na rin siya ng pagawaan. Minsan nang naaksidente sa trabaho si Aling Beth, kung saan sumabog ang mga nagawa na nilang paputok. Nagtamo siya at iba pa niyang mga kasamahan ng mga sugat mula sa pagkasunog sa iba't ibang parte ng katawan.

Sa kabila ng aksidente, hindi na nakaalis si Aling Beth at ang kanyang asawa sa trabahong ito. Kahit peligroso, napagtapos nila ng kolehiyo ang apat na anak. Ngunit, ani Aling Beth, kahit sa legal na pagawan ng paputok siya namamasukan, hindi siya magdadalang isip na lumipat kung mabibigyan ng ibang mas ligtas na pagkakakitaan.

Tuwig bagong taon, pinakikinggan na lamang ni Aling Beth ang pagpapaputok ng kapitbahay. Bawas pa kasi sa kita niya kung magpapaputok din siya.

Ilang linggo makalipas ang unang araw ng 2010, muling mag-uumpisa ang paggawa ng paputok sa Santa Maria. Muling babalik ang presyuhan ng paputok sa normal at mag-sisimula nang mag-imbak ng paputok ang mga malalaking negosyante para sa susunod na bagong taon. Sa panahong ito, ipinagdarasal na lamang ni Aling Beth na maging ligtas siya sa muling pagbalik sa pagawaan.

Habang nananatili ang pagkahumaling ng marami sa mga naglalarong ilaw at dumagundong na pagsabog ng mga paputok, magpatuloy din ang nagmamadaling mga buhay sa loob ng mga pagawaan dito sa Santa Maria. □

*hindi tunay na pangalan.

SA KABILANG DULO NG
ARTICLE: Lee JACOB FABONAN - PHOTOS: CHRIS IMPERIAL - PAGE DESIGN: BIANCA BOMJIBOD

SCIENCE FAIR

OM NARAYAN A. VELASCO

I am a fan of physics. Though my grades in high school will tell you otherwise, I've always been keen on learning new knowledge which can explain to me how the universe works, and stumbling upon new discoveries and theories which suggest possibilities that challenge our present notion of time and space.

This semester, I enrolled in a physics appreciation class as one of my last MST GE requirement. Our classes have been fascinating, as we tackled topics like gravity, motion, and light. Numbers and equations have never dictated our class discussions as experiments and demonstrations shown in the videos or done by our own professor constantly kept the whole class attentive and absorbed. I recalled my high school days and wished I had a physics class that was as fun and as interesting.

Last week, our professor said something that struck me and made me ponder on his statement's veracity and implications. He said, that the most genius of physicists do not think of the relevance or practical application of their discoveries, and that in essence, they are just interested in explaining the very nature of the object or phenomenon that they are working on.

I understood it as almost something short of saying that the best physicists are detached

from their society, isolated, and only engrossed with their own experiments and theories, all for the name of science. It was as if Newton, for example, formulated his laws of gravity unmindful of its impact on how it can redefine our understanding of the universe, and Faraday observed and studied electromagnetism oblivious of its possible implications in the future.

That postulation was something hard for me to believe. If physicists or scientists should

BUT LIKE ANYTHING ELSE IN THE UNIVERSE, SCIENTISTS CANNOT JUST EXIST IN A VACUUM. IT IS APPARENT IN ANY LAW IN PHYSICS THAT EVERYTHING IN THE UNIVERSE IS CONNECTED, AND THUS, THEY INEXTRICABLY AFFECT OTHER THINGS AROUND THEM

be good at anything, one of it should be being observant and perceptive of his surroundings. And this is not just applicable to a limited observation about an isolated object or even other matters related to each of their own scientific processes.

This debate about science's purported objectivity has long been debated endlessly and has caused a rift between scientific groups. It is also a myth echoed in other disciplines like journalism and economics, and constantly claimed by the academe which sees itself

standing on top of the ivory tower.

But like anything else in the universe, scientists cannot just exist in a vacuum. It is apparent in any law in physics that everything in the universe is connected, and thus, they inextricably affect other things around them.

Even Albert Einstein, considered to be the epitome of genius and brilliance in physics, understood this. He understood that his own existence, his "inner and outer life are based on labors of other men" and that he must exert

himself "in order to give in the same measure as [he has] received and [still receiving]." With egalitarian objectives in mind, he vocally espoused socialism, believing that the current system is "crippling" and "evil."

Indeed, aside from a brain that can formulate equations and understand things through numbers and science, one must possess an insight of relativity to his society, a desire to elevate his fellow man to a place free of suffering and injustice. This is the mark of a true physicist or scientist of the highest caliber. □

ELECTION FEVER

GAEL GARCIA M. BURNAL

Sa wakas, isa na akong botante. Matapos ang pitong oras ng nakakabagot, nakakagutom, at nakakayamot na pagpila sa cityhall at pakikipagtagal sa mga taga-comelec upang di macut-off ang pila, sa huli ay matagumpay akong nakapagbiometrics at nakapagregister ng thumbprints upang maging ganap na botante.

Kukulangin sa isang buwan bago ang opisyal na simula ng kampanya at apat na buwan bago ang mismong eleksyon. Unti-unti na namang napupuno ang mga kalye't mga highway

ingini na rin ang tenga ng mga iilan sa paulit-ulit na jingle ng mga kandidato sa telebisyon at radyo na minsan ay di ko namamalayang nakakabisado ko na, at kinakanta pa habang naglalakad sa kung saan.

Ito ang kultura ng eleksyon sa bansa. At hindi na ito bago. Nakakatawang isipin na bukambibig ng maraming kandidato ang 'pagbabago' sa panahong ito, isang makapangyarihang salita na halaw sa kampanya ng pangulo ng Estados Unidos na makalipas lamang ng

sa pagkakongresista. Ikatlo, isang kandidatong bitbit ang pangalan ng kaniyang tanyag na mga magulang bago ang kaniyang mga plataporma. Ito ang mga bagong eksena sa darating na eleksyon na sa aktwal ay magsisilbi lamang sa pagpapanatili ng isang lumang sistema ng pamamahaling kinatatampukan ng korupsiyon, panunupil at tiraniya.

Ang tunay na pagbabago ay pagbabagong nagsisilbi sa interes ng kalakhan ng mamamayan. Pagbabagong kinatatampukan ng pagsusulong ng karapatan ng mamamayan sa edukasyon, tunay na repormang agraryo, pambansang industriyalisasyon, disentang kabuhayan, trabaho, tirahan, at hustisyang panlipunan. Bagamat iilan, may mga grupo o partido at mga personalidad na nagsusulong ng gantong uri ng pagbabago. At agenda ng mamamayan na suportahan at ipagtagumpay ang mga makabayang kandidatong ito kapalit ng pagtagal ng kasalukuyang pangulo higit sa deadline niya sa pwesto sa ika-30 ng Hunyo.

Umaasa akong hindi masasayang ang boto ko at ng milyun-miyong kabaataan sa darating na eleksyon. Panata kong babantayan ang boto ko at ang boto ng mamamayang Pilipino para sa ganap at tunay na panlipunang pagbabago. □

ilang buwan ay napatunayan namang walang ipinagkaiba sa pinalitan nitong 'warfreak president'.

Ngunit totoo pa ring maraming bago sa darating na eleksyon. Una na ang automated elections na maging hanggang sa ngayon ay wala pa ring katiyakan at maaaring humantong sa failure of elections. Ikalawa, ang isang pangulong desperadong makatakas sa pang-uusig ng mamamayan kaya tatakbo na lamang para

proklamasyon ang Zone C sa Pook Ricarte.

Ngunit noong Hulyo 2008, napagpasyahan ng DPWH na ipatupad muli ang naunang plano, kung saan gagamitin ang ilang bahagi ng Pook Ricarte, kabilang ang Zone C.

Sa pagpapatupad ng naunang plano, makatitipid umano ng P650 milyon na mapupunta sana sa relokasyon ng halos 600 apektadong pamilya sa Ripada at pagpapatayo ng mga gusali sa UP na matatamaan ng paggawa ng kalsada, ani dating DPWH Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane sa isang pahayag.

Bagaman hindi kasama sa SARO, nararapat ding magamit ng mga residente ng Zone C ang pondo sapagkat maraming pamilya ang apektado ng demolisyon, ani Gaan.

Nararapat naman umanong magpaubaya ang

ITO ANG MGA BAGONG EKSENA SA DARATING NA ELEKSYON NA SA AKTUAL AY MAGSISILBI LAMANG SA PAGPAPANATILI NG ISANG LUMANG SISTEMA

ng mga naglalakihang pangalan at ng mga bago at lumang mukhang may scripted na mga ngiti. Mga ngiting bumabati at muling nanganagako sa sinumang mamamayang titingin dito. Ngunit katulad ng isang new year's resolution na di matupad-tupad, o di kaya'y wishlist na di makuha-kuha dahil sa krisis, ang mga pangakong ito'y nananatiling slogang nakadikit na lamang sa pader o kaya'y sa lumang tarp na nakasabit sa isang kable ng kuryente. Nabib-

Demolisyon... mula pg 4

Aniya, kailangan munang i-"realign" ang SARO upang magamit, sapagkat nagkaroon ng pagbabago sa plano kung saan hindi kasama ang mga taga-Zone C sa makikinabang sa SARO.

Sa orihinal na plano ng DPWH, gagamitin sa pagpapalawak ng C-5 ang ilang bahagi ng Pook Ricarte, malaking bahagi ng Brgy. Matandang Balara at ilang daang metro-kwadrado sa loob ng Capitol Hills Golf and Country Club.

Binago ang plano noong 2007 matapos piling sundin ang Proclamation 1395, na nagsasaad na matatamaan ng pagsasaayos ng daan ang ilang bahagi ng UP na kinabibilangan ng Pook Ricarte, Pook Palaris at Pook Dagohoy (Ripada). Hindi kasama sa



Send in your opinions and feedback via SMS! Type: KULE <space> YOUR MESSAGE <space> STUDENT NUMBER

(required), NAME and COURSE (optional) and send to 0927.300.5121. Non-UP students must indicate any school, organizational or sectoral affiliation. WARNING: We don't entertain textmates.

PAANO KA MAAPEKTUHAN NG PAG-EXTEND NG VOTER'S REGISTRATION?

about the extension of comelec registration, i think its no longer necessary, kaya hindi umuunlad ang pilipinas, dahil sa mga procrastinator, 10months of reg period is enough, pero inintay pa nilang humaba ang pila bagomagregister, for sure ngayon, most people will go to comelec by jan. 8, jaque eroles, may karapatan ang kabataan pero may responsibilidad din sila, remember that. BS IE, 08-03977

no effect. maaga kasi akong nagregister. Tamad ang 4 million na di nagregister. pero tama ang ginawa ng sc. Comelec is supposed to be the vanguard of direct democracy pero parang sila na ang nagdedesisyon kung sino mananalayon disenfranchising voters ang candidates. our presidential elections are direct democratic compared to the US's electoral college be proud! 2009-29298 KING ENGG

d ako apektado sa extension ng voters reg, ang apektado ang buwis ng mga taxpayers dhil masasayang lng ang naimprintang voters lists dhil ggwa na nman ng bago. Sayang ang nagastos dun. Badtrpl 99-47119

ANO ANG GAGAWIN MO SA CHRISTMAS BREAK?

sa drtng n xmas break, magchecheck ag ng mga xam ng mga as2dynte q at mgrersearch 98-66648

Christmas break? meron b? kng meron man, DAPAT maligo ag sa umuulang 8 formal repOrts ng majOrs at Oral presentatOrns. DAPAT din magswimming aquo sa mga libro, readings, lectures para sa 4 na exams ang saya db? pro mgwa q kaya ang lhat ng mga DAPAT nay an? Well, sisikapin q since wlan nman aqng perang panggala, sa bhay nlng aq at pliting maligo sa mga DAPAT na itO. 07-16149. BSFoodTech

ngaung pasko, mg "beach" s ppuntang math bldg n batis/lawa, k2lad ng 1 ate na nkta nming kiligo lng ata at naglalakad2 dun. taob ang oblation run! 05-3111

anOng xmas break? Wla n akong gnun! Tadtad kya kami ng cases, research, exams... nakakainis! Hbang ngpuputukan ng dec31 nagaaral pa rin ako... -0631599 BAA

COMMENTS

pkidag2an nmn ung space pra dun s mga comments, sagot s mga kule questions, at sagutan portion. dati half page ang ina-allot nyo 4 ds pero ngaun isang kolum nlng. i2 p nmn ung pinakaabangan q s kule. tas anong nangyari s eksenanang peyups?? bkit ang STRAIGHT n ng pgkasulat ng? ala nb c ATE GAY writer? I miss u n bakla! 09-69174 bart bsba

HUWAT?!? Tapos nab a ang seryeng "No Way But UP"? Hindi maaari! Ibalik! 07-78697

Ang ganda ng lahat ng illustrations sa dec. 17, 09 editorial cartoon. :} 08-62145, char BA BC

gus2 q lng mgcoment kht i8 n abt sa pe shirt d q lng mkta ung sense, sv nla for security purposes, para rn dw ung mga up s2dnts lng ang mglalaro. eh bket pg bumili ka ng pe shirt, ndi naman tntngnan ung id or form5? ade pwde rng bumili kht con, useless db? 08-22028

avid fan op ako. cnu p0 ung artist ni aling minda? ang galing nya.. idol ko sya tska si kuya nico :D -sarah, pampanga highschool

hannah chan's article in child's play was simply remarkable. 06-36716

Ano ito? Bkt bglang nagkroon ng fun page ang kule? At may prizes pa! kaloka 2 d nth level! 03-15004 ros

NEXT WEEK'S QUESTIONS

1. Payag ka ba sa live coverage ng trial ng Ampatuan Massacre? Bakit?

2. Ano ang masasabi mo sa pang-ookray ni Osang sa mga teacher sa TV?

Tungo sa Tagumpay

Sa pagputok ng dekada 70, kasabay ng guitar solo ng Led Zepellin at pagpasok ng ilegal na marijuana sa buong Asya mula sa Afghanistan, ay pagputok ng isang rali ng kabataan sa isang tipikal na araw sa Paco Maynila, sa paligid ng Malacañang, Panawagang bitbit— itigil ang giyera sa Vietnam, itigil ang korapsyon, tanggalin ang impluwensya ng Imperyalistang Estados Unidos sa Pilipinas, isulong ang Digmang Bayan. Natapos ang protesta sa pagkakakulong at pagkakabugbog ng mga militante. Saksi ang mga kapitbahay ng Malacañang, kaya hindi malayo na sumama sila sa mga sumunod na protesta sa dumating na mga araw. Ang nagsimula sa maliit na protesta ay natapos sa pagdagundong ng libong mamamayan. Ang banta ng bawat araw: babalik kami, may dalang bato.

Ito ang pilosopiya ng mga katagang mula maliit, papalaki; batas ng

kalikasan na hanggang ngayon ay sinusunod ng kilusan. Isang aksyon sa Malacañang na hanggang sa ngayon ay ginagampanan. Lumipas ang mga dekada. Sumikat na si Sharon Cuneta at ang dekada 70 ay naisapelikula na. Ang pag-atras at pag-abante ng natatanging militanteng kilusan ay nesubukan. Tuloy ang dakilang hamon sa mga kabataan na gampanan ang dakilang papel nila sa kasaysayan. Higit pa sa mga sariwang ideya, higit pa sa pagsisimula at pagpapatuloy sa pagpapalapat sa hanay ng kabataan upang gampanan ang papel sa Pambansa Demokratikong Rebolusyon. Nanatili ang pananawagan ng pananatili.

Ang pagbabago ng itsura at detalye ng tatlong pangunahing problema sa Pilipinas—Imperyalismo, Burukrata Kapitalismo, Pyudalismo—ay hindi kaso upang sabihin na ang mga panawagan ay paulit-ulit, nakakasawa at gasgas. Ito ang



We welcome questions, constructive criticism, opinions, stands on relevant issues, and other reactions. Letters may be edited for brevity or clarity. Due to space constraints, letters must have only 400 words or less. Send the letters to kule0910@gmail.com.

riyalidad na paulit-ulit din namang kinakaharap ng mamamayan.

Mula sa sahod ng manggagawa, lupa para sa dugo't pawis ng mag-sasaka, disentang kinabukasan para sa kabataan at pambansang industriyalisasyon, binaybay at patuloy na binabaybay ng mga kabataan—kasama ang iba pang sektor sa lipunan—ang mga hamon at pakikihamon upang makamit ang pinakamataas na panawagan. Kaya't sa huli, hindi kupot ang simpleng poster ng panawagan ng "Rollback the Tuition" at "US Troops, Out Now!". Ambag ang maliit na aksyon at ambag ang malalaking pagkilos sa pagsalubong sa mga problema na kinakaharap ng mamamayan.

Noong Agosto ng nakaraang

taon, muling binuhay ng kabataan ang mga yabag ng paa patungong Malacañang. Ang mga boses ng protesta at ang sigaw ng mga panawagan. Ganun pa rin naman ang estado. Nagbago lang ang itsura ng parehong mukha ng pasismo. Ang mga aral ng Kabataang militante ay hindi nanibago habang ang bulok na rehimen ay nagulat sa panawagan ng pagbabago.

Sa ganitong antas, hindi putok sa buho ang mga kabataang lumalahok sa kilusan. Sila ay katabi sa upuan, sa loob ng mga klasrum, kakiskisang braso sa loob ng jeepney, kasabay sa pila sa pagbabayad ng matrikula. Kinakaisa at pinag-iisa ang kabataang estudyante sa mga usapin at demokratikong karapatan na dapat nating makamit. Ang League of Filipino Students, kasama ang iba't ibang estudyante at buong hanay ng laksang mamamayan ay humahamon sa panahon at paggampan ng papel sa kasaysayan.

Hindi usong awit ang rebolusyon. Hindi sikat na artista ang mga nakikibaka. Ang plakard ay hindi paroo't parito. Kaya ang Pambansang Demokratikong Kilusan ay patuloy na nananatili at hinaharap ang katotohanan ng kontradiksiyon.

LEAGUE OF FILIPINO STUDENTS Ang LFS ay miyembro ng Kabataan Partylist

na hindi sang-ayon sa pagtakbo ni Gloria Arroyo bilang kongresista ng ikalawang distrito ng probinsya, ayon sa IBON Foundation: **halos 86 porsyento**

Buwang nalalabi sa termino ni Arroyo: **kulang sa limang buwan**
Bahagdan ng Pilipinong hindi kurento sa pamamalakad ni Arroyo sa bansa, ayon sa Social Weather Stations: **mahigit 60 porsyento**

Nakaambang budget deficit na ipapasa ng administrasyong Arroyo sa susunod na administrasyon: **P300 bilyon**

Biktima
Bilang ng biktima ng pampulitikal na pamamaslang kaugnay ng paparating na eleksyon: **mahigit 60, kabilang ang 57 na napaslang sa Maguindanao**

Bilang ng kasong pagpatay na isinampa kay Datu Unsay Mayor Anda Ampatuan Jr., na sinasabing pasimuno sa pamamaslang sa Maguindanao noong Nobyembre 23: **41**
Bilang ng kasong isinampa kay Ampatuan kung saan nahatulan siyang may sala: **wala**

Bilang ng bayan at siyudad na ideneklara ng Comelec bilang election hot-spot o mga lugar na kilala sa "intense political rivalry" o pamamalagi ng mga "terror groups": **558**

Bilang ng bayan at siyudad na ideneklarang election hot-spot na nasa Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM): **118**

Bilang ng private armies na kasalukuyang nagseserbisyo sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa, ayon sa Philippine National Police (PNP): **170**

Bilang ng private armies na nakabase



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IBON YEAREND BIRDTALK

Thursday/ January 14, 2010/ 1-5 pm/ UP Balay Internasyunal (formerly Balay Kalinaw)

The IBON Birdtalk is a semi-annual on economic and political assessments and trends. It presents alternative information on the current economic and political situation as well as analysis from the people's point of view.

There will be a registration fee of P150 to cover expenses for food and briefing proper. For more details, please visit <http://info.ibon.org/>.

UP HARING IBON SIGN UP WEEK

Birdwatching | Exposure Trips | Likhalikasan Contest | Environmental Workshops | Community Lecture Series | Cleanup Climbs and Fun Climbs | Environmental Film Festival | Basics of the Environment | Grand Clean UP! | Wall News | EcoTriv Quiz Bee | Hunt Newsletter

Do all these and more! Join us in UP Haring Ibon as we celebrate our 22nd year of advocating for the environment!

Sign up booth: AS Walk | Jan 12 - 15 2010
Applicants' Orientation: UP Haring Ibon Tambayan | Jan 15 2010
Contact Daniela for details +639273817097 or visit <http://up-haringibon.wordpress.com/>.

sa ARMM: **25**

Bilang ng pulis na mag-iinspeksyon sa mga checkpoint upang ipatupad ang 5-month election gun ban: **mahigit 50,000**

Tinatayang bilang ng mga taong kasalukuyang nagtratrabaho sa mga private army, ayon kay Defense Secretary Norberto Gonzales: **mahigit 10,000**

Kabuuang bilang ng mga rehistradong baril at firearms sa bansa, ayon sa PNP: **1.2 milyon**

Kabuuang bilang ng mga hindi rehistradong baril at firearms na maaaring nasa kamay ng mga "terror groups" at mga private army, ayon sa PNP: **mahigit isang milyon**

Bilang ng mga taong nahulihan ng baril matapos ipatupad ang election gun ban noong Enero 10: **71**

Sanggunian: Commission on Elections, National Statistics Office, Commission on Filipinos Overseas, kabataanpartylist.com, IBON Foundation, Social Weather Stations, gmanews.tv, abs-cbnnews.com, inquirer.net, philstar.com, manilatimes.net, ibanangayon.ph, sunstar.com, congress.gov.ph

PAKULO



Clark Kent

l-match ang logo ng superhero sa kanilang alter-ego. Ipaasa ang inyong mga sagot sa rm.401 ng Vinzons hall. May premyo ang pang-20 na magpapasa. Sagot na!

Narda

Magno Meneses

Peter Parker

Bino Bayani

Bruce Wayne

Steve Rogers

Diana Prince

Wally West

Enteng

Sumatotal... mula pg 4

(COC) para sa pagkapangulo: **99**
Bilang ng nagpasa ng COC para sa pagkabise-presidente: **20**
Bilang ng COC sa pagkapangulo at pagkabise-presidente na inaprubahan ng Comelec: **tig-walo**
Bilang ng nagpasa ng COC para sa pagkasenador: **158**
Bilang ng inaprubahang COC para sa pagkasenador: **58**

Kasalukuyang bilang ng mga party list group na nakaupo sa Kamara: **35**
Bilang ng party list group na naghain ng petisyon upang makalahok sa halalan: **306**

Bilang ng party list group na papayagang lumahok sa halalan, sa pagtaya ng Comelec: **hanggang 100**

Kabuuang bilang ng mga kinatawan sa Kamara: **265**
Kasalukuyang bilang ng mga party list representative sa Kamara: **49**
Kasalukuyang bilang ng mga kinatawag pandistrito: **216**

Bilang ng posisyong bukas sa Kamara para sa mga kinatawag pandistrito sa darating na halalan: **222**

Bilang ng mga kongresistang nasa ikatlo at huling termino na at hindi na maaaring tumakbo pa bilang kinatawan ngayong halalan: **67**

Bilang ng mga kongresista na nasa una at ikalawang termino pa lamang at maaari pang tumakbo ngayong halalan: **193**

Halagang mula sa pork barrel na ginasta ni Arroyo para sa mga infrastructure project sa ikalawang distrito ng Pampanga noong 2009: **P459 milyon**
Bahagdan ng mga taga-Pampanga



EKSENANG
PEYUPS

Global Warming Edition

Wafaz naman sa kainitan! Tumatagaktak ang pawis ng lola nyo sa ka-lelegwork. Isipin nyo na lang kung anong legworks ginawa ko! Char-otekeliz! Feel na feel ko na ang summer kahit happy new year pa lang naman. Effects nga naman ng global warming.

Pero mas ramdam ang effects ng global warming sa Kolehiyo ng Artemechu at Libog. Winner naman ang inclination sa arts ng mga tao sa kolehiyong ito. Dalawang lovers in Paris ang namataang tila nag-eethnic dance sa ilalim ni Mother Magdangal habang katirikan ng araw. BUT NO! Napag-alamang hindi pala ethnic dance ang ginagawa ng dalawa kundi panibagong ethnic group ang nais achibin ng mga ito! Mukang nahiya ang hubad na katawan ni Mother at tuluyang nawalan ng dangal. Pakitaan ba naman kami ng bagong style. Chumechenelyn ang dalawa nang nakadamit! Fatale. Chumenelyn with clothes on! Kermi mo yun? Kamon mamon!

Pero mas may mainit pang kaganapan bukod diyan sa experimental play ng mga feeling lovers in Paris. Kumusta naman ang experimental power-play ng ibang tao sa Quickie Hall? Mag-iinit ka nga naman talaga kapag nalaman mo!

Akalain mo ba namang tsugiin ni madam ang hinirang ng pisara (clue: isalin) at ipalit ang gusto niya overruling everyone else. So powerful! Katakot! Like the emperor of an empire. You know like that. I'm so scared.

But wait a minute! Akala ko ba powerful siya? E bakit biglang parang tutang nabahag ang buntot ni mother? Hugas-kamay ba namang sundin ang desisyon ng isang department e alam niyang mali nga. Natakot ba siya sa mga magpapabagsak ng kanyang empire? Wafaz talaga! Try kaya nating buhusan siya ng tubig nang mahugasan buong katawan. Baka matauhan. At mabawasan ang init na dala ng global warming. Wacha think? I think so. I know right.

Pagkatapos ng maiinit na pangyayari...
(Habang nagpapalamig at naglalakad ang lola nyo isang gabing tahimik at madilim kasama ang isang bakla at isang tibong Kulutera...)

TIBO: If I can't have the best, I will settle for nothing.

BAKLA: You can't have the best... because you can't.

Ay! Winner ka bakla! Ayan. Wag na kasing magmaganda ateng when you can't. Like saying "Eewwww" to Charing Banyo. Chaka ate ha! Sige hanggang dito na lang. So long assholes.

Pagkatapos ang mahabang paghihintay, magkakaroon na muli ng

PHILIPPINE COLLEGIAN LITERARY FOLIO

Tumatanggap kami ng mga tula, kwento, sanaysay, komiks at litrato hanggang huling araw ng Marso 2010.

Dalhin lang ang mga obra maestra sa 4th floor ng Vinzons Hall, room 401 at ipagbigay alam na ika'y writer/ photographer/ artist ng di-masukat na kagalingan.

Para sa mga tanong, mag-email lamang sa kule0910@gmail.com.

No way but UP EPILOGUE

"Walang hinihintay ang panahon."

Ikaw ang nagsabi sa akin nito. Matagal na 'yon, noong una pa lang tayong nagkakilala.

Naaalala mo ba?

Nagbabago ang lahat ng bagay. Hindi natin ito mapigligian, pero laging magabayaan. Kailangan nating umasa na ang bawat pagbabago ay para sa mabuti.

Kung hindi mabuti ang kinalalabasan, hindi ito pagbabago kundi pagpapabaya.

Ikaw rin, Mando, nagbago ka.

Tahimik ka dati. Palaisip. Kahit sa pagtingin mo sa ibang tao, sa mga nangyayari sa paligid mo, simple ka lang pero hindi ka nadadala sa biglang tingin.

Iyon ang nagustuhan ko sa'yo.

Ganoon ka pa rin naman ngayon, pero nag-iba na ang lalim ng katahimikan mo.

Dati, para bang may hinahanap ka tuwing napapadpad ang mga mata mo sa kung saan-saan. Ngayon, palwas ka tumitig.

Para kang may tinataguan...

Lahat naman tayo, nagbabago...

Marahil nagbago na rin ang pagtingin ko sayo.

Nagbabago ang lahat, pero hindi ako naging pabaya. Sana ikaw rin.

Sadya lang nagbago ang lahat dahil walang hinihintay ang panahon.

Kailangan nating umasad kung ayaw nating malwan.

Wala akong pinagsisisihan

Nagbago rin ako at patuloy akong magbabago dahil ganito ang hinihingi sa atin ng panahon at pagkakataon.

Saan man tayo dalhin ng ating mga pagbabago, sana sa ikabubuti ito.

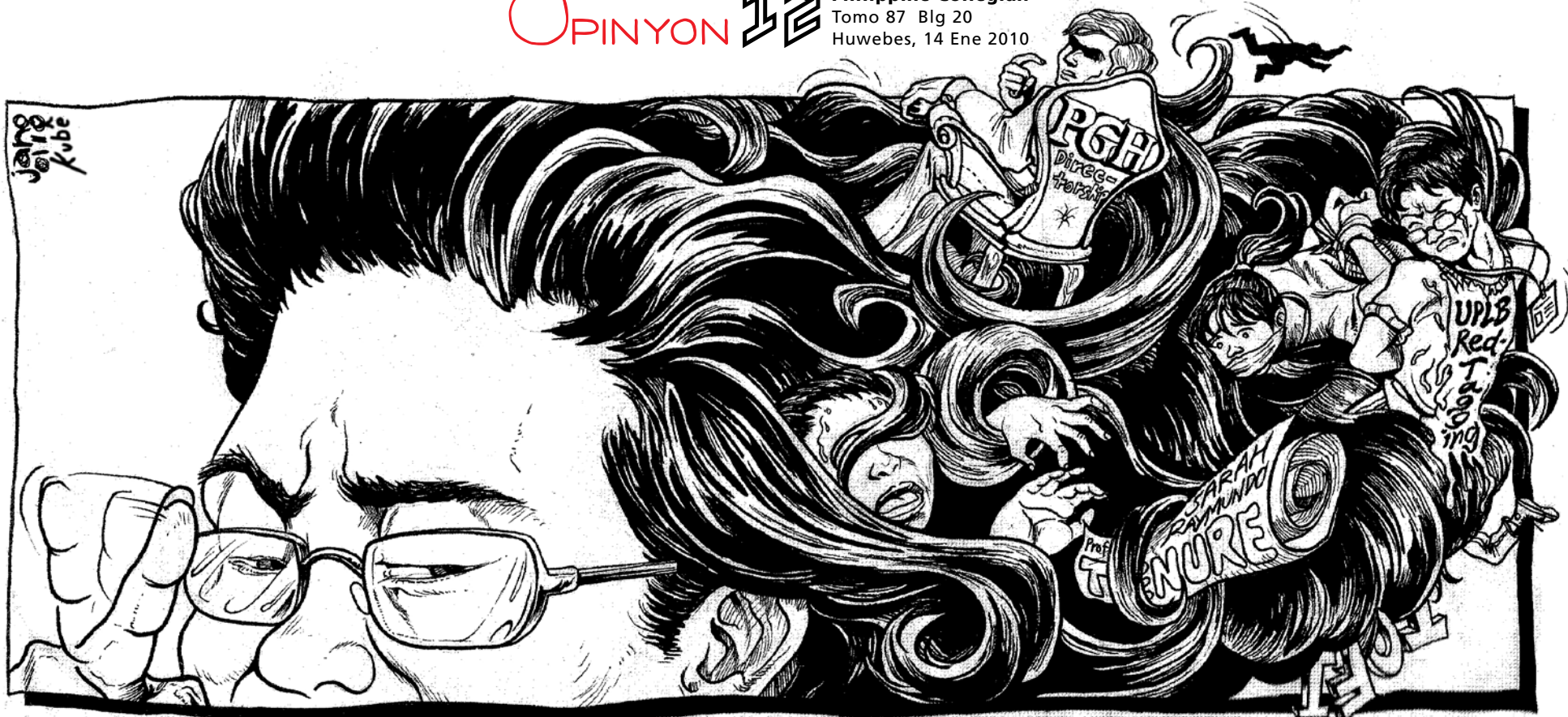
Tanda ng hindi paglimot, Marz.

Wakas.

SIPAT

Abot-tanaw
PNR train

Airnel T. Abarra



Jano Gonzales & Nico Villarete

EDITORIAL

DEAD-END

The year 2010 is a deadline for Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Her presidency has been marked by the escalation of chronic political and economic crises. Indeed, the final chapters of her term include the massacre of nearly 60 people in Maguindanao by Arroyo's longtime political allies, and the much-criticized declaration that she will run again for a political post in 2010 — scenarios which were unimaginable a mere decade ago, before Arroyo came into power.

Her policies, too, have been less than effective. On the economic front, Filipinos have seen the price of oil and other basic commodities skyrocketing, while wages remain suppressed at a bare minimum. And still Arroyo continues to deregulate the private sector and encourage the privatization of social services. She has also imposed heavy taxes, and pushed for laws that place local industries at a disadvantage, under the guise of "encouraging foreign investments."

Certainly, crippled by these actions, our economy was ill-prepared for the global financial crisis of 2008. Amid rising joblessness and poverty rates, the year 2010 opens with bleak prospects — for clearly, despite claims to the contrary, the global capitalist economy is far from recovery.

Only one percent of the global population has benefited from last year's economic growth,

while global credit firms are rendered unstable by the increasing disparity between workers' wages and inflation rates.

A credit card crash in the US is also looming, possibly causing the same global fiasco dealt by the housing bubble two years ago. This bodes ill once more for the economically-backward Philippines, which has yet to recover from the blow of the previous crisis.

On the field of politics, the Arroyo regime has long lost its credibility and legitimate rule. Since the accusations of electoral fraud in 2004, Arroyo has been involved in numerous scandals and anomalies, such as the fertilizer fund scam in 2005 and the more recent NBN-ZTE deal.

Now, with the upcoming elections and the purported changing of political figureheads, the chronic political crisis in the country is expected to intensify this year.

Clearly, Arroyo's plans are centered on escaping all possible legal raps already waiting to be lodged against her, for she would lose all immunity once her term lapses.

Perhaps the most blatant of Arroyo's tactics is her participation in the upcoming elections, this time as congressional representative of the 2nd district of Pampanga. She has quietly laid out her plans months prior to her bid, when she regularly showed up in the district no less than 50 times. Then, despite her earlier denial, Arroyo filed her certificate of candidacy just

before the deadline.

Arroyo's more clandestine motives may be revealed with the latest clamor for yet another ploy to amend the constitution. While Arroyo may not be the first president to pursue charter change, she has had the most attempts.

And, if coupled with the recent attempts of her allies to amend the constitution, it is easy to discern Arroyo's true plans: should charter change push through in the next term, and she wins her congressional bid, she is in the perfect position to be appointed as the country's first prime minister.

Arroyo's intentions to stay in power via elections are well-formed. Yet beyond these, the implementation of poll automations and the recent violence in Maguindanao cast light on the possibility of a failure of elections, and even a no-elections scenario. With such conditions, Arroyo clearly has several alternatives to pursue her objectives other than participating in the elections.

Arroyo's crime to the people is even more apparent as her record on human rights violations (HRVs) proves the culture of impunity fostered by her regime. Indeed, with more than 1,000 HRVs under her belt, state terrorism is clearly engraved on her term, with the slaughter of 64 people in Maguindanao on November 23 as one of the most gruesome manifestations. Allegedly perpetrated by Arroyo's warlord allies, the Ampatuans, the

said carnage has exposed the Arroyo regime as despotic, particularly with its unprecedented violence towards the Filipino people.

As early as now, concerns have arisen about increasing electoral violence, and the presence of private armies serving political oligarchs nationwide — conditions which have long existed in the country. Should this continue, it will be easy for Arroyo to claim that election-related violence has reached an alarming rate, thus requiring drastic measures, such as emergency or military rule.

The military has always played an important part in Philippine politics and elections, and during Arroyo's regime, she has kept their loyalty by granting favors and positions of power to its top members.

Arroyo's plans are clear. Despite the odds, she has played her hands well, and she could escape all her crimes unscathed.

But she has not counted on one thing: the people's raging discontent, and the intensifying calls for her ouster. The people are now placed in a decisive position. Beyond elections, beyond casting votes, we are challenged to uphold the democratic rights this regime has shamelessly trampled on.

Indeed, after a decade in power, Arroyo has reached a dead-end. The people will not allow her regime to continue. Her tyranny must end. □