

# OPINION & FEATURES



Source: Inquirer.net

## Power to the People

There's no better time to show how Filipinos value their hard-earned freedom.

### EDITORIAL

Two days before the 111th celebration of Philippine Independence, the nation convenes for another freedom fight -- a rally to signify their protest against the constituent assembly of the House of Representatives. The passing of House Resolution No. 1109, which empowers the House of Representatives to call a constituent assembly (Con-Ass) to amend the Constitution without the Senate, is clearly a violation of the original objectives by which the 1987 Constitution was made. The preamble of the 1987 Constitution reads: "We, the sovereign Filipino people, imploring the aid of Almighty God, in order to build a just and humane society and establish a Government that shall embody our ideals and aspirations, promote the common good, conserve and develop our patrimony and secure to ourselves and our posterity the blessings of independence and democracy under the rule of law and a regime of truth, justice, freedom, love, equality, and peace, do ordain and promulgate this Constitution." Enacted during President Corazon Aquino's term, the Philippine Constitution was made under the issuance of Procla-

mation No. 3—"declaring a national policy to implement the reforms mandated by the people, protecting their basic rights, adopting a provisional constitution, and providing for an orderly translation to a government under a new constitution." The 1987 Constitution is a product of blood, sweat and tears, undergoing much heated debates before its completion and ratification through a plebiscite. The current outrage is, therefore, inevitable. Even business groups have expressed their disagreement in a joint statement saying, that they "are appalled at the indecency and blatant disregard of the Filipino people's will displayed by the House of Representatives in its adoption of House Resolution No. 1109." The Constitution is the very core of our identity, the beacon of our independence as a nation. Our by-laws should exist for the people and by the people. For a country who has gone through more than 300 years of foreign conquest, 20 years of a dictatorship and an impeached president, it is our responsibility to remain vigilant in protecting our rights and securing our democracy. (AJ Press)

## Complicated plot



**STREET TALK**  
Greg B. Macabenta

BACK in the days when I was battling out stories and screenplays for Tagalog movies, the challenge we always faced was how to come up with original and interesting twists on the plot, dealing with a variety of complex characters and yet succeeding in fitting all the dramatic elements together to bring the story to a logical and gripping climax. One time, a producer who fancied himself a writer decided to change some of the elements in a plot that I had so laboriously crafted. The result was that he didn't quite know how to solve a particularly difficult situation in which I had cast the hero. Rattled, he sent for me and asked me to unravel the complicated scenario. "You created the problem." I replied, "You should solve it yourself." Then I told him about a similar situation in which a playwright found himself dealing with too many complicated characters and sub-plots. "You know how he resolved it?" I told the producer, "Towards the end of the play, a new character went onstage and shot everyone dead. Then he turned to the audience and introduced himself: 'I'm the author. I didn't know how else to end the play.'" That desperate playwright would have found himself even more confounded by the plots and sub-plots that have now begun to unfold in Philippine politics. First of all, the characters that populate the

Philippine political drama are straight out of a Machiavelli primer on intrigue, double-talk and double-cross. In politics, you never know whom to trust. There are no permanent friends and no permanent enemies. That is never more true than in the Philippines. You never know whose side someone is on. Except when it comes to cheating and stealing from the Filipino people. They are all on the same side and the poor masses, the victims, are on the other side. Take the so-called opposition party and what is supposed to be the other bastion of independent thought and of principles in our benighted country, the Senate. With so many of them insisting on running for president, they are guaranteeing that they will all lose. As a matter of fact, the way some of the senators are cutting up each other, they're not being subtle about wanting their own opposition party mates to lose. Now, does a politician really run to lose? Not on your life. That makes you think that, maybe, someone is assuring them that, if they lose, they will still win. And we all know what that means. I knew a candidate for senator who was aware from the outset that he had no chance of winning. But he ran anyway, and not just on one ticket but on two. He lost in the votation but went home with loads of cash. Listening to the speeches of these politicians is enough to make your stomach curdle. The language they use is straight out of *The Prince*. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo delivered one of those speeches at the LAKAS-KAMPI merger. Here's what she said: "Cynics and detractors love to paint

grim scenarios about a cancellation of the 2010 elections. Let this merger of LAKAS and KAMPI be tangible proof of the Administration's readiness, nay determination, to help ensure that the elections do push through." That, of course, is verbal sleight of hand. She didn't say presidential election. It could be a parliamentary election. No, Arroyo and her cohorts haven't given up yet. This is the one issue on which the congressmen and the local officials are on the same side -- against the Filipino people, that is. A parliamentary election will give them an opportunity to extend their term of office while Arroyo disposes of the constitutional impediment to her remaining on the throne. But wait—she's also talking to "presidentiables" like Noli de Castro and Gilbert Teodoro and, on the side, Manny Villar. And she's encouraging the governor-priest Among Ed Panlilio to run. In fact, she's encouraging many others to run for president. The candidates are playing along, as well as a number of wanna be senators and congressmen and wanna be vice-presidents. What's the game plan? Heads they win. Tails, the Filipino people lose. If there's no election, you can bet your life they were bought off. If the election happens, because the people decide to stand their ground, you can bet your life that the candidates will buy the voters off. Whichever way the plot goes, she and her cohorts win. Here's what Arroyo said about this: "The emergence of LAKAS-KAMPI-CMD as one party is our finest weapon and perhaps our best guarantee for success in the 2010 elections. I look upon

LAKAS-KAMPI, moving as one, fighting as one, as the instrument and vehicle for electing the best, most qualified and the worthiest leaders of our country. Let us strive for victory which not only our party but the entire nation and our democracy can claim as their own." It doesn't require reading between the lines to know what she means. Forget about clean elections in 2010. Whether it is a20presidential or a parliamentary contest, the capos and the torpedos who run the Malacanang Mafia know exactly what they need to do to win. It's simple. This country is divided into fiefdoms. At the local level, the political warlord will have the guns, the goons and the gold to ensure victory. The trouble is, the unfolding drama on the political stage leaves the Filipino people totally confused over who the heroes and the villains are. The result is that they will simply allow their votes to be bought because, hey, if you're going to be raped, you might as well profit from it. Ask the folks who adjudicated the rape case involving a US soldier and a Pinay. In other words, it all boils down to the people. The reason the politicians are so bold and brazen in their cheating, double-crossing, stealing and killing is because the people allow it. So how would you resolve the complicated drama unfolding on the Philippine political stage? My answer to the Filipino people is similar to what I gave the producer who messed with my script: "You created the problem. You should solve it yourself." And, no, I'm not suggesting the recourse of the desperate playwright. (gregmacabenta@hotmail.com)

## Celebrating our freedom



**ROSES & THORNS**  
Alejandro R. Roces

HALFWAY through the year, the month of June signals many beginnings—the start of the rainy season, the beginning of classes, the new life of newly married couples. Next year, as in previous election years, June will be a new administration under a newly-elected President. More importantly, Filipinos must not forget the importance of June as the month when Filipinos declared their independence from Spain after more than four centuries of Hispanic rule. On June 12, a holiday, the whole nation celebrates 111 years of Philippine Independence. Our people, especially the youth, must not forget the birth of the Philippine nation on June 12, 1898. After many months of struggle and resistance, an immense and jubilant crowd of Filipinos led by Emilio Aguinaldo, gathered in Kawit, Cavite, to proclaim their independence. This was when the Filipino Flag was first hoisted up. It was also during this historic moment that the public first heard the national anthem, majestically played by a marching band. Few people know that our anthem, composed by Julian Felipe, had no lyrics at first, influenced by the Spanish anthem which, to this day, has no lyrics. It was only after the Filipinos saw the Americans singing their national anthem that Spanish lyrics were added the following year, culled from a poem entitled *Filipinas* by poet and soldier Jose Palma (*Tierra adorada, hija del sol de Oriente...*). The

original title of our national anthem was *Marcha Filipina Magdalo*, later changed to *Marcha Nacional Filipina*. Because of its stirring music, the spirit of nationalism was even more enkindled among Filipinos to the point that Americans interpreted their stance as seditious. Hence, singing the anthem and display of the Filipino flag was banned. Five years after the Philippine Commonwealth was established in 1935, an English version was commissioned, the *Philippine Hymn*, written by educator, Senator Camilo Osias and an American named Mary A. Lane (Land of the morning, child of the son returning...). Such was the fervor and fire of nationalism expressed throughout various generations thereafter. During the Japanese occupation in World War II, the first Tagalog translation sung was *Diwa ng Bayan (Lupang mapalad, Na mutya ng silangan...)*. After this, *O Sintang Lupa (O sintang lupa, Perlas ng Silangan...)* by Balmaceda, Santos and Caballo was used from 1948 after the US declared our independence in 1946 up to 1956. Finally, under President Magsaysay, a version in Tagalog was made official and this was entitled *Lupang Hinirang* by Idefonso Santos & Julian Balmaceda, 1940 (*Bayang magiliw, perlas ng silangan...)*. The various versions in three different languages attest to a strong spirit of nationalism and love for freedom among our race emblazoned in the pages of our history. No wonder there were such loud protest when the national anthem was sung avant-garde during a famous Filipino boxer's recent matching event recently held in Las Vegas. Not long after, following the victorious year in 1898, the United States aggressively pushed its rule over the new republic and was

quick to smother the flames of new-found Filipino independence. It was then set on launching and expanding its imperial conquests in the attractive strongholds of the Pacific region, and the Philippines was a perfect strategic point to do so. In 1941, when the Philippines was occupied by the Japanese, General Aguinaldo would again lead the people to unite as one and cooperate wholeheartedly with the United States in order to save our democracy. After combined Filipino and American forces defeated the Japanese in 1946, former US President Harry Truman recognized our independence, and declared this on July 4, the same day America celebrates its independence. But President Diosdado P. Macapagal officially changed the date of Philippine independence from July 4 to June 12 with a grand celebration in 1962, with Gen. Aguinaldo, then 93, as Guest of Honor. As his Cabinet member, this columnist had the privilege of recommending this change. I believe that countries are supposed to celebrate their independence on the day they declared it, and not as other governments, especially colonizers, recognized it. These great deeds are more than enough reason to celebrate in June; but sadly for many, June 12 is just an ordinary holiday. We should think how our nation and its democracy have progressed from that time our brave heroes have first declared independence. This should make a good topic for our young students to reflect on, one way in which they and the future generations will retain in their memory the sacrifices made by our forefathers more than a century ago. (Philstar.com)

ADVERTISING AND ADVERTORIAL POLICIES  
Asian Journal Publications, Inc. ("AJPI") reserves the right to refuse to publish, in its sole and absolute discretion, any advertising and advertorial material submitted for publication by client. ("Client's Material")  
Submission of an advertisement or advertorial to an AJPI sales representative does not constitute a commitment by AJPI to publish a Client's Material. AJPI has the option to correctly classify any Client's Material and to delete objectionable words or phrases.  
Client represents and warrants that a Client's Material does not and will not contain any language or material which is libelous, slanderous or defamatory or invades any rights of privacy or publicity; does not and will not violate or infringe upon, or give rise to any adverse claim with respect to any common law or other right whatsoever (including, without limitation, any copyright, trademark, service mark or contract right) of any person or entity, or violate any other applicable law; and is not the subject of any litigation or claim that might give rise to any litigation.  
Publication of a Client's Material does not constitute an agreement to continue publication.  
Client agrees and covenants to indemnify AJPI and its officers against any and all loss, liability, damage, expenses, cost, charges, claims, actions, causes of action, recoveries, judgments, penalties, including outside attorneys' fees (individually and collectively "Claims") which AJPI may suffer by reason of (1) Client's breach of any of the representations, warranties and agreements herein or (2) any Claims by any third party relating in any way to Client's Material.  
AJPI will not be liable for failure to publish any Client's Material as requested or for more than one incorrect insertion of a Client's Material. In the event of an error, or omission in printing or publication of a Client's Material, AJPI shall be limited to an adjustment for the space occupied by the error, with maximum liability being cancellation of the cost of the first incorrect advertisement or republication of the correct advertisement.  
Under no circumstances shall Asian Publications, Inc. be liable for consequential damages of any kind.

<p><b>Main Office:</b> 1150 Wilshire Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90017-1904 Tel: (213) 250-9797 • Fax: (213) 481-0854 e-mail: info@asianjournalinc.com http://www.asianjournal.com</p> <p><b>Northern California:</b> 841 San Bruno Avenue West, Suites 12-14 San Bruno, CA 94066 Tel.: (650) 583-6818 • Fax: (650) 583-6819</p> <p><b>Las Vegas Sales Office:</b> 3700 W. Desert Inn Road Las Vegas, Nevada 89102 Tel.: (702) 792-6678 • Fax: (702) 792-6879</p>	<p><b>Manila Office:</b> Suite 208, The Manila Bank Corp. Bldg. 6772 Ayala Ave., Makati City 1226 Tel.: (632) 893-1720 • Telefax: (632) 813-8746</p> <p><b>New York and New Jersey:</b> 5 Penn Plaza, Ste. 1932, New York, NY 10001 Tel.: (212) 655-5426 • Fax: (212) 655-9241</p> <p><b>2500 Plaza NJ, Harborside Financial Center,</b> Jersey City, NJ 07311 Tel.: (201) 484-7249 • Fax: (201) 484-7201</p>
---	---

<p><b>ROGER LAGMAY ORIEL</b> Publisher &amp; Chairman of the Board</p> <p><b>CORA MACABAGDAL-ORIEL</b> President &amp; Executive Editor</p>
<p><b>MOMAR VISAYA</b> Editor-in-Chief</p> <p><b>JOSEPH PERALTA</b> Associate Editor</p> <p><b>SHARON ANN BATHAN</b> Features Editor</p> <p><b>DANTE SAMBILAY</b> Art Director</p>
<p><b>BANDER LAW FIRM, LLP</b> Legal Counsel</p>

ASIAN JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS, INC. publishes the Los Angeles Asian Journal, published twice a week; the Orange County and Inland Empire Asian Journal; Northern California Asian Journal; Las Vegas Asian Journal and the New York / New Jersey Asian Journal which are published once a week and distributed to Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange Counties, Northern California, Las Vegas and New York and New Jersey respectively.

Articles published in this paper do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the publisher. Letters to the Editor are welcome. Letters must contain complete name and return address. The materials, however, are subject to editing and revisions.

Contributions and advertising deadlines are every Mondays and Thursdays. For advertising rates and other information, please call the L.A. office at (213) 250-9797 or the Las Vegas Sales Office at (702) 792-6678 or send us an email at info@asianjournalinc.com