

Mabuhay C. Bangko release

Has Senator Hontiveros

Finally Embraced PBBM?

By Mabuhay C. Bangko

Like her pretentious counterparts in the Liberal Party, namely, Senators Kiko Pangilinan and Bam Aquino, it's pretty obvious that Senator Risa Hontiveros has also embraced President Bongbong Marcos and his beleaguered administration.

This is confirmed by the recent developments in the Senate, i.e., when the three senators, who have branded themselves as alleged firebrands of the political opposition just last year, are now smiling side by side certain senators known for their dogged loyalty to the current tenant in Malacañang.

At the very least, Pangilinan, Aquino and Hontiveros are now political stooges of President Marcos, and are enjoying the perks and privileges of their alliance with everything that the pro-Marcos senators enjoy.

For them, to hell with what they promised the voters who installed them in the Senate. To them, what is important is that they are now reaping the benefits a lapdog senator periodically gets from the administration. Nagpakatuta na ni BBM sila, so to speak, and they have no regret being plain and simple political opportunists.

Being political opportunists, joining the administration bandwagon in the Senate gives them an all-expense paid, even financially and strategically beneficial, opportunity to strike at Vice President Sara Duterte when the latter's impeachment trial takes place in the Senate this July 2026.

Pangilinan most likely looks forward to the trial because it's a rare, all expenses paid (by the government, of course) chance for him to hit back at his rival for the vice presidency in the 2022 elections. With all the nasty inuendoes Pangilinan's campaign threw against Sara Duterte, why the VP Duterte camp has not so far sought Pangilinan's inhibition in the impeachment trial is baffling.

Actually, what Pangilinan, Aquino and Hontiveros are doing cuts both ways. They have a gratuitous (government paid) chance to weaken VP Duterte's presidential run in 2028 by doing their best to discredit and embarrass her during the impeachment trial.

Their next step is to wait for the closing months of the Bongbong Marcos administration, and then disassociate themselves from him, and proceed to the second phase of their political opportunism, i.e., to present one of them, probably Hontiveros, as the "ideal" choice for president in 2028, as against frontrunner Sara Duterte and against whosoever presidential candidate will be given the "kiss of death" by Malacañang. By creating a third ticket, they hope to get another chance at reinstating an abusive and corrupt administration in power in 2028.

When that time happens, the public should expect all the opportunists in the dilawan camp to once again invoke the name of the late Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. in their organized attempt to regain power for the notoriously corrupt Liberal Party (LP). It will be back to hardship for the Filipinos if that happens.

Knowing the history of the LP is enough to discourage any sane voter from electing Pangilinan, Aquino, Hontiveros and their kind.

Under President Manuel Roxas (who was from the LP), the Philippine government allowed the infamous Parity Rights to be appended to the 1935 Constitution. That permitted Americans the same economic rights as Filipinos in vital industries in the country, including manufacturing,

banking, energy, transportation, media and telecommunications, infrastructure, the retail trade, insurance, petroleum, and even the practice of the professions and ownership of land in the Philippines.

His successor, President Elpidio Quirino (his partymate in the LP) continued the same pro-American policies. Quirino's reelection attempt in 1953 was recorded as one of the dirtiest polls of all time. Fortunately, he lost to President Ramon Magsaysay of the rival Nacionalista Party.

President Diosdado Macapagal, another LP politician, was extremely embarrassed when his government's shady involvement in the infamous Harry Stonehill scandal was exposed by his Secretary of Justice, Jose Diokno.

Macapagal unceremoniously stopped the investigation of the scandal by firing Diokno and deporting Stonehill. He lost his reelection bid in November 1965 to President Ferdinand Marcos

After his defeat, Macapagal never attended any campaign rally of the LP. He was conspicuously absent at the LP proclamation rally at Plaza Miranda when it was bombed in August 1971.

As President of the 1971 Constitutional Convention, Macapagal delayed the drafting of a new charter. After martial law was proclaimed in September 1972, Macapagal personally cobbled up the notorious 1973 Constitution that allowed the Marcos dictatorship to run the country. He even personally handed the draft charter to Marcos in Malacañang.

President Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, the last of the LP leaders, was the worst. His administration was notorious for the large-scale, in-your-face pork barrel scandal where LP legislators held sway.

Like his mother President Corazon Aquino before him, Aquino III tried to exempt his family's vast Hacienda Luisita from the coverage of the comprehensive agrarian reform law. When the Supreme Court under Chief Justice Renato Corona effectively disallowed the hacienda's exemption once and for all in 2011, Aquino III had his Senate remove Corona in an impeachment trial in 2012.

Let's face it. The LP politicians seek and hold power for their selfish interests. Before it gets too late for comfort, President Bongbong Marcos should distance himself from these dilawan political opportunists who will betray him before the 2028 elections. Mark my words. ■