

## Elections for Revolution

A month from now, the country would be holding its next national and local elections. Though the popular mood is for participation, the popular despair is on the lack of worthy candidates. A gap exists between the belief in the legitimacy of elections as an arena for the contestation of power and the doubt on the credibility of the contestants. This fissure in the system serves as a gateway of progressives to the electoral landscape that eagerly awaits new faces offering new directions.

Yet despite this opening, the mainstream left has chosen to condemn itself to the outside of the political exercise and, consequently, of the popular consciousness. Its slogan "revolution not elections" betrays a mechanical understanding of not only the nature of the electoral struggle but of the revolutionary dynamic as well. It perpetuates the dangerous left error of dismissing elections as essentially reformist, when the pressing theoretical and practical task is on how to make electoral means serve revolutionary ends.

The task is made more urgent at a time when once sacred models of the left are rapidly being desecrated for their unpopularity and unsoundness. The current search for new visions of the alternative society is leading to the question of elections, as the death of the one-party state concept resurrects the necessity for a democratic process of political competition among different groups in the post-revolutionary arrangement. In this changing context, electoral struggle becomes doubly strategic: it serves not only as one of the intertwined roads to the new order but promises to be one of its central features as well.

In our cover photo, the poster at the back of the woman and child screams: *Gobyernong tuta ng Kano wakasan!* (End the lapdog government of the Americans!). How in relation to the coming elections, it does not say. Worse, among its "lapdog" presidential candidates is former Senate President Jovito Salonga who led the historic anti-US bases victory in the Senate and who is now actively being supported by a broad coalition of smaller left formations and non-governmental organizations. Members of this coalition are exploring the rugged electoral frontier for electoral territories, hoping to acquire the necessary experience and infrastructure for the long drawn battle of conquest ahead.

