

# Philippines Australia Solidarity Group

## NEWSLETTER

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50¢

## FILIPINO LABOUR

### EXPORTED LIKE A CASH CROP

Massive Filipino labour out-migration is a phenomenon not only of present-day Philippine society. At the turn of the century, tens of thousands were recruited to work in the plantations of Hawaii and the U.S. mainland.

The first batch of Filipino overseas workers were employed at the Olaa sugar plantations in Hawaii in 1906. They were followed by even larger numbers of new recruits mostly coming from the Ilocano and Visayan regions. By 1934, more than 120,000 were employed on Hawaiian plantations.

From 1906 to 1934, almost half returned home to the Philippines. The rest stayed in Hawaii or later moved on to the U.S. mainland following the harvest trail.

During and after the Second World War, many Filipinos joined the U.S. navy and Filipinas married to American servicemen moved to the U.S. after the war. Later, the navy men were granted preference in petitioning for their family's settlement in America.

Unlike the first wave of Filipino migration, those who went overseas in the second wave (1946 to late 60's) were mostly professionals, war brides and military servicemen. Many were nurses, doctors, dentists and medical technicians. Their main destination was still the U.S.

In the 1960's however, Filipinos also began exploring work in Sabah and Borneo. In this period too the number of Filipino seamen working on international vessels began to increase.

The third wave of Filipino labour out-migration began in the 1970's with the government's adoption of the labour export program - a massive and systematic export of workers.



One factor which brought about this third wave of out-migration was the rapid increase in the price of oil in the 70's. Many Middle Eastern countries received windfall profits which they spent on importing labour to build the infrastructure and develop their oil economies.

To date, there are an estimated 3 to 3.5 million overseas Filipinos in more than 120 countries worldwide.

### LABOUR EXPORT OBJECTIVES

#### FOREIGN EXCHANGE

The Philippine government has outlined the massive exportation of human resources with two underlying objectives, namely:

- a) to earn foreign exchange to address the country's growing balance of payment deficit and,
- b) to ease unemployment and under-employment.

(Contd on page 2 ▶)

# FILIPINO LABOUR (← Contd from page 1)



In 1983, Marcos issued Executive Order 857 - notoriously known as the "forced remittance" law. EO 857 mandates all overseas workers to remit 50-70% of their dollar earnings only through Philippine banking channels. Violation of EO 857 then was punishable with the cancellation of passport or the blacklisting of the errant worker from overseas employment.

The loud and strong campaign launched by Filipino overseas workers particularly in Hong Kong, the Middle East and western Europe, and in the Philippines itself, forced Marcos to repeal the penalty clause in 1985.

The overseas workers' remittances through the Philippine banking system reached over US\$944 million in 1983 alone. And even more is sent via informal channels like money couriers and returning overseas workers.

The Aquino administration has not altered the fundamental direction and character of government policy on labour export. In essence, the current overseas employment program is just a continuation of the old Marcos program. 1989 saw almost half a million workers deployed overseas and remittances of more than US\$1 billion pass through the banks.

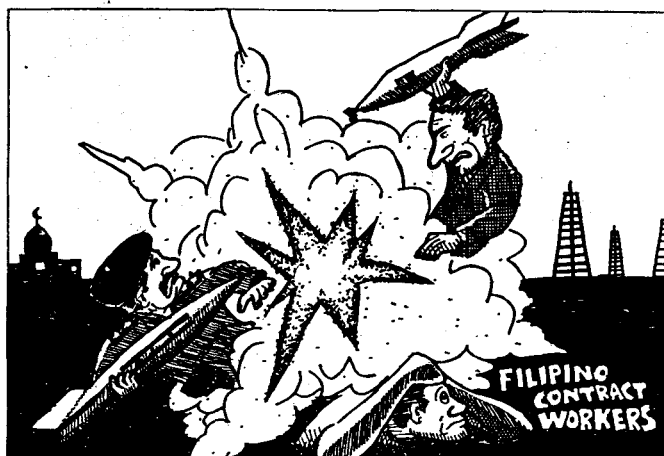
While the Philippine government is very effective in marketing our people all over the world, not a single significant step has been made towards providing mechanisms for the protection of this most precious commodity.

While many importing countries of Filipino labour are signatories to the International Labor Organisation (ILO) conventions and resolutions for the protection of migrant workers, the Philippines has yet to ratify these instruments. While workers are sent to all parts of the globe, not a single working bilateral labour agreement between the Philippine government and the host countries exists. In fact, wherever conflicts arise between welfare protection and market development, the Philippine government always chooses the latter over the former.

The National Commission on the Role of the Filipino Woman (NCRW), a government commission under the Office of the President, admits in its draft assessment report for 1989 that government had done nothing substantial for the protection of migrant women. Thus, with this current policy, it is no wonder why our countrymen and women are subjected to so much abuse.

In the search for better employment opportunities as a solution to the economic and political crisis, people have simply been left to their chances even if this means risking war (as in the Middle East conflict); even if this means entering a host country illegally just for the chance to work to survive.

**TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE**



**CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE**

## PROFILE: KAIBIGAN AND ITS VISION



The text for this issue's front page article is taken from Philippine Migration Review (Vol. IV No. 3.), published by the Friends of Filipino Migrant Workers Inc. popularly known as KAIBIGAN. KAIBIGAN caters to the needs of disadvantaged Filipinos overseas. Kaibigan means "friend". Established in 1982, KAIBIGAN believes that labour outmigration and labour export is not the principal solution to the socio-economic problems of Philippine society.

To provide relevant information to migrant workers, returned migrants, their families and the general public, KAIBIGAN publishes the following: (1) Philippine Migration Review a quarterly that tackles specific issues confronting overseas Filipinos and alternative policy recommendations - 4 issues US\$20. (2) Pinoy Overseas Chronicle bimonthly aims to update and educate overseas Filipinos about current events in the Philippines - 6 issues US\$24. (3) KAIBIGAN Update a bimonthly compilation of news articles - 6 issues US\$15. Orders: KAIBIGAN INC., PO Box SC 311, Manila, Philippines

### KMU CORRESPONDENCE: FIVE UNIONISTS MURDERED

Five active unionists were killed in separate incidents during the month of December 1990: Perlito Lisondra, Apolonio Alecanio, Ike Hernandez, all from Davao; Lino Arog, from Cotabato City also in Mindanao; and Ronelo Ginolos from Antique, Visayas. It is widely believed that the three from Davao were killed because of their participation in the successful island-wide General Strike against the December 5 oil price increase.

Lisondra, an organizer for TRANSMISSION (Transport Mindanao for Solidarity), a KMU affiliate, was killed on December 18, in a busy commercial district in Davao City. The KMU believes that the killing of Lisondra is the handiwork of Alsa Masa, a vigilante group. According to close associates, he was threatened while distributing strike leaflets.

Early on the day Lisondra was murdered, Alecanio, a rubber plantation worker, was killed on his way to work in Toril, 12 kilometers south of Davao City. An hour later, the mutilated body of Ike Hernandez was found in a subdivision, also in Toril.

According to reports, Hernandez appeared to be a victim of summary execution and that he had "several cuts on the body, his legs chopped off, and his stomach sliced."

Meanwhile, Lino Arog, the union President at STANPHILCO, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen on 24 December 1990 in the premises of the plantation in General Santos, Cotabato City.



The previous day, CAFGU member Oroy Diego shot dead Ronelo Ginolos, an active union leader of Malayang Kapisanan ng mga Manggagawa sa Semirara Antique, and affiliate of the National Federation of Labour-KMU. Two other union leaders, McCreynold Ginolos and Bong Frias, were also seriously wounded in the attack.

The KMU believes that this recent spate of killings of trade unionists is part of the government's grand design to crush militant unionism. Despite calls from groups including the ILO for the Aquino government to disband paramilitary groups and look into the alarming cases of trade union and human rights violations, the government continues its policy of repression and adds teeth to its anti-labor laws.

The KMU calls on international supporters and friends to condemn these killings. Urge the Aquino government to give justice to the victims, disband all paramilitary groups and scrap all anti-labor laws. Write to President Aquino and inform the ILO in Geneva, Switzerland.

# GABRIELA WISAP '91

THE CULTURE OF FOREIGN DOMINATION:  
WOMEN'S ISSUES,  
ALTERNATIVES AND INITIATIVES

AUGUST 29 - SEPTEMBER 8, 1991  
MANILA, PHILIPPINES

## WISAP '91 SCHEDULE:

- Aug 29 - Registration
- Aug 30 - Conference Plenary one: Political and Economic Aspect of Foreign Domination and its Impact on Women
- Aug 31 - Plenary two: Women as Sex Objects - Impact of Patriarchal and Imperialist Culture on Women
- Sept 1 - Plenary three: Creating Counter Culture Against Foreign Domination and Patriarchy and Towards Liberation of Women
- Sept 2 - Resolutions/Action Plans/ Conference statement/Cultural Festival
- Sept 3 - Orientation on Exposure
- Sept 4/7 - Exposure (regional and local community)
- Sept 8 - Exposure Reflections    Sept 9 - Departure



The Women's International Solidarity Affair in the Philippines (WISAP) is a yearly gathering of women from different countries sponsored by GABRIELA, a national coalition of women's organisations in the Philippines. WISAP aims to discuss the various issues that affect women globally and to share and learn from each other's experiences and initiatives. At the same time it aims to build and strengthen bridges of solidarity and sisterhood among women working for change.

In the last WISAP (1989), delegates suggested the theme of women and culture for the next international solidarity affair. Women in GABRIELA, especially those from the regions and sectors, propose to focus on the culture of foreign intervention, and home-grown patriarchal culture. While in the past WISAPs, we have touched on culture and women, we have not really brought to the fore the development of pervasive decadent culture, its roots and the forces that seek to perpetuate and profit from it.

WISAP '91 will look into the role of foreign domination in the maintenance and reinforcement of this way of life and thinking, and how the culture akin to foreign domination has affected women and their status in society.

The interplay of home-grown patriarchy and the culture of foreign domination - how they reinforce each other to perpetuate and enhance structures that maintain women's status in society, will also be tackled as women participants relate and share their experiences, knowledge and feelings.

WISAP '91 will also tackle women's alternatives in building and developing a culture free of foreign intervention and patriarchy; a truly patriotic, democratic way of life where both men and women could enjoy quality of life and equal opportunities; and where nations enjoy their freedom and self-determination.

The US\$380 WISAP '91 Registration Fee covers: accommodation, food, conference expenses, and transport fares inside Manila. Transportation expenses for exposures are subject to changes due to another round of oil price increase. As a guide they currently range from Central Luzon US\$11 to Davao US\$185.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FORMS: write to PASGQLD or contact Manila directly through Cherry Padilla, Director, GABRIELA Commission on International Relations, PO Box 4386, Manila 2800. Tel No: 99-80-34

# 1991 INTERNATIONAL PEACE FESTIVAL

STRENGTHEN PEOPLE'S SOLIDARITY  
AND ACTION FOR WORLD PEACE

SEPTEMBER 4 - 17, 1991  
MANILA, PHILIPPINES



## IPFP '91 SCHEDULE:

- Sept 4 - Registration
- Sept 5/8 - Exposure
- Sept 9 - Opening & Plenary Session
- Sept 10/13 - Peace Camp (workshops, kite flying, jogging, earth day exercises, exhibits, cultural festival, solidarity nights)
- Sept 14 - Closing Plenary Session
- Sept 15 - National Congress on a People's Agenda for Peace Thru a Bases-Free and Sovereign Philippines
- Sept 16 - Nationwide anti-US intervention rallies and International peace march
- Sept 17 - Departure

In 1947, the government of a war-torn Philippines was forced to sign an agreement with the US government regarding the use of some areas in the country as military bases. The agreement, among others, allows the US to maintain major naval and air facilities in the Philippines: Clark Air Base in Angeles City, and the Subic Naval Base in Olongapo.

Events have shown the presence of US bases to be incompatible with sovereignty and peace in the country or in the region. It has brought with it political and social problems like the increased threat of involvement in war because of its direct use in military aggression against other countries, and within the Philippines itself, the presence of nuclear weapons in these bases.

Combined with the social problems of AIDS, prostitution of women and children, and a rising number of abandoned Amerasian babies, an increasing number of Filipinos look forward to the termination of the agreement on September 16, 1991. Join us at IPFP '91 to mark this historic event.

The US\$300 IPFP '91 Registration Fee covers: accommodation, food, conference materials, and local transport.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FORMS: write to PASGOLD or contact Manila directly through Nelia Sancho, Convenor, IPFP '91, Mailing Center: Suite #0066 FNP, G/F Cosmopolitan Tower Condominium, 134 Valero Street, Salcedo Village, Makati, Metro Manila. Telefax: (6-32) 999437

The '91 International Peace Festival, initiated by BAYAN, is a multi-sectoral effort in which 27 patriotic and democratic organizations and solidarity associations in the Philippines, including GABRIELA, are participating.

The sectoral and regional visits of the Peace Conference (Sept 5-8) will be about the same time as the WISAP exposure. Depending on the schedules prepared by the regions/sectors, there is a possibility that the WISAP and the IPFP exposurists will be together on certain activities. WISAP participants are encouraged to extend their stay and take part in the Peace workshops and conference commencing September 9th.

## PEACE PILGRIMS FROM AUSTRALIA AND AOTEAROA URGE THE END OF MILITARY AID TO THE PHILIPPINES

MANILA -- February 3, 1991 -- A contingent of 40 religious peace pilgrims, mostly Protestants, called for the cessation of Australian military aid to the country and appealed for united efforts to remove the US military bases from the Philippines.

(The Australian government sends some A\$1.6 million yearly for the "professionalisation" of the Philippine military. This military aid is part of about A\$20 million of Australian aid sent to the Philippines.)

The Peace Pilgrims, visiting for a month with various groups (urban poor, workers, peasants, fisherfolk and tribal peoples) in Metro-Manila, Central Luzon, Negros and other regions, also demanded an end to Australian involvement in the sex industry proliferating in the country.

Sr. Diane from Australia said their group has become a "sensitized and committed" church as a result of their exposure. Rev. John Madden, head of the Australian panel and moderator of the Uniting Church of South Australia, said their group recognizes the need for "active compassion, change of heart and a challenge to live simply."

He added that the hierarchical church has a lot to answer for with regard to the growing deterioration of the standard of living and oppression in the Philippines.

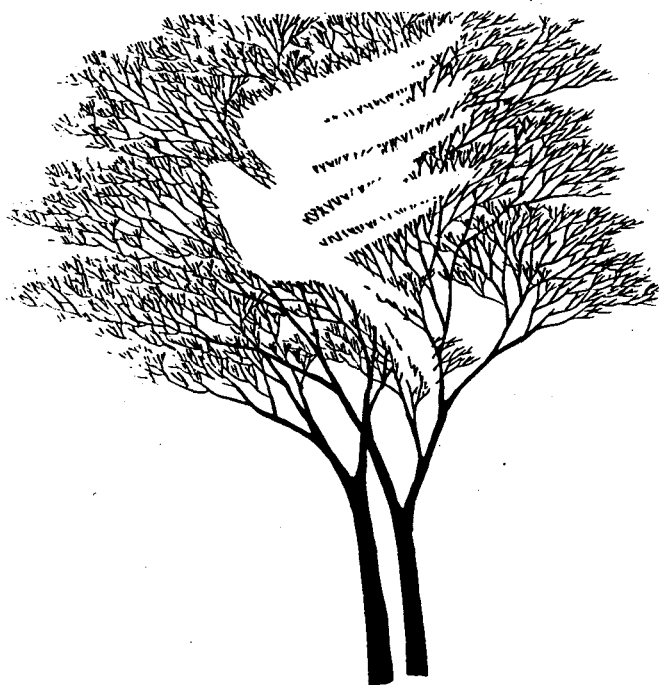
### DEVELOPMENT THREATENS RARE BIRD

CEBU CITY -- February 17, 1991 -- Development demands have clashed again with a community's need for environmental conservation. Threatened this time is the black shama bird, (*Copsychus cebuensis*), an endangered species found only on this Central Visayan island.

The Asian Wetland Bureau Philippines Foundation Inc. is closely watching the bird, known locally as 'siloy', as its natural habitat is being converted into a first class subdivision about 13 kms. north of Cebu City.

They summed up the problems faced by the different sectors they met as: constant military harassment and disregard of the labor laws for workers; lack of genuine agrarian reform and the threat of dispossession by absentee landlords; the use of destructive fishing techniques by foreign trawlers; and erosion of the culture, and loss and ecological devastation of the tribal peoples' ancestral lands.

The pilgrims' visit was sponsored by: Ecumenical Bishops' Forum, Association of the Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines - International Solidarity Network Desk, CONTAK-FORUM and United Church of Christ in the Philippines. They will run an education campaign on Philippine realities among the Australian and Aotearoan people and vowed to lobby for the cessation of military aid with the Australian parliament. /Ma. Elena Ang /PNF



Already, a flock of the territory-conscious siloy, has been forced out to other places when their home of bamboo, trees and thickets were cut down in the ongoing real estate development.

The Wildbird Society of Japan funded the Foundation to carry out a study of the bird's breeding ecology last year. /Merpu Roa /PNF

"Because the pieces of paper are backed by men who speak threatening words; Men who have power to shoot and to kill, men who have power to take our men and our sons away? If the land could speak, it would speak for us!  
FOR THE LAND IS US!"



## LUMADS ' STRUGGLE FOR ANCESTRAL DOMAIN CONTINUES

- Some 200 T'boli families in South Cotabato abandoned their homes after armed men burned their houses during a raid last Nov 25, 1990. Their food and animals were stolen, they lack clothing, and they now face starvation.

- In the town of Alabel in the same province, 2,500 tribespeople face dislocation because the government leased their lands for an agro-forestry project to two private companies, Eastern Davao Resorts and the Cotabato Resource Corporation. The 7,175 hectares of forest land is home to indigenous communities in 18 barrios.

- In Bukidnon, 35,000 Manobo tribespeople could have their homes, farms, hunting and burial grounds submerged by the construction of three multi-purpose dams. Seventeen barrios, in a 7,662 hectare tract of land in Cabanglasa town, will go under water.

- Tribal communities in Arumen, Carben, North Cotabato face the same threat of dislocation from land taken over by the Bureau of Plant Industry.

In the struggle to hold onto their ancestral lands against landgrabbing in

the guise of 'development', their homes and harvests have been burned, and they've been subjected to food blockades and terror from armed thugs.

This is the saga of Lumads in Mindanao, the non-Muslim and non-Christian ethno-linguistic groups of southern Philippines, whose leaders are now (Feb '91) in Manila to protest their ordeals and demand government recognition of their birthrights.

In meetings with government officials and the press, the Lumads' leaders demanded recognition of their ancestral domain against the "onslaught of development projects."

The Lumad leaders have been going the rounds of government offices to present their problems, as well as seeing lawyers and people's organizations.

They also denounced the Aquino administration for betraying them. "We were promised food and shelter but remained poor and deprived," a position paper said. "We were promised respect of our culture and welfare for our children, but were mocked and displaced from our communities."

# HACIENDA LUSITA: DID YOU KNOW?

The Voice of America, the radio network which broadcasts American propaganda worldwide, is located within the Cojuangcos' Hacienda Lusita in Concepcion, Tarlac. The Cojuangcos' acquisition of Hacienda Lusita in 1957 was partly brought about by the political rivalry between then Pres. Ramon Magsaysay and the influential Lopez family and bankrolled by the financial resources of the Manufacturers Trust Company of New York. Benigno 'Ninoy' Aquino was the first manager of Hacienda Lusita and was responsible for diffusing the labor unrest on the estate. It was also Ninoy Aquino, then Tarlac governor in the 1960s, who invited the U.S. Agency for International development (USAID) to the province to test "development models" in large-scale plantations for application on similar sites in other Third World countries.

The history of Hacienda Lusita, Pres. Cory Aquino's family's asset and Cory's showpiece for the government's so-called land reform program, is investigated and exposed in a 7-page article, "A CHRONICLE OF GREED - THE BITTER TRUTH BEHIND HACIENDA LUSITA", printed in LIBERATION Sept/Oct 1990, a publication of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. If you would like a copy of the article, please send a suitably sized and stamped envelope with \$1.40 payment for the photocopying.

Back copies of "Philippines Issues" and the "PASG QLD. Newsletter" are available at 50¢ and 20¢ per copy respectively. There is also a range of situationers

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 receive a one year subscription to the PASG Qld. Newsletter and Philippines Issues. I enclose payment of \$15.

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