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## Protest Songs in EDSA 1: Decoding the People's Dream of an Unfinished Revolution

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**Abstract:** *"Twenty-six years after Edsa I, also called the 1986 People Power Revolution, exactly what has changed? People old enough to remember ask the question with a feeling of frustration, while those who are too young find it hard to relate to an event too remote in time."* (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 25 of February 2012, 12)

The People Power-1 Revolution (also known as EDSA Revolution of 1986 or the Yellow Revolution) was a series of mass demonstrations in the Philippines that took place from February 22-25, 1986. The nonviolent revolution led to the overthrow of then President Ferdinand Marcos that would eventually end his 21-year totalitarian rule and the restoration of democracy in the country. The quote cited above generally represent the sentiment of the people in celebrating EDSA-1 yearly, such feelings of frustration, hopelessness, indifference, and even a question of relevance, eroded the once glorified and momentous event in Philippine history.

The paper aims to provide a historical discussion through textual analysis on the People Power-1 Revolution using as lens the three well known protest songs during that time namely: *Bayan Ko*, *Handog ng Pilipino sa Mundo* and *Magkaisa*. Protest songs are associated with a social movement of which the primary aim is to achieve socio-political





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in the last stanza induce the listener for an active role and challenge them to act for the country in attaining its former glorified state and condition. Such struggle of Filipinos for independence is also reflective in both American and Japanese occupation of the Philippines.

On the second note, "Bayan Ko" as a protest song continued its relevance even after colonization. Initially, during the late 50's and 60's

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As a protest song, "Handog ng Pilipino sa Mundo" is classified as a Magnetic Song as it tends to persuade and attract listeners to join or support the cause of the movement in this case the EDSA Revolution. This reality can be seen in stanza 2, 3 and 4 of the song. Stanza 2 of the song attract listeners by expressing how proud one to be a "Filipino" to be one with the cause of EDSA which is to gain back freedom and democracy. Also manifested in the same stanza is the Filipino spirit of "bayanihan" as expressed in the words "magkakapit-bisig." Stanza 2 clearly express the function of protest songs which is it promotes cohesion and solidarity in a movement. In achieving the goal of soliciting outside support or sympathy, stanza 3 more particularly the words "Handog ng Pilipino sa Mundo" provided a very clear indication for this. Moreover, stanza 3 also reinforce the value system of individuals who are a priori supporters of the movement by re-instating the goals of EDSA which are "katotohan," "kalayaan" and "katarungan." Stanza 4 on the other hand entails unity among people and among social classes. Stanza 1, 5 and 6 pertains to valuing democracy, social justice, and a call for unity of all Filipino.

The following are the lyric of the song "Handog ng Pilipino sa Mundo":



The following are the lyric of the song "Magkaisa":

Ngayon ganap ang hirap sa mundo  
Unawa ang kailangan ng tao  
Ang pagmamahal sa kapwa'y ilaan  
Isa lang ang ugat na ating  
pinagmulan  
Tayong lahat ay magkakalahi  
Sa unos at agos ay huwag padadala

Chorus  
Panahon na (may pag-asa kang  
matatanaw)  
Ng pagkakaisa (bagong umaga,  
bagong araw)  
Kahit ito (sa atin Siya'y nagmamahal)  
Ay hirap at dusa  
Magkaisa (may pag-asa kang  
matatanaw)  
At magsama (bagong umaga, bagong  
araw)  
Kapit-kamay (sa atin Siya'y  
nagmamahal)  
Sa bagong pag-asa

Ngayon may pag-asang natatanaw  
May bagong araw, bagong umaga  
Pagmamahal ng Diyos, isipin mo  
tuwina

(Repeat Chorus)

Magkaisa (may pag-asa kang  
matatanaw)  
At magsama (bagong umaga, bagong  
araw)  
Kapit-kamay (sa atin Siya'y  
nagmamahal)  
Sa bagong pag-asa.

## DECODING THE DREAM: UNFINISHED REVOLUTION

Protest songs served as the best imprint of the people expression and aspiration in that very important historical place of time. The protest song "Bayan Ko" that gained its prominence in the 70's and 80's during the Martial Law and EDSA Revolution period, was in reality a time capsule of a "nationalist struggle" for genuine independence and socio-political transformation that its origin can be traced back from the colonial period of the Philippines. The song "Bayan Ko" had its roots from the KKK and the Revolution 1898, in fighting for the Independence of the "Inang Bayan." This imbedded "nationalist struggle" will carry on as Filipinos will defend their independence against the American and later on against the Japanese. Such "nationalist mentality" that will again resurface during the Martial Law Years and gain climax in EDSA People Power I Revolution. On the other hand, protest songs like "Handog ng Pilipino sa Mundo" and "Magkaisa" expressed the culminating spirit that was already won by the people in EDSA in 1986, values and principles such as hope, freedom, justice, and democracy.

In decoding the people's dream that was EDSA People Power I Revolution, it remained nothing but an unfinished revolution. In 1987, Social Psychologist Dr. Patricia Licuanan pointed out the danger of not sustaining the very essence and spirit of People Power and morphing it into a "fad." For Dr. Licuanan, people power is not merely the revival of the savage state of the Philippines, but its primary objective is to be "truly just" by equally distributing the "fruits" of economic prosperity



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Individual loyalty must move upward-  
-- from the citizen to the nation. But





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