

Philippines Australia Solidarity Group NEWSLETTER

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LINGAP-PINOY PHILIPPINE HELP

A CAMPAIGN FOR FILIPINO VICTIMS OF NATURAL AND MAN-MADE DISASTERS

Zenaida Delica, the Executive Director of the Citizens' Disaster Rehabilitation Center (CDRC) in Manila, addressed a public meeting at the Albion Peace Centre on May 10th. The meeting was sponsored by the Philippines Australia Solidarity Group (PASG), Queensland Development Education Committee, Philippines-Australia Christian Forum, Action for World Development, the Uniting Church Social Responsibility Section and Kabalikat.

CDRC's national information tour is the start of a two-year campaign in Australia to generate material support for Filipino internal refugees and the children of war. Zenaida spoke about how they are affected by environmental destruction and Aquino's "total war" policy.



**SAVE A REFUGEE, REBUILD A LIFE
SUSTAIN THE PHILIPPINE ENVIRONMENT!**

Task Force Detainees' Human Rights Report covering Jan 1 - Nov 14, 1989 shows a grim picture: 1,875 cases of arrest and detention, 312 tortured, 141 salvaged, 249 cases of physical and mental assault, 249 destruction of property cases, 26 massacres, 29 frustrated massacres, 70 cases of forced evacuation, 5 cases of hamletting.

As well as these human rights abuses, there are also the more widespread violations of the people's right to live in dignity: the right to earn, the right to health and the right to survive. The violation of these rights

is clearly exemplified by the most recent group of victims, the "internal refugees". The armed conflict between government forces and rebel troops has forced thousands of families to evacuate to safer ground. The government's "total war" has turned them into refugees in their own land.

In Justice and Peace Review (2nd Qtr '89) a summary, shows that during the 18 months of Jan '88 - June '89: 74,185 families (450,099 persons) were displaced. Behind the statistics are, "numerous reports that, taken together, paint in vibrant, traumatic colors, the travails of people forced to flee their homes, their lands, their barrios."

CDRC is a voluntary humanitarian non-government organisation working to realize a citizenry-based and development-oriented disaster response and preparedness program in the Philippines. It was set up because of the situation of the country's environment. It explains:

"Disasters, whether due to natural forces or man's activities have already become part of the Philippine environment. However, many Filipinos are

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vulnerable to disasters not because of their unpreparedness but because abject poverty and marginalization, brought about by economic inequality, injustice and government neglect, have made them more susceptible to onslaughts and adverse effects of calamities. Many communities are vulnerable to disasters because the unrestricted damages to the natural environment or ecosystem that provide natural protection to floods, typhoons and other calamities, have allowed disasters to strike at will and more ruthlessly, displacing poor communities."

A National Midweek (Sept 13, 1989) report on the Philippine environment gives an alarming picture:

Of the country's 30 million hectare total land area, only 7.1 million hectares are still considered forest. According to an Asian Development Bank study, logging syndicates are devouring the Philippine forests at an annual rate of 350,000 to 400,000 hectares, "among the highest in the world." Devastation of the forests has resulted in soil erosion of about 100,000 hectares annually to a depth of one metre, that is about one billion cubic metres of soil every year.

"If it's not a typhoon, it's a coup.
If it's not a fire, it's a free fire zone." --- Midweek, Jan 31, 1990

There is also the silting of the country's longest wharf and, from 1982 to 1986 alone, five floods claimed 241 lives and cost millions in property loss. In 1987, 25% of crop failure was attributed to drought. Just the loss of biodiversity is cause for alarm. Some 18 species are nearly extinct.

In coastal areas, mangroves and trees which grow in shallow waters are used as timber and habitats for commercially harvested fish, prawns, crabs and oysters. They have undergone a decline of about 500,000 hectares in the 1920's to 38,000 today. Consequently, fish production is reducing and hence, the coastal dwellers' income and food is dwindling. Half the Philippine coral reefs, the richest and most diverse in the world, are depleted.

Most of the Philippine seas, rivers and lakes are now excessively polluted. The "red tide" poisoning of fish in August-October 1988, caused 20 deaths and sickness in many families.

The crisis in the Philippines needs more than the efforts of government and non-government institutions. The international community can certainly do a lot, as exemplified by the South African experience. There are, throughout the globe, millions of Filipino migrants. According to the 1989 Immigration figures, Filipinos in Australia number 50,000. Many were forced by economic hardship to migrate, but their hearts are still close to their homeland. Most Filipino organisations in Australia have humanitarian projects for their compatriots at home.

There are more than 80 Australian multi-national companies operating in the Philippines. Like other foreign investors, they viciously exploit local labour and pay the Philippines very little tax. Australian-owned clubs in the Philippines victimize the youth by luring them to be entertainers, 'companions' and prostitutes.

Australian involvement also takes the form of military and development aid that does not benefit the people. Recently, Australia joined 19 countries in contributing \$30 million per annum to the much criticised Philippine Assistance Plan (PAP) (including \$2 million in military aid to a country over-loaded with military hardware). The conditions attached to the PAP are the same IMF-World Bank conditions that have already resulted in the aggravation of the Philippine foreign debt problem, concentration of aid benefits in the hands of the business sector and the upper middle class, further marginalization of the poor and the powerless, and the exacerbation of land and income disparities.

The Australian Government and some individual Australian entrepreneurs and the users of sex tours and the like, share responsibility for the plight of the Philippines. But since the fall of the Marcos dictatorship, there has been little help. Perhaps the unconditional support for the Aquino regime, offered by the government and the media, has

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CAMPAIGN TO STOP THE OPEN PIT MINING OPERATIONS OF BENGUET CORPORATION

The current struggle of the indigenous people against open pit mining in Itogon, Benguet province has, as at April 4, resulted in 28 being charged in court for barricading key areas and obstructing Benguet Corporation's mining operations. A petition is in circulation that, hopefully, will pave the way for grassroots legislation against open pit mining in the area. The Organization of Itogon Residents would appreciate international support and have sent the following letter:

Dear Friends,

We, the residents, of Itogon municipality, Benguet province request your assistance in our campaign against the open pit mining operations of Benguet Corporation in our communities.

The scraping of the mountains has already caused the drying up of our water sources and the destruction of our lands. We face further dislocation when the Grand Antamok Project will proceed. BC plans to scoop earth from this site in search for gold and dump the soil on the nearby communities. Antamok, which has been a mining area of the indigenous peoples for hundreds of years, will be buried.

We have been extracting gold from the mountains and rivers long before the foreign conquerors came. But we take only what we need for survival and share our blessings with the others through our canaas and feasts.

The corporation squeezes every ounce of gold and even goes to the extent of destroying the forests and the natural contour of the earth in its feverish search for gold so that the few top officials in the corporate ladder can live like kings. It pays taxes to the central government, leaving our communities underdeveloped.

Meanwhile, the workers get only a meager share of the gold and live in cramped quarters. With open pit mining, 1,000 workers were retrenched by BC in 1989 as machines took over the task of the workers.

We oppose the destruction of our mountains and our communities and the economic dislocation that will result when both small-scale miner and corporate worker will be displaced by machines. We have established our roots in this land which has given us life and which will also be the life source for our children.

We therefore call on your support in our struggle against this destructive activity which will result in ecological damage and economic loss for a great number of people.

We also call on you to support our campaign for a sound development program which will conserve the environment and benefit the majority.

TIMPUYOG DAGITI UMILI ITI ITOGON
(ORGANIZATION OF ITOGON RESIDENTS,
ITOGON, BENGUET, PHILIPPINES)

Letters of support should be sent to:
Organization of Itogon Residents,
c/- Cordillera Resource Center
for Indigenous People's Rights,
Rm. 314 Laperal Bldg., Session Rd.,
Baguio City 2600, Philippines.

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deterred the public from responding up to now. It should not. Under Aquino, human rights abuses now exceed those of the Marcos years, and have risen to unprecedented proportions comparable to the hellish years of World War II.

The public meeting at the Albion Centre supported the resolution that, "This meeting of Filipino & Australian organisations & individuals resolves to form the LINGAP-PINOY PHILIPPINE HELP CAMPAIGN in Queensland and take all necessary measures to generate material support and solidarity from the Australian public and Filipino migrants, for the self-reliant efforts of the people in the Philippines who suffer daily from natural and man-induced disasters."

We strongly urge all PASG members and friends to join the Campaign. Contact the Queensland co-ordinator:
Teddy Tinambacan, P.O. Box 633,
Capalaba QLD 4157 Tel. (07) 289 8226

«««« INTERVIEW: ZENAIDA DELICA »»»»

Citizens' Disaster Rehabilitation Center

During her recent visit to Brisbane, Zenaida talked to Kerry Thatcher on the 4ZZZ Radio programme Megahertz. The following is an excerpt from that interview.

4ZZZ: What does CDRC do?

ZENAIDA: The Citizens Disaster Rehabilitation Center in the Philippines is giving relief services to victims of disasters. By disaster, we mean those victims of natural disasters like typhoons, flood and ~~victims of man-made disasters~~ like the ongoing war in the country.

4ZZZ: How do you go about doing that work?

ZENAIDA: Well, first of all we survey the area to assess the damages done by a calamity, then we contact the organization and we conceptualize or brainstorm on possible assistance that they would need. Then if they need relief assistance, we deliver relief services. Then after the relief phase, we have rehabilitation assistance.

4ZZZ: How do you organize aid? I mean, do you just give material relief to people or just give material relief to some people and rehabilitation to the others?

ZENAIDA: No. We give this through our affiliates. We have 14 regional affiliates that operate in the country. We give this assistance through our regional affiliates and these affiliates are the ones directly involved in the organized groups in the countryside or in the communities. So they are with the peoples' organizations in assessing the damage of the calamity and they consult the people on what kind of rehabilitation projects that these people would like to undertake.

4ZZZ: What's the difference between dealing with people who have suffered disasters like flood or typhoon and dealing with people who are internal refugees from militarization?

ZENAIDA: The approaches are very much different in the sense that the victims of natural disasters are usually not displaced from their communities, while the victims of war are displaced or dislocated and they usually transfer to

another place, so the approaches would be different.

4ZZZ: So, would it be right to say that material relief only is given to people who are internal refugees because it would be really hard to rehabilitate them?

ZENAIDA: As much as possible we would like to give also rehabilitation projects to these victims because as a development oriented organization we would not want to stop at delivering relief services. But it would be very hard for us to go on giving rehabilitation assistance to these victims because there would be problems of continuity, management of the project and security. So, usually we just give relief assistance. And if they are already stable in resettlement areas, then it would be the time to give them rehabilitation assistance.

4ZZZ: What would be the greatest need of people who are internal refugees?

ZENAIDA: The greatest at the moment is, of course, security and then the material needs, the basics: food, clothing and shelter. But most of all, security, because the material goods some organization can provide. Like, for example, our institutions provide these basic necessities, but the security aspect, that is, for us, impossible to provide.

4ZZZ: How many internal refugees are there in the Philippines?

ZENAIDA: In 1988 we were able to monitor around 350,000 individuals and our data is not yet complete for 1989. We have noticed that there is a decrease in the numbers for many factors. Like for example, those refugees who got traumatized or who had negative experiences when they sought ~~refuge in the cities~~, they didn't want to go to the cities again, so they flee to the mountains.

4ZZZ: Do most refugees come from remote farming communities?

ZENAIDA: Yes, but we were not able to list all of those, so our data on internal refugees is not accurate. It is safe to assume that our data is incomplete because we were able to monitor around only 70%.

4ZZZ: Have you noticed a change in recent years in the kinds of people you're giving aid to?

ZENAIDA: Yes, in the past, for the first years of our existence, we were able to deliver services to victims of natural calamities more. But for this year, we were starting to deliver services to internal refugees more.

4ZZZ: Why is that?

ZENAIDA: I think it may be due to the total war policy of the present government and maybe because the war escalated to national proportions.

4ZZZ: Can you just explain what "total war policy" means briefly?

ZENAIDA: The present government thinks that the insurgency problem could be solved by this policy. In fact, they were denying lately that there is a total war policy. So they call it now a "total approach policy", which actually means this is a total approach of the military. It means the military would saturate all the possible areas where the insurgents are, to gradually constrict them into small areas to finally wipe them out. And for us, for our institution, well, if they could find those insurgents, it would be fine, but the problem is the civilians are the ones affected. It's not actually the insurgents that flee or seek refuge to the cities but these civilians.

4ZZZ: Because they have their villages bombed?

ZENAIDA: Yes, because there are massive bombings in the villages. And, you see, bombs don't have eyes, so they don't choose the insurgents; they could not recognize insurgents from civilians.

4ZZZ: How are women affected by becoming refugees?

ZENAIDA: Mostly affected by becoming refugees are the women and children. They are the ones usually that are fleeing because the men are in the fields, they creep to the fields during the day. So,



these women are left taking care of the children and looking for food for the children.

4ZZZ: So the situation is, if people come to evacuation centres, men try and get back to work?

ZENAIDA: Yes, they try to creep into their fields if possible, if they can get some food left. The women are the ones left tending, caring for the children. So, I think it's doubly hard for the women being left in the center with nothing to do except to worry and take care of children. Psychologically it's not very good for women and children. That's why I'm saying it's doubly difficult for them.

4ZZZ: What kinds of problems are encountered in evacuation centres?

ZENAIDA: Well, of course, because of overcrowding, sickness and malnutrition due to lack of food. Because when they evacuated in the first place they were already malnourished so, when they reach evacuation centres, where overcrowding is present, they contract disease, especially the children. And some of those children died. In our experience of Negros, more than 100 children died.

PART TWO OF THIS INTERVIEW WILL
BE PRINTED IN THE NEXT ISSUE

ORGANIC ACT REJECTED IN THE CORDILLERA: PART II

Over 70% of the Cordillerans voted "no" in the plebiscite on the Organic Act in the Cordillera held on 30 January, 1990. Part one of this report, printed in the March-April issue, examined how the principle political forces campaigned in the lead up to the plebiscite. Part two appraises the post-plebiscite forces in terms of the continuing popular mass movement for regional autonomy in the Cordillera.

THE CONTINUING POPULAR MASS MOVEMENT FOR CORDILLERA AUTONOMY

The strongest popular mass movement for Cordillera autonomy continues to be the Cordillera Peoples Democratic Front (CPDF), despite some recent setbacks. Ignacio Capegsan, head of the CPDF and third in the Communist Party of the Philippines Central Committee, was arrested on the 7th of March, 1989. Kinufat Kerol was elected new head of the CPDF during their second congress held in July 1989. With the adoption of a 10 point general program, Peoples Revolutionary Autonomous Governments were created after the second congress. The CPDF is the most pervasive grass-roots force and the government was unable to convince voters that their Organic Act was any improvement on the Peoples Revolutionary Autonomous Governments already operating in 46% of the Cordillera.

Politically, the CPDF stipulates that in the autonomy struggle the indigenous Cordillera peoples are essentially the same as the Filipino majority because all are under the national oppression of the Philippine ruling class. The CPDF recognises the bodong and the other indigenous political institutions in the Cordillera, such as the ator, dap-ay, ili, communities and tribes. The latter constitute eight ethnolinguistic groupings; the Kankana-eyes, Kalanguyas or Ikalahans, Bontocs, Kalingas, Apayaos, Ifugaos and Tingguians or Isnags. However, the indigenous right to self-determination must be within the framework of the national democratic revolution, as is stipulated in their latest 27pp document on Cordillera autonomy.

The term 'Cordilleran' has passed into common usage, though previously its usage was considered subversive. Now the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) is promoting 'Kaigorotan' for validation as a collective term of identity. The CPA insists that genuine

autonomy must guarantee all ancestral domain to the Cordillera people. Politically, the CPA is for peoples empowerment by transfer of economic and political power to the indigenous masses through the framework of a national democratic coalition government, rather than through armed resistance.

The Cordillera Peoples Liberation Army (CPLA) rejects affiliating autonomy in the Cordillera to the national democratic revolution. Politically, the CPLA stipulates that the state majority in the Philippines is oppressing the indigenous minority in the Cordillera. Autonomy under the Organic Act was rejected because they view the Cordillerans as nation-peoples who should be linked through federalism to the state. As a grass-roots organisation, its influence is more urban than rural, especially in Baguio.

Advancing through their political front, the Cordillera Bodong Administration (CBAd), that the bodong should be the only indigenous form of government for the Cordillera nation has corrupted the institution beyond its bilateral peace-pact function. Not only is the bodong not recognised throughout the Cordillera, but the other indigenous political formations integrated into the CPDF revolutionary governments are rejected. Basilo Wandag, secretary of the Kalinga Bodong Council, wants to codify the by-laws (pagtal) of the bodong. Over 2,000 lawyers and professionals of the Cordillera Executive Board, Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) and Cordillera Regional Consultative Commission (CRCC) attended the Kalinga Bodong Congress of April 1989, but conspicuous in their absence were the pangats, the actual peace-pact holders. The congress agreed to make portions of Tabuk sanctuaries from automatic revenge (bug-oy) after the lapse of 10 days, but the New People's Army (NPA) was excluded from bodong membership.

Excluding the NPA proliferates, rather than minimizes, the bug-oy institution. The congress even asked for militarization by stipulating a quota of 80 Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGU) per municipality. Currently, the CPLA is integrated into the Armed Forces of the Philippines as a CAFGU unit and it is advocating a peace-keeping force of only Cordillerans under its leadership.

Although the popular mass movement for autonomy is divided, the CPDF operating through revolutionary local governments and the legal CPA are much stronger forces and better organised than the CPLA/CBAad faction. The struggle for genuine autonomy through the CPDF and the CPA must also politically outmaneuver various post-plebiscite forces of the state which want to continue exploiting and disposing of natural resources and taking their percentage from transnationals and local big-business operating in the Cordillera.

The state canceled the Chico Dam and Cellophil Resource Corporation projects and began peace talks with the CPLA in 1986. CAR was created in 1987 and the CRCC in 1988. The state lost its momentum from these political initiatives when 70% of the Cordillerans voted against the Organic Act in January 1990. The state's formal political presence is now reduced to a Cordillera Autonomous Region consisting only of Ifugao and the future status of a greater CAR remains uncertain. There is internal political conflict within the formal structures of autonomy but the state still has other economic, cultural and military forces operating in the Cordillera.

Economically, the state has started the Highland Agricultural Development Program (HADP) and the Central Cordillera Agricultural Program (CECAP). The HADP operates primarily in Benguet with over 310 million pesos loaned from Japan, whereas the CECAP operates primarily in Ifugau with over 360 million pesos loaned from the European Economic Community. Ifugao, because of the CECAP and its emerging status as the Cordillera Autonomous Region, is receiving unprecedented amounts of money that has attracted away many middle class professionals

from the popular mass movement for autonomy and grass-root mobilisation is required to make up lost ground. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has been made responsible for delineating, titling and providing dispute guidelines for ancestral lands in the Cordillera. This responsibility will directly confront the CPDF/CPA demands that all ancestral domain must go directly to the people.

The state is committed to a policy of integration through their Office of Northern Cultural Communities (ONCC). Both the CPDF and the CPA oppose the cultural policy of integration and insist on indigenous rights to genuine autonomy and self-determination. In August 1989 when Roberto Tima was replaced as head of ONCC by Manuel Bayana, who is of the lowland majority and not from the Cordillera, Congressman Claver spoke out against the appointment as 'politics of patronage'. Other cultural forces of the state include the proliferation of anti-communist propaganda from a growing number of fundamentalist Protestant sects and the appearance of new socio-economic and environmental Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). One such NGO, the German Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) under Helmut Kurth and Max Garming, a Kalinga researcher, began organising participatory broadcasting and autonomy seminars in July 1989 and FES prepared development plans for the Cordillera in the event the Organic Act was accepted by the voters.

The state's military presence is through Oplan Pakilala III which deploys CPLA CAFGUs. Brig General Juanito Aquias, the Chief of Regional Command, estimates that some 1,000 NPA troops are in control of 25% of the barangays in the Cordillera. This is a gross underestimation. The 'total war' and Low Intensity Conflict in the Cordillera is part of the policy of defeating the revolutionary forces by 1992 when Aquino's term of office is completed. The CPDF ties genuine autonomy in the Cordillera to the success of the national democratic revolution over the next decade. If the revolution is lost, then the popular mass movement for genuine autonomy is seen to have little prospect for long-term success.

MEMBERS & SUBSCRIBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOMED

The Philippines Australia Solidarity Group (PASG) Queensland is part of a national organisation with offices in all state capitals and in Canberra. PASG is a broadly-based solidarity group welcoming membership of individuals who support the struggle of the Filipino people for independence, freedom and democracy. It brings together people of diverse backgrounds and includes both Australians and Filipinos living in Australia. It has close links with Filipino Community Organisations in both countries. Its members include people with extensive Philippine experience and information on trade unions, the role of the church (Christian and Non-Christian), women's organisations, industrial working conditions, peasant organisations, rural conditions, teachers, and the indigenous peoples in the Philippines. PASG in Queensland can provide resource material, slides and videos as well as speakers.

PASG Qld. aims 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 peoples.

PASG Qld. holds regular monthly meetings. For further information contact Chris Bush on (07) 377 4029 or write to the address below.

ATTENTION: PASG Co-ordinator
P.O. Box 174
St. Lucia 4067
Queensland

I would like to:

- join PASG (membership includes a one year subscription to the PASG Newsletter and Philippines Issues). I enclose payment of \$20.
- receive a one year subscription to the PASG Newsletter and Philippines Issues. I enclose payment of \$15.
- have more information about PASG.
- make a donation of \$..... for solidarity work.

NAME
ADDRESS
.....
TEL. NO.(H)(W)

PASG Q'ld.
P.O. Box 174
St. Lucia 4067
Queensland

POSTAGE PAID ST LUCIA QLD.AUST. 4067
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