

A reprise of the recently concluded reactionary elections

by the Communist Party of the Philippines

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The recently concluded reactionary elections, seemingly “modernized” with automation, was as rotten to the core as ever. The return to power of the Aquino-Cojuangco clan and its Kamag-anak Inc., through apparent president-elect Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III; the repositioning of the Marcoses–Imelda, Ferdinand Jr. and Imee; the continuing domination of Congress by the Arroyos, now with Gloria Arroyo herself elected congressman; and many more of the like all point to the indictment of the recent reactionary elections as nothing but a big sham foisted by the reactionary ruling classes upon the masses.

Such rottenness reeks down the line with the perpetuation or return to power of big warlord-political dynasties such as the Dys of Isabela, the Singsons of Ilocos Sur, the Ortegas of La Union, the Pinedas of Pampanga, the Jalosjoses of Zamboanga, the Garcias of Cebu, the Dimaporos of Lanao and so on with the usual “guns, goons and gold,” and now electronic cheating.

Despite allout efforts to keep them from winning, a few progressives are expected to gain seats in Congress as representatives of grassroots party-list organizations. Within parliament, they can espouse the patriotic, democratic and other basic interests of the people and help advance the struggles of the people in coordination with the democratic mass movement. They will, however, always be outvoted by the overwhelming majority composed of representatives of imperialist, comprador and feudal interests, especially when it comes to fundamental issues concerning national sovereignty, land reform, national industrialization and the welfare of the toiling masses.

The recent election has resulted only in the perpetuation of the same old, rotten semicolonial and semifeudal system. However deep and intense the contradictions are among the rival political factions of the reactionary ruling classes, they remain one against the Filipino people, especially the toiling masses. They are all puppets of US imperialism and share the same class interests. They deceive the people with lies and empty promises, and apply the coercive apparatus of the reactionary state to suppress those who oppose and fight.

They dominate the elections and make a mockery of democracy and the people’s right to suffrage. Reactionary elections in the Philippines do not actually provide the people with much of a choice, except that between evil and the apparent lesser evil. Most of the time, the apparent lesser evil that gets installed into power soon becomes the primary evil and carries out policies even much worse than before.

The imperialists are abundant with praise for the seeming success of the recent elections. Among the first to congratulate the apparent winner, Aquino, even before his being officially proclaimed, was the newly appointed chief imperialist representative US Ambassador Harry Thomas Jr.

US imperialism has long been interested in seeing the apparent success of the reactionary elections with the hope of pacifying the people and achieving temporary compromise among the rival factions of the local ruling classes. It has thus been pushing for the automation of the elections with the hope that its swiftness, apparent efficiency and difficulty in proving fraud would at least make for some credibility. The ultimate objective of the US in this is the stability and preservation of the puppet ruling system for its own interest.

Many were initially awed by the rapid counting of votes and return of results through the newly implemented automated elections. They have long been tired of the tedious, long-drawn and highly contentious manual counting and canvassing of votes with weeks of waiting for the final results. Even critics of the automated elections who foretold of wholesale failures were almost ready to concede as election results rapidly streamed from the COMELEC computers to the media with initially apparent speed and efficiency.

However, information concerning electoral fraud began spilling out soon after, dampening many people's initial enthusiasm about the automated elections and casting aspersion on its credibility. Claims are now coming out regarding widespread rigging of votes through old and new ways, including the use of tainted flash cards, the pre-shading and switching of ballots, the failure of many PCOS machines and "refeeding" of ballots or resort to manual counting, the jamming of transmissions and many others. There are widespread suspicions of fraud over the flash cards that were hurriedly replaced just a few days before the elections. These have been further stoked by the COMELEC which has ordered the destruction of those flash cards.

The source code of the software used to run the machines has never been made available to the public despite repeated requests for independent public review. Several key security safeguards in the system, such as the ballot verification system, were not applied or were even suspiciously disabled. Transmission dates and time stamps were suspiciously way off the actual election period. Meanwhile, scores of PCOS machines were discovered in a private residence in Antipolo and believed to have illegally transmitted results. Sacks of flash cards, ballots and other election paraphernalia were discovered suspiciously dumped in a garbage site in Cagayan de Oro.

Hearings are now being conducted to look into numerous claims of fraud. It would now appear that all the major parties that contested the recent elections—including Arroyo's ruling party that is driven by its own sinister agenda of putting the entire process in doubt—are accusing the other parties and even the COMELEC of rigging the elections. These may indeed still snowball and trigger widespread doubt about the credibility of the results, including Aquino's victory. In the face of evidence of massive fraud and demands to investigate the matter, there are now threats of delay in the Congress' canvassing of votes and proclamation of winners in the presidential and vice-presidential contests.

Even as it denies dipping its hand in the imbroglio, the Arroyo ruling clique is taking advantage of such developments as part of its tactics. On the one hand, it is a way to put Aquino's claim to

the presidency in question right at the outset and further weaken it all throughout. On the other hand, it is part of its own power perpetuation scheme. With the operators of US imperialism continuing to intercede among the rival reactionary factions and come out with some compromise, the Arroyo camp is now resorting to the slickest of tactics so as not to radically upset the ruling puppet reactionary system with outrightly illegal maneuvers and avoid openly clashing with the wishes and interest of their imperialist master.

As the different rival factions of the reactionary ruling classes continue to jostle against one another, the Filipino people are again being provided a valuable lesson revealing the reactionary class nature and rottenness of Philippine politics. More and more, it becomes clear to the people that they do not enjoy real democracy under the ruling political system, and that the reactionary elections are only there to make them believe that democracy exists. The democracy that the ruling system provides is one that is enjoyed only by the ruling classes of imperialist agents, big landlords, big bourgeois compradors and big bureaucrat capitalists who lord it over the downtrodden workers, peasants and other oppressed classes and sectors.

For the people to enjoy real democracy, they must make revolution to overthrow the oppressive puppet state of the reactionary ruling classes. They must replace it with one that is built directly from their strength, especially from the mass of the workers and peasants, on the basis of their national and democratic aspirations. Only under a people's democratic government can national sovereignty be thoroughly upheld, genuine agrarian reform achieved, national industries built and the other basic interests of the people given guarantee and priority.

As the reactionary elections once again reveal the hopeless rottenness of the entire ruling system, more and more are turning to the revolutionary path with the aspiration of building a liberated, democratic, bright and prosperous future for the country and its people.

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