



# Philippines Australia Solidarity Group NEWSLETTER

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PASG JOINS LABOUR DAY  
MARCH AND THE  
ABORIGINAL PEOPLE'S  
PROTEST AND CULTURAL  
SURVIVAL FESTIVAL



PASG Members Participating in the Labour Day March

Philippine Australia Solidarity Group (PASG) members marched behind their PASG banner during Labour Day to once again be in solidarity with workers and on this historic occasion the march was also in solidarity with indigenous peoples. PASG also joined the Aboriginal peoples in the successful launching of their "Indigenous Cultural Survival Festival" from Musgrave Park earlier that week. For this year's Labour Day, Aboriginal peoples were invited to lead the traditional march. Shortly after hundreds of Aboriginal people started the march, came the procession from West End protesting the disruption to their community caused by EXPO. Musgrave Park and EXPO stand adjacent to one another, yet each place produces different political meanings. As a place, Musgrave Park is the site of political struggle against EXPO, the place symbolising white invasion of Aboriginal land in the year of Australia's Bicentennial.

As the march progressed, certain march organisers mistreated the Aboriginal peoples. In protest, they refused, together with other supporters including PASG, to enter the Exhibition grounds and instead staged their own sit-in demonstration at the entrance of the grounds. Eventually Aboriginal peoples and their supporters were invited inside and provided with a platform from which to speak. Bob Wetherall, the coordinator of the "Indigenous Cultural Survival Festival" explained that Aboriginal people follow their own cultural style of marching and that it was unrealistic to expect their community of old and young alike to march to the imperative of white demands. More importantly, Bob Wetherall welcomed solidarity with his people and encouraged everyone to participate in the concluding days of their festival at Musgrave Park.

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## BASES AND BEYOND

### THE ASIA-PACIFIC

#### PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGN

The Asia-Pacific Peace and Development Brigade is still looking for recruits from Queensland to join around 200 other Australians and several hundred other regional delegates for a four week educational tour of the Philippines. The Brigade begins on 26 December, 1988 and ends on 22 January, 1989 and it aims to raise awareness of the links between foreign military bases and development with peace and justice in our region.

This first Brigade begins in the Philippines where the U.S. maintain their biggest overseas military presence as part of their compliment of over 350 Bases throughout the Asia-Pacific. The Bases are currently up for renewal in the Philippines and the Brigade initiates a regional strategy to prevent them from simply being shuffled from one state to another. Bases already dispossess indigenous peoples from their traditional lands (the Tuomotuans in French Polynesia, Marshall Islanders in Micronesia, Agtas in the Philippines and Aboriginal people in Australia) and when the American bases are removed from the Philippines they must not be relocated on indigenous peoples homelands in Belau or in the Northern Territory.

The first two weeks in the Philippines will involve exposure with a local community, especially indigenous peoples. A conference in the third week focuses on the struggle against nuclear

This year's Labour Day week is especially significant because it highlighted Musgrave Park as a politicised place where Aboriginal people throughout Australia met to talk, eat, sing, dance and demonstrate their survival as indigenous people. To Aboriginal people, Musgrave Park has constantly been their meeting place, their territory; the land that as indigenous peoples they have lived upon for thousands of years. White Australia denies Aboriginal land rights and imposes western sports in the pursuit of physical health and economic development as the preferred meaning for Musgrave Park. Festival activities never received media attention in stark contrast to coverage of EXPO.

Land rights was the central focus of the festival as banners, marches and speeches proclaimed "ONE MOB, ONE VOICE, ONE LAND". As one Aboriginal person stated "it's the good EXPO versus the bad EXPO and international people are going to know about it". Media statements from the police and politicians created the illusion of the caring, rational and liberal-minded state rightfully abhorred by Aboriginal protest and violence. In denying the continual violence perpetrated against the indigenous people who traditionally and contemporaneously belong to Musgrave Park, the state and the media can assert that violence is caused by Aboriginal people. By denying Musgrave Park as a place of Aboriginality, it is easier to perpetuate over 200 years of racism and ethnocide and reject self-determination for the indigenous peoples of this country.



Bob Wetherall at the  
Labour Day Platform Upon  
Invitation by the March  
Organisers

colonialism and indigenous peoples will speak to the social, political, economic and geographical ties that create our inter-dependency in the Asia-Pacific region. The final week culminates in a long "peace walk" to Clark Air Field and Subic Naval Base.

Cost is \$1800 and includes air fare, food and all internal travel and accommodation. Contact PASG or the national campaign committee in Sydney (02) 267 1761 as soon as possible. Seats are difficult to obtain over the holiday season and a down payment will of \$200 is required by the end of July.

#### MEDIA COVERAGE UNDERMINING LIBERATION

#### MOVEMENTS AND THE ASIA-PACIFIC

#### NUCLEAR FREE CAMPAIGN

Across the Asia-Pacific region in recent weeks, national liberation movements and indigenous peoples campaigns for a nuclear free and independent Pacific have been under media attack. French terrorism resulting in the murder of many Kanaks was callously dismissed as clever gendarmes outsmarting ignorant savages willing to use violence to force political change in New

Caledonia. Vanuatu Prime Minister, Walter Lini, has issued deportation orders for six members of the popular West Papuan band, Black Brothers, and their families. "How can Melanesians expel Melanesians from Melanesian soil?" questioned Moses Werror, chairperson of the OPM Revolutionary Council operating out of Papua New Guinea. The Black Brothers arrived in Vanuatu five years ago and were given permanent resident status by the government but have been expelled apparently for their close friendship with Barak Sope, the sacked Minister for Tourism who led demonstrations against land reforms proposed by the Lini government. West Papuans and Kanaks are still struggling for Melanesian decolonisation and they are in the forefront of the nuclear free and independent Pacific movement. Speakers representing these indigenous peoples will feature prominently in the Asia-Pacific Peace and Development Campaign later this year in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, a story written by Louise Williams in Manila has appeared in The Sydney Morning Herald, Saturday, 30 April, 1988 under the headline 'Club Red' holidays for trendy radicals, and

reappeared later in New Zealand. The story surfaced when the Aquino government confronted Foreign Minister Bill Hayden with alleged evidence of Australian visitors to 'Club Red', the euphemism used by the right wing in the Philippines to denounce supposed youthful idealists taking "exposure" visits to strongholds of the New Peoples Army. The 'Club Red' story flippantly dismisses the Peace Brigade as yet another trendy adventure holiday among the communists, while begrudgingly admitting in the final sentence that the campaign is linked to legal progressive organisations. It is apparent that such media campaigns are designed to discredit liberation struggles and the growing solidarity movement in the Asia-Pacific, one manifestation of which is the Peace Brigade.

#### New Constitution Discriminates against

#### Indigenous Peoples

(continuation of statement to UNWGIP, August 1987 by indigenous delegates from the Philippines)

While the newly ratified constitution provides for the establishment of autonomous regions for the Muslims of Mindanao and the Igorots of the Cordillera, there are contradictory provisions, negating genuine autonomy. We have, for example Article XII, Sec.5: "The state, subject to the provisions of this constitution and national development policies and programs, shall protect the rights of the indigenous cultural communities to their ancestral lands to ensure their economic, social and cultural well-being".

Unfortunately, the National Development Plan for the next five years is designed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to ensure the repaying of the huge \$27.8 billion foreign debt. The implications, just like any debtor country are indeed staggering. Specifically, for our indigenous peoples, this means:

1. Lesser state allocation for our basic human and community needs. Since more than 70% of our people live below the poverty line, poverty related diseases will surely increase, together with our illiteracy rate.

2. More of our ancestral lands will be forcibly opened for plunder by transnational big businesses leading to more displacements and landgrabbing.

3. More repression to bring about political instability which is a pre-condition for more investments and loans.

Last July 15, Pres. Aquino signed Executive Order 220 creating a Cordillera Administrative Region. Sadly, the Executive Order did not have the benefit of a broad democratic debate. Rather, it favored a few and isolated group. This government action is now causing divisions and tensions in our Cordillera communities.

Our right to participate in determining our economic plans are likewise violated. Shortly after Pres. Aquino assumed office, the European Economic Community (EEC) granted a \$20 million "goodwill" development package called the Central Cordillera Agricultural Project (CECAP). We were not consulted. It was only after vigorous, expensive and time consuming lobby work that our right to be consulted was recognized.

Madame chairperson and members of the Working Group, the plague of militarization, discrimination, poverty and landgrabbing continues, increasing our agony. For this reason, we have submitted to an European government our opposition to its nomination of Pres. C. Aquino for the Noble Peace Prize Award. We are now organizing an international campaign to support our opposition.

(conclusion of the indigenous delegates statement to the UNWGIP to appear in the next issue)

#### NEXT MEETING

PASG next meets on Thursday the 30th of June, 1988 at 102 Macdonald Road in the Albion Centre. The meeting starts at 7:30 pm and we will have an informal discussion with John Thompson, Secretary of the Plumbers Union who went on the trade union delegation to the Philippines from April 22nd to May 5th. The Kilusang Mayo Uno, the largest progressive trade union centre in the Philippines, organised the two week solidarity program.

#### WHAT IS PASG?

*The PASG (Qld) is part of a national organisation which has offices in all state capitals and in Canberra. It brings together people of diverse backgrounds and includes both Australians and Filipinos living in Australia. As well, it has close links with Filipino Community Organisations in Australia and the Philippines. Among its members there are people with extensive Philippines experience with information on trade unions, women's organisations, industrial working conditions, peasant organisations, rural working conditions, teachers working conditions and schools, the role of the churches (christian and non-christian) and the conditions of tribal Filipinos. The PASG Brisbane provides resource materials such as videos and slides as well as speakers.*

*The objectives of the PASG are to generate support in Australia for all Filipino organisations working for genuine democracy, freedom and sovereignty, to end Australian military aid to the Philippines and to oppose all forms of foreign intervention in the affairs of the Filipino people.*

For a one year subscription to the Philippine Australia Solidarity Group Queensland Newsletter, Philippine Issues and Bulletin send \$10.00 to:

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