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[Countries, Philippines](#)



Pia A. Kasaysayan 1: Philippine History Reflection Paper A Modern " Malolos Republic": A Reflection on M. Guerrero's " The Underside of the Malolos Republic" It's generally acknowledged among Filipinos and some people around the globe that the Philippines is among one of the most corrupt countries in the world. In 2012, the Philippines ranked 105 with a 3.4 Corruption Percentage Index in Transparency International's compilation of data from 176 countries. The CPI score ranks countries from 0-10, with 0 indicating that a country is perceived to be highly corrupt, and 10 means that a country is perceived to be very clean (Transparency International, 2012). Corruption proves to be that longstanding problem that Filipinos and Filipino politicians always face. Of the many means of political corruption in the Philippines today, believed to be among the most rampant are graft, bribery, embezzlement, electoral fraud, backdoor deals, cronyism, and nepotism (Conde, 2007). Just by taking a look at the politicians currently holding office can the last type be evident. One family sometimes holds a seat in office for generations, ranging from barangay captain to the presidency. The political arena in the Philippines is largely comprised of and governed by ruling political dynasties, instead of political parties (Eder & Vallarta, 2007). Corruption truly remains rampant in the Philippine society. What astounds me is the fact that it has been so rampant for so very long. According to Milagros Guerrero's " The Underside of the Malolos Republic, " political corruption has been with the Filipinos since the very establishment of a republic in our country. Emilio Aguinaldo's term as presidency seemed at-par with that of modern-day Filipino presidents like Joseph " Erap" Estrada or Gloria Macapagal " GMA" Arroyo in terms of its cleanliness and

transparency. Where Aguinaldo's term exhibited cronyism, or appointing longstanding friends into positions of authority regardless of their qualifications, so did Erap's and GMA's. Erap's infamous Midnight Cabinet consisted of shady characters with which he would spend the night drinking liquor with. These men were often powerful players in society, both from the public and private sectors. This group of men, from politicians to businessmen, often won favor and other perks from the Estrada administration. Another example of cronyism is GMA's alleged "midnight appointment" of former Chief Justice Renato Corona just before she was to step down from office. This mirrors Aguinaldo's own treatment of his former generals and comrades at arms in the revolution. These men were soon elevated into positions of high rank, taking advantage of the sudden absence of the Spaniards to prey on unsuspecting fellow Filipinos. It was also from cronyism that came graft and embezzlement, manifestations of a politician's greed for more power and personal belongings. Graft is the unscrupulous use of a politician's authority for personal gain. Embezzlement, in the context of political corruption in the Philippines, is basically taking money for personal use in violation of a trust, such as the tax law. Among Aguinaldo's cronies and supporters, there were quite a few who used their name and political power to exhort Filipinos into giving up land and money. As governor of Cagayan, Daniel Tirona swindled the town of hundreds of thousands of pesos. This is no different from modern day governors who seek out the favor of the current president in office, in order to gain more power. Embezzlement, when committed by high government officials, becomes an even graver crime against the state. Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and

some officials of her government were often suspected of embezzlement. There were a number of notable political scandals during her tenure as president, two of which were the notorious Fertilizer Fund Scam and the NBN-ZTE Deal. Even until today are Erap and his indulgent lifestyle become the stuff of urban legend and stigmatization. While Aguinaldo himself is mostly spared from such a demeaning legacy, as he is often lauded as the hero-president of the Philippine Revolution, his colleagues and supporters simply cannot be awarded the same protection. Jose Ignacio Pua, Aguinaldo's brother-in-law and general, was not well received in Albay and other Bicol areas where he milked his constituents out of home and land. Mentioned above, the infamous Daniel Tirona was hardly also the symbol for political and financial cleanliness. While it is our politicians' ongoing promise to eradicate corruption, it's obvious that with its roots so deep into our history, it will be no easy task. In order to truly have a clean, just government it's up to the people to vote for whom they think deserves it and for those politicians to serve the people fairly and selflessly. As simple as it is, this conduct is often forgotten due to mostly selfish reasons. While corruption in the time of Aguinaldo and that of past presidents' leave indelible stains in the history of the Philippines, our only solace is in the hope that future generations will not have to experience the same things. Works Cited Conde, C. H. (2007, March 13). Philippines most corrupt, survey says - The New York Times. Retrieved March 3, 2013, from The New York Times: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/13/business/worldbusiness/13iht-peso.4891792.html?_r=1 & Eder, E., & Vallarta, A. (2007, April 20). GMA News Research: Political families reign in almost all of RP | News | GMA Online.

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