



# Philippines Australia Solidarity Group NEWSLETTER

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## WOMEN AGAINST "TOTAL WAR"

In the six years since Philippine President Corazon Aquino declared "Total War" against the forces and sympathizers of the Communist Party of the Philippines, New People's Army, National Democratic Front, and all other forces fighting for fundamental social and political change, the government's policy has not succeeded in eliminating the insurgency. Massive sums of people's money have been spent on army operations in the countryside and establishing a hundred thousand Citizen's Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) members as local armed militia.

The rural populace is a special target of Total War. For women, this militarist policy has only brought more suffering and misery.

In militarized areas, fear and anxiety are women's common complaints. At the sound of gunfire or just rumour of military or para-military activity, most women immediately evacuate their homes and farms. Whether it is day or night, with or without their husbands, pregnant or not, they leave with little or no food. Terror and running for their lives is all that many know.

Starvation and malnourishment stalk the daily lives of women, men and children as they are forcibly removed from their means of livelihood and herded into hamlet areas euphemistically called "evacuation centers". And every day after dawn, the women walk long distances to reach their farms and return to the centers before dark.



Women are the living witnesses and victims of military cruelty and the Total War policy which is doggedly implemented against the people. Women have been variously accused of being NPA sympathizers or supporters and insurgents. For this, they are abused, raped and sexually molested. There are many cases where young women have been raped and used for sexual pastime by the soldiers. They are threatened with death if they resist.

The women of the barrios and towns of the Philippine countryside want to return to their homes and farms free from military intervention and harassment. They want their children to live without fear and with all the basic necessities: education, proper health support, food and nutrition, a home and a loving and peaceful community. They want freedom from fear and uncertainty. They demand justice for the members of their communities who have been killed, tortured and abused by the military and its para-military groups.

Continued on page 2 -

**Brisbane**

### International Women's Day

Sunday, March 8th, 1992

Rally at 11 o'clock

King George Square

March to City Botanic Gdns.

- ⊗ Entertainment    ⊗ Refreshments
- ⊗ Speakers (incl. Dale Spender)
- ⊗ Information stalls    ⊗ Market

**Speaking Out, Being Heard**

## WOMEN AGAINST TOTAL WAR

◀ From page 1

Local women's organizations together with cause-oriented groups have launched many actions asking the Aquino government to stop the continuous military operations and its "Total War" policy. They have presented the cases of human rights violations to the Senate, Congress and Commission on Human Rights for investigation and demanded punishment of the perpetrators. Women's organizations abroad have sent letters and gathered signatures appealing to the Aquino government to stop the warrantless arrests, detention and torture of women and their children.

As long as women's human rights are violated and are victims of this "Total War" policy, Filipino women and women's organizations will condemn such violations and rally to achieve justice and peace.

.....  
The text of this article is based on the Editorial of the Jan/March 1991 issue of Action Alert published by the Gabriela Commission on Women's Human Rights.



Carolina "Bobbie" Malay: Woman political prisoner arrested and detained with her husband, Satur Ocampo, on July 29, 1989.

PASGQLD has the names and locations of over 600 political prisoners in the Philippines who need moral, political and material support. The GABRIELA Commission on Women's Human Rights "Adopt A Woman Political Prisoner Campaign" needs your assistance. Contact PASGQLD for details.



## SEND CARDS TO PRISONERS

Receiving greetings and communications from outside really boosts morale to keep on surviving if only just for another day. PASGNSW and Bayanihan have produced postcards printed with the message "YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN IN THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE".

You mail the card to Task Force Detainees Philippines who will have it hand delivered. There is space for a personal message and your name and address.

PASG Queensland can supply you with the cards and prisoners' names. The cards cost 15¢ each plus postage.



Filipino women have a long history of struggle against oppression, foreign control and male domination. They fought for better jobs and the rights to vote and go to school. One of them led a revolt against Spanish colonizers. She was Gabriela Silang.

Primed by the anti-dictatorship campaign and the drive for economic and political change in the Marcos years, women's organizations established the national women's coalition, GABRIELA - the General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action.

Starting from 42 when we were organized in April 1984, we are today a center of over a hundred women's organizations, institutes, desks and programs. Our ranks include women workers, peasants, urban poor, housewives, professionals, religious and students across the country.

We believe that the freedom women seek will be brought about by the resolution of the problems of foreign domination, landlessness and political repression and in the changing of patriarchal value systems and structures in Philippine society.

From being a coalition of middle-class women, Gabriela now finds its base among grassroots women, the peasants, workers and urban poor, the most oppressed and marginalized. Together, 40,000 women fall under Gabriela's mantle.

## PROFILE: GABRIELA

### WOMEN AS A POLITICAL FORCE

National Office: 35 Scout Delgado Street,  
Quezon City, Philippines. Tel: 99-80-34

We focus on issues that affect women: the effects of militarization and women's landlessness; the International Monetary Fund-World Bank and the debt crisis; denial of women's reproductive rights and gross neglect of health care for women; violence on children, wife abuse and family life; development aid; prostitution and trafficking of women.

#### MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:

Pambansang Pederasyon ng Magsasakang Kababaihan (AMIHAN)  
Kilusan ng Manggagawang Kababaihan (KMK)  
Samahan ng Malayang Kababaihang Nagkakaisa (SAMAKANA)  
Association of Women in Theology (AWIT)  
National Organization of Women Religious in the Philippines  
Samahan ng Mag-aaral at Kabataan (SAMAKA-Kababaihan)  
Gabay at Kalinga ng mga Ina (GKI)  
Mothers and Relatives Against Tyranny (MARTYR)  
Buklod Drop-in Center, Olongapo City  
Watch, Mindanao  
Kabalaka, Iloilo  
Balikatan at Ugnayang Naglalayong Sumagip sa Sanggol (Bunso)  
Parents Alternative, Inc. (PAI)  
Kanlungan Migrants Center  
Bicol Rural Women's Development Center  
Task Force Detainees - National Capital Region  
Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT)  
Student Christian Movement of the Philippines (SCMP)  
Forum for Rural Concerns (FRC)  
Women, Development and Technology Desk, SIBAT  
Institute of Religion and Culture of the Philippines (IRCP)  
Center for Women's Resources (CWR)  
Women's Crisis Center (WCC)  
Kasamaka, Bacolod  
Bugas, South Cotabato  
Cordillera Women's Education and Resource Center  
Women's Studies and Resource, Mindanao

#### Gabriela Commissions:

- Violence Against Women
- Women's Health and Reproductive Rights
- Women's Human Rights
- Children and Family
- Migrant Filipinas
- International Relations

#### Regional Chapters:

Metro Manila, Cordillera, and Mindanao.  
Sub-regional Chapters:  
Negros, Panay, and Samar.  
Provincial Chapters: Bicol and Cebu.



## Message To The Advocates Of A Just Peace

On September 9, 1991 the National Democratic Front (NDF) declared a unilateral ceasefire. We publish the following NDF statement to inform our readers of the basic negotiating position of the NDF.

### [Part Two] Continued from last issue

If we are to achieve the peace for national reconstruction, reconciliation and renewal advocated by Senator Wigberto Tañada and various organizations, we must address the historical and deep-seated problems of poverty, injustice and national oppression. We must work together to build a national consensus for a broad-based government of national unity, salvation and reconstruction.

This is not the time for a few schemers of pacification inside and outside of the GRP to suggest that the NDF agree to the fragmentation of the revolutionary movement through localized ceasefires outside of humanitarian grounds and dislodgment of revolutionary forces from any of its areas through a refurbished version of the strategic hamlet disguised as a "zone of peace" or "zone of life".

This is the time for all patriotic and progressive forces and the broad masses of the people to unite and work for national freedom and democracy. Let us focus attention on the major issues.

Regarding the specific matter of ceasefire on humanitarian grounds, this is best arranged mutually by the two basic conflicting sides (GRP and NDF) every time there is a need. The principles, general methods, mechanisms and procedures for this specific kind of ceasefire can at best be put in clear terms in an agreement on mutual respect for human rights and humanitarian norms of war between the GRP and NDF.

We have already explained the reasons why the New People's Army has resumed defensive actions in areas covered by its July 21 (1990) unilateral ceasefire declaration. In the first place, enemy troops have never ceased to conduct offensive operations in these areas in violation of President Aquino's own belated ceasefire declaration.

To compound the enemy's ceaseless violations of the terms of the ceasefire, the

regime has moved under the cover of its peace rhetoric to conspire with the United States against our national interest on the issue of US military bases, allow the brutal attack on protesters, raise fuel prices and press down the wages and salaries of workers and employees.

The National Democratic Front is willing to have its representatives engage the representatives of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines in a peace dialog before a multilateral audience of advocates truly committed to a just peace. The various aspects and details of this concept must be threshed out first among the factors of the dialog, especially the principal ones.

There are a number of interested international organizations like the World Council of Churches, the Inter-national Committee of the Red Cross, United Nations agencies and inter-national human rights organizations that might be willing to sponsor the conference.

While bilateral and multilateral discussions are going on, the GRP (especially the AFP) is likely to demand a ceasefire even before any socially significant agreement. And yet, as in the past, it would have no intention of honoring the terms of the ceasefire. Bilateral and multilateral discussions by themselves neither have the legal nor moral force to stop the progress of the revolutionary movement.

Even in times of coup threats that do not as yet carry US approval at the highest level and therefore cannot yet be effective in immediately installing a barefaced militarist regime, the NDF is under no obligation to tightly embrace the ruling reactionary faction, forget about the people's basic demands and stop or discourage the legal democratic mass movement and the tactical offensives of the people's army. If it is truly interested in coming to terms with the NDF, the ruling faction should accede to the basic demands



of the people, desist from repressing them and win their support against militarism in times of coup threats.

Coup threats should never be used as an excuse by the ruling reactionaries and their hangers-on to pre-empt or co-opt the revolutionary mass movement but should provide them with the occasion for satisfying national and democratic demands and winning the broadest possible popular support against militarism, US domination, landlordism and bureaucratic corruption.

The National Democratic Front is ever willing to co-operate with the peace advocates in clarifying and working for the basis of a just peace.

NATIONAL COUNCIL  
NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT  
October 5, 1990

Authenticated by: Luis Jalandoni  
Vice Chairperson for International Affairs  
NDF National Council

## GREEN PRIESTS TARGETTED BY LOGGERS

**Manila, Oct 28 (IPS)** - The slaying of a Catholic priest last week by suspected loggers in the southern Philippine island of Mindanao has made other environmentally active church workers here fear for their lives.

The priest, 35-year-old Nerelito Satur, was killed in an ambush by gunmen hired by suspected loggers in the province of Bukidnon in Mindanao.

At least 10 priests have been killed in the last six years by private militiamen believed to be working for big business interests involved in the timber and mineral exploitation in Mindanao.

Church workers say that for every murder of a priest, there are many more incidents of harassment, intimidation and threats against church workers and nuns. Rape or subversion charges have been filed against several environmentally active priests in Mindanao in the past year.

"The situation has become alarming because we have become virtual sitting ducks," Fr Roberto Wapano, a missionary in Mindanao, told Philippine News and Features (PNF).

Many priests, who have taken the side of the underdogs, have paid with their lives.

According to activists in Mindanao, there have been more than 200 killings and atrocities against church workers by right-wing religious sects and government security forces in recent years.

The governor of Bukidnon province, Ernesto Tabois, has no doubt that latest killing of Nerelito Satur was the work of illegal workers.

Satur was driving his motorcycle when he was ambushed by three masked gunmen one km away from the chapel where he offered mass. One of the men smashed the butt of a rifle on the priest's head and then shot him point-blank with a shotgun.



# ROOTS OF PATRIARCHY IN THE PHILIPPINES

From Toward An Asian Principle of Interpretation: A Filipino Women's Experience a joint study of five Filipinas contributed to the EATWOT (Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians) Asian Feminist Theology Meeting held in Madras, India - Dec. 1990.

Patriarchy as we experience it today in the Philippines was systematically introduced by Spain through the dual process of colonization and Christianization. We do not, however, preclude the possibility of an earlier introduction of patriarchal notions through the Islamic mission and trade relations with China, but this requires further research. While patriarchy affects both women and men as well as people's relationship with the earth, this study will emphasise patriarchy's effects on women.

In exploring the roots of patriarchy in our land, we face the problem of inadequate historical data needed for a comprehensive view of the status of women in pre-colonial times. Mainstream history was almost always written by men, whose perspective oftentimes glossed over the participation of women in the social, political and economic life of a community.

## Women in Pre-colonial Times

Research done by women historians has established the more egalitarian status of women during the pre-Spanish period. Encarnacion Alzona enumerates the following rights enjoyed by the pre-Spanish Filipino woman: (1) to be treated as an equal by her husband and to share his honors; (2) to retain her maiden name; (3) to freely dispose of the property she had brought into the marriage; (4) to be consulted or informed by her husband about his business affairs and contracts; (6) to divorce her husband in case of non-support or maltreatment; and (7) to assume the headship in the barangay.<sup>1</sup> To this list Mary John Mananzan adds: (1) to have a baby or not, whether she is married or not; and (2) to name her children.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, women had an unquestioned preferred role in religious ceremonies as babaylanes or catalones (priestesses).

## Women During the Spanish Period

When Spain colonized the Philippines, it almost immediately imposed the land tenure system which is central to feudalism. This shifted the tribal and communal use of land to private ownership and records show this disenfranchised many women. While debt peonage and sharecropping had their origin in pre-colonial days, the coming of the

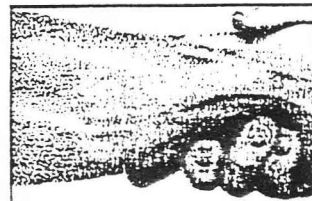
Spanish colonizers institutionalized these socio-economic phenomena. State laws like the exaction of tribute per family, land titling, patrilineage, etc. were imposed. As a result, the communal, extended and matri-focal family system became nuclearized, the woman privatized and her role domesticated. She was denied political rights and formal education. Within the context of these developments, the transformation of woman from a respected equal of man to an inferior and subjugated being began.

The new Filipina (or female Indio) was now her father's meek daughter, the husband's faithful subject, the Church's obedient servant, and before her marriage, a chaste virgin who would yield only to her husband (and occasionally to the friar). But of course, like her peasant husband, she was also a slavlike toiler who worked the rich man's land for a pittance.<sup>3</sup>

The imposition of Catholic religion exacerbated the oppression of the local inhabitants, especially the women. The friar (friar) became a symbol of the new oppression. History now illumines for us the fact that women had been the primary victims of friar abuse. Native women were not only made church cleaners and priests' servers, oftentimes they were also forced into sexual relations through the confessional. The women took all these abuses in silence, fearful of Spanish reprisals not only against themselves but also against their families. The image of the long suffering woman became an integral part of women's consciousness.

The Filipino woman of the Spanish period was molded after the Spanish woman of the 16th century, Spain's Golden Age. Women were to be protected and controlled by men. Manuals for the training of girls were written and taught. In one of her studies, Mananzan notes some of the contents of one such manual<sup>4</sup>: a modest young woman should never have friendship with any man; she is warned against dancing, because it is the devil's work; she should stay at home and occupy herself with domestic tasks.

Correspondencia #10 1991





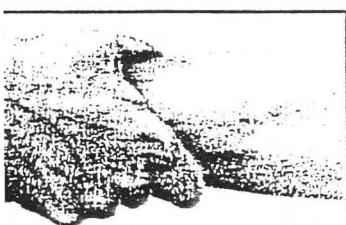
The Filipino woman during the Spanish period was tied to the house; her main function was simply to bear children. Religion became a refuge, inspiring her with the martyrdom of saints, cultivating in her an infinite capacity for forbearance, suffering and forgiveness, and obscuring in the process her capacity for greater involvement in things other than the earth and heaven.

### Women During the American Period

American colonization brought the public school system to the Philippines. Women were trained to read and write as part of the American capitalist goals. America of the 19th century found it unproductive for women to stay at home and sent them to school to equip them for factory or office work. This put women into the public sphere (probably something never intended by the American colonial government); at the same time, it intensified the patriarchalization of Philippine society. Capital now lorded over labor. Women formed the reserve and cheap labor force. As the Americans established the military forts through-out the country, a new commercial venture arose: prostitution as a rest-and-recreation enterprise.<sup>5</sup>

### The Post-colonial Woman

The woman of the 1940's was a perfect product of American colonization. She had thoroughly absorbed Western ways and values. She was unaware of neo-colonialism or perceived it as



benevolent. She was hardly aware of her oppressed status because she - as well as her male counterpart - had wholly internalized patriarchy as the normative social system.

### The Growth of Women's Consciousness

It is only within the last two decades that Filipino women have become conscious of gender oppression and the need to overcome it. Feminist historians mark this period as the true beginning of the women's movement, when a handful of middle-class women - students and professionals - raised the woman question and denounced the commercialization of women as sex objects. These women also asserted the role of women in social change and women's rightful place in society.

The public response was initially one of scepticism, from women and men alike. It took the declaration of martial law in 1972 for people to see the rightfulness of the women's demands and actions. The movement gained adherents from all sectors of society and women's organizations with a feminist orientation began to multiply, confirming women's leadership capabilities.

By the mid-1980's, there was a proliferation of organizations championing the women's cause. Women's networks, centers for research and training, rehabilitation houses for women, institutes for women's studies, sectoral women's organizations, association of churchwomen and women in theology - all were channels promoting women's rights in the home, in the workplace, in the Church and in society at large.

Today, twenty years after the beginning of the women's movement, women's consciousness has evolved in a significant way. Proponents of the movement no longer concentrate on issues central to women alone. They see their struggle for liberation within the context of the overall people's struggle for national sovereignty. In transforming society, they recognize that class, ethnicity, nationality, and race are also determining factors that shape our individual character, social experience and human relations. Although they see the transformation of unjust social structures as necessary, they do not consider it a sufficient condition for women's liberation. Our liberation will not happen automatically. We, therefore, have to struggle for our own agenda within the overall struggle for equality and national sovereignty." Continued on Page 8 ►



# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: A TRADITION OF MILITANCE

Editorial: Womens Update Jan/Mar '91 -  
Quarterly Newsletter of GABRIELA  
National Womens Coalition, Philippines



There are two versions why women around the world celebrate March 8 as the International Women's Day. One version has it that on this day, women, most of them workers from the needle trades industry, gathered in New York City to demand their right to vote and to urge the building of a workers' union. So successful was this women's action that women from other countries took notice, and at the motion of Ms. Clara Zetkin, a staunch feminist of that period, [in 1910 at the 2nd Conference of Socialist Women in Copenhagen - Ed.] decided to commemorate March 8 in dedication to women's struggles for equal rights in all countries.

The other version is no less militant and is even more heart rending. A few days before March 8, 79 years ago, a fire gutted a textile factory on the ninth floor of a building in New York City. The workers, all of them women, could not get out because management had locked their only door to prevent theft. To escape the fire and the thick smoke, they jumped out of the window, their only other means of escape, and 175 of them died. An outpouring of anger at the horrendous conditions of the workers and of sympathy for the workers resulted in a massive funeral march held on March 8 of that year.

Whatever the version, the conditions that motivated the women to act, still exist, though in varied forms. March 8 is not only a reminder that whatever women have gained, we fought hard for. It also serves as a guiding light for us to further struggle on.

As we commemorate international Women's Day in the Philippines, the economic crisis has intensified, making the burdens that women carry, heavier. The new conditions that the IMF/WB has imposed on the country in the Letter of Intent or Memorandum of Economic Policy that the Aquino government itself designed contain provisions that will make our lives harsher.

The streamlining of government through massive layoffs of personnel has already affected several thousands of women government employees, most of them Metro Aides and teachers.

Then 9% import levy has led to massive layoffs in the private sector due to a fall in production. Already 8,000 workers from the garments factory, majority of them women, have already been laid off. Unemployment is on the rise, pushing women to look for desperate measures to put food on their families' tables.

◀ Continued from Page 7

## Roots of Patriarchy

Notes:

1. Cited in Mananzan, "The Filipino Woman Before and After the Spanish Conquest of the Philippines," in Essays on Women, ed. Mary John Mananzan, (Manila: Institute of Women's Studies, SSC, 1988), 9-10 passim.
2. Ibid., 13, 17.
3. Aida Santos, "Do Women Really Hold Half of the Sky?" in Essays, ed. Mananzan, 41.
4. The manual is entitled "Los Avisos a Las Doncellas," by Bishop Antonio Claret. Cited in Essays, ed Mananzan, 29, 31
5. Excerpt from a lecture by Carolyn Israel Sobritchea, Manila, June 29, 1990.

The other provisions are no better, proving the government's promise to women of better lives with their much touted Philippine Development Plan for Women was a sham.

Thus, on March 8 women take to the streets again, in the tradition of our foremothers before us, who have fought hard for what they wanted to achieve. We do remember, and because we remember, we shall continue to fight for what is due us.

# INDIGENOUS WOMEN, ENVIRONMENT, and SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

By Victoria Tauli-Corpuz  
Cordillera Women's Education and Resource Center

The historical and present roles of indigenous women in developing sustainable agriculture and protecting the environment have been ignored or were made invisible. Most historians and development planners are gender-blind. In the frantic search for sustainable development models and effective programs to save what is left of the environment indigenous women will have a lot to say.

In spite of or maybe because they were left out in mainstream development programs, many of them held on to their sustainable development practices.

A serious look into history will show us how indigenous women all over the world struggled against logging concessionaires, mining companies and governments to save their ancestral lands. Their roles as food producers, water fetchers, fuel providers, child bearers and rearers impelled them to defend their land which has been their partner in doing all these. They are the ones who are in the best position to understand the value of nature and land. Since they have been working in close partnership with nature through thousands of years to sustain life, they have developed ecological consciousness which should be sustained and propagated.

## Indigenous Women and Nature in Active Partnership

Indigenous people regard their territories as their ancestral homelands, a concept which has historical, cultural and ecological implications. The dynamics of nature which is presented as land, history presented as ancestor, and home which describes the obtaining human relations, is aptly captured in this concept. The defence of the ancestral homeland from forces of destruction is not just defending a territory but defending a whole lifestyle which is in close communion with nature.

In indigenous communities, it is the woman who is the primary food producer and her awareness of nature is that of a living force which is her partner in the production of sustenance. Her productivity

is directly proportional to the continuing capacity of nature to renew its forests, soils, and rivers. It is impossible for her to see food production as distinct from the forests, water and animal systems.

Indigenous women and men have maintained a deep reverence for nature. They worship the sun, mother earth, the trees, the forests, and the rivers. Their religious and cultural rituals are held to ask blessings from the spirits of their ancestors and goddesses and gods to protect these. These rituals are done to ask for a good harvest and to call the rains. Many of these practices still linger even if the Christian colonizers branded such as pagan and barbaric.

Indigenous women and men also have knowledge of tree species which are water-conserving and those which are highly water-consuming. Water-conserving trees are regarded as sacred and should not be cut. Their knowledge of agriculture and forestry is very basic. The land and forest should not be abused. These should be allowed to rest for them to be able to regenerate.

## Colonization, Market Economy: Impact on Indigenous Women and the Environment

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE



Detail of a pen and ink drawing by Ben Cabrera from the series, Images of Women in the Cordillera

## APPEAL OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE TO THE WORLD COMMUNITY



October 16, 1991 - Nuclear-Free Philippines Coalition,  
Rm 511 J&T Bldg, 8894 R.M. Blvd, Sta Mesa, Manila.

### **The Philippines' Finest Hour - Rejection of Bases Treaty**

On 16 September 1991, the Filipino people through their duly elected Philippine Senate resoundingly rejected the misnomer of a "Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Security" between the US and the Philippines. It was in fact a one-sided and oppressive treaty for the extension of the stay of the US military bases in the Philippines for another 10 years or more. By this historic and heroic act the Philippines had finally found her soul; regained her lost identity and dignity; asserted her national sovereignty and won genuine independence and freedom after almost 470 years of foreign military presence. This was the Philippines' most glorious and finest hour.

So after 16 September 1991, the US military forces and bases have no more legal nor constitutional basis for their presence in the Philippines. Since the Philippine Constitution is crystal clear that "foreign military bases and troops or facilities shall not be allowed in the Philippines" after September 16 "except under a treaty concurred in by at least two-thirds of all members of the Senate ...and recognized as a treaty by the other contracting State" [Article XVIII, Section 25 of the Philippine Constitution]. By the Senate's rejection, the treaty is dead and the US should immediately remove all its military bases, troops, nuclear weapons and facilities from the Philippines. The US should immediately start an orderly and expeditious withdrawal of all its troops, nuclear weapons, all other weapons systems and hardware, completing their removal by the end of December 1991. This will give the Philippines an opportunity to immediately put in place the conversion of the baselands for economic and peaceful uses.

### **Respect for the Constitution and the Rule of Law**

The Filipino people and the world community expect the United States to respect the constitutional mandate of the Filipino people and the decision of the Philippine Senate, and not to ignore nor violate its laws and Constitution. We hope and pray that President Bush and the US

Administration will exhibit the same respect for our laws and constitution. However, we have reason to doubt and worry! During the negotiations on the treaty, the US panel headed by Richard Armitage and other US officials arrogantly threatened or bluffed that they would immediately leave once the Philippine Senate rejected the treaty. But now they seem to be singing a different tune and trying to prolong their stay by hook or by crook as a foreign military occupation force.

### **Appeal to World Opinion**

We call and appeal to the United Nations, the world community and their governments; to the international solidarity groups; and to all our friends world wide to urge President Bush to respect the decision of the Philippine Senate and the right of the Filipino people to self-determination and independence, and to equally hold inviolate the Philippine Constitution. Let the pressure of world opinion bear upon the US to a friendly, orderly and expeditious withdrawal of its troops and military bases from the Philippines and desist from dirty tricks and acts to subvert the will of the Filipino people.

### **The New International Order**

President Bush, this is "the new international order" we would like to see in the Philippines and the world. We want a world where genuine friendship, mutual respect and international justice reign among nations, big or small, powerful or powerless; where there is no double standard of morality in dealings with nations; where peace is secured and assured, not by the force of arms or the "balance of terror", but by the force of the spirit, in the upholding of justice and human rights, in the mutual embrace of love and friendship.

### **Thanksgiving and Prayer**

We thank you all for your solidarity and support for the Philippine struggle. May we all continue to work and struggle for a nuclear-free and foreign bases-free world. May we witness the dawn of genuine peace in the world based on justice and love. May almighty God bless us all in our work for peace.



# Ang pagiging babae ay pamumuhay sa panahon ng digma To be a woman is to live at a time of war

Joi Barrios



Ang pagiging babae ay pamumuhay  
sa panahon ng digma.  
Kapiling ko sa aking paglaki  
ang pangamba,  
hindi ko tiyak ang bukas  
na laging nakakawing  
sa mga lalaki ng aking buhay:  
ama, kapatid,  
asawa, anak.  
Kinatakutan ko ang pag-iisa.

Sa pagiging ina,  
kaharap ko'y tagsalat.  
Pagkat ang lupit ng digmaan  
ay hindi lamang  
sa paggulong ng mga ulo  
sa pagguhit ng espada,  
kundi sa unti-unting pagkaubos  
ng pagkain sa hapag.  
Ay, paano sabay na magpapasuso sa bunso  
habang naghahanap ng maisusubo  
sa panganay?

Walang sandaling  
walang panganib.  
Sa sariling tahanan,  
ang pagsagot at pagsuway  
ay pag-akit ng pananakit.  
Sa lansangan,  
ang paglakad sa gabi'y  
pag-anyaya sa kapahamakan.  
Sa aking lipunan,  
ang pagtutol sa kaapiha'y  
paglalantad sa higit na karahasan.

Kay tagal kong pinag-aralan  
ang puno't dulo ng digmaan.  
Sa huli'y naunawaan,  
na ang pagiging babae  
ay walang katapusang pakikibaka  
para mabuhay at maging malaya.

To be a woman  
is to live  
at a time of war.

I grew up  
with fear beside me,  
uncertain of a future  
hinged  
to the men of my life;  
father, brother,  
husband, son.  
I was afraid to be alone.

To be a mother  
is to look at poverty  
at its face.  
For the cruelty of war  
lies not on heads that roll,  
but tables always empty.  
How does one look for food  
for the eldest  
as a baby sucks at one's breast?

No moment  
is without danger.  
In one's own home,  
to speak, to defy  
is to challenge violence itself.  
In the streets,  
walking at nightfall  
is to invite a stranger's attack.  
In my country  
to fight against oppression  
is to lay down one's life for the  
struggle.

I seek to know this war.  
To be a woman is a never ceasing  
struggle  
to live and be free.

"The women's movement in the Philippines has come to a point of no return. It can no longer be considered a fad or a transitory phenomenon. Not only in the Philippines but throughout the world, the women's movement has taken root and is one of, if not the most significant movement in contemporary times. It is a movement that is inclusive not only of women's concern but of the concern of race and class. It is crucial not only to the liberation of women but to the survival of the human race."

From The Woman Question in the Philippines by Sr. Mary John Mananzan, OSB

## JOIN PASG QUEENSLAND OR SUBSCRIBE TO ITS NEWSLETTER

The Philippines Australia Solidarity Group (PASG) Queensland welcomes membership of individuals who support the struggle of the Filipino peoples for independence, freedom and democracy. The group meets regularly in Brisbane. Members and subscribers are of diverse background including Filipinos and non-Filipinos. PASG QLD has close links with Filipino community organisations in Australia, the Philippines, and the Asia-Pacific region. We receive information on Philippine trade unions, churches (Christian and Non-Christian), women's groups, peasant organisations, rural conditions, teachers, environmental concerns, and the indigenous peoples in the Philippines. PASG QLD can provide resource material, slides and videos as well as speakers. CONTACT: The PASG Co-ordinator on (07) 221 9398.

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.

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

I would like to: ☐ know more about PASG. ☐ make a donation of \$..... for solidarity work.  
☐ join QLD PASG (membership includes a year's subscription to the Newsletter) - \$20 enclosed.  
☐ receive a one year subscription to the QLD PASG Newsletter. I enclose payment of \$10.

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