

Philippines Australia Solidarity Group Newsletter

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The February 10, 1988 issue of *Midweek* magazine ran this cartoon and headline on the occasion of the appointment by Cory Aquino of then retired General Fidel Ramos as the Philippines secretary of national defense. The editorial said of Ramos: "...a military man with a military mind, while still in the military service, has been plucked out of military affairs and placed on top of a civilian office overseeing the military. It would seem that the Aquino government is subtly subverting the constitutional principle of civilian supremacy over the military..."

CIVILIAN OR MILITARIST?

IT IS OFTEN SAID that Filipinos prefer a strong man in the leadership. Riding with the banner of People Power, Cory's initial popularity seemed to have put paid to that particular truism. Then, on May 11, 1992 voters in the Philippine elections brought Fidel Ramos to presidential office.

At first with Marcos then later with Cory, Fidel (or 'Eddie' as she prefers to call the one-time jailer of her assassinated husband, Ninoy) built his career mainly in military service. He has not served in any elective office. He has never been into political or party organising outside of the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines). To

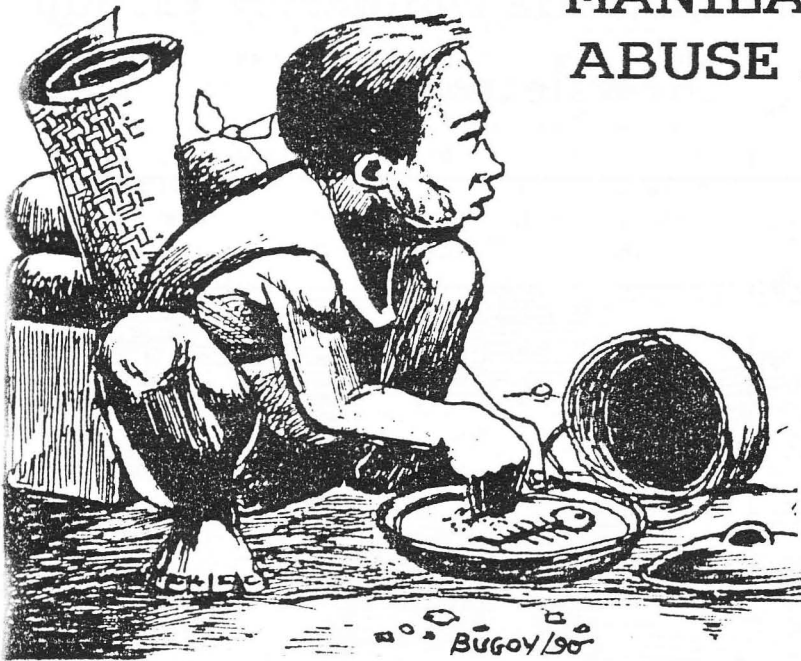
gloss over his role as a chief implementer of Marcos' martial law, Ramos' election campaign concentrated instead on his part as a key player in the EDSA event of 1986.

Ramos' campaign image was portrayed as the saviour of restored democracy; giving total fidelity to the President, (but not necessarily complete allegiance to the Constitution), in past political crises. Professing faith in the ideals of democracy, he led the crushing of several coup attempts against Cory Aquino using the most undemocratic state machine, the AFP.

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MANILA STREETCHILDREN: ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION



ECONOMIC HARDSHIP and rapid urbanisation in the Philippines are driving more children out into the streets to make a living, without the benefit of legal protection from abuse and exploitation, experts say.

Children, whether they be accused or victims of a crime, get little or no protection from the Philippine justice system, delegates said at a seminar on streetchildren held in Manila in March.

The seminar, called to discuss ways to defend a child in an adult-oriented justice system, was sponsored by the Women Lawyer's Circle of the University of the Philippines (WILOCI) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

A study by the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) showed about 2-3% of the child population in Philippine urban areas are streetchildren. Ill-clothed and malnourished, these streetchildren are often taken for violators of the law by police. When apprehended, they are subjected to the same treatment as adult offenders.

According to Manila prosecutor Jesus Guerrero, detained children go through the same pre-trial procedures as accused adults. They are even put into the same prison cells with hardened criminals, he added. Under Philippine law, only children below nine years old are exempt from criminal responsibility. Children aged nine to 15 are also exempt unless they are proven to have acted "with discernment".

When children are accused of a crime, the focus should be on treatment and rehabilitation to help them lead normal lives later, said Ofelia Santos of the Judicial and Bar Council. In a traditional family system like the Philippines where minors cannot act without the approval of elders, the government must launch a massive information campaign to make children aware of their rights, she added.

While child victims cannot go to court unless accompanied by a parent, guardian or representative assigned by the state, they have the right to file a complaint alone. She said the government must re-assess the law which states that only girls suffer from rape since about 74% of sexually abused children are male. Abandoned, neglected, abused or exploited children must know that they can turn to school and church authorities, social workers, government officials and the police for help, Santos said.

But Francisco Tanega, who runs the 'Sons of Mary Home for Street Children', said children who come to his shelter often complain of having suffered torture and sexual abuse in the hands of law enforcement officers. They refuse to press charges against their abusers for fear of being killed, Tanega said.

Clinical psychologist Lourdes Carandang, who heads the Psychology Department of the Ateneo de Manila University, said children, whether accused, victim or witness, will always need special treatment to get over the emotional trauma of their experiences. An abused child must be taught to trust again in adults so he or she will not grow up to be an abusive parent.

To help the campaign of child defenders, the Department of Justice said it would assign special prosecutors to work with the police in handling cases involving children. UNICEF regional adviser for east Asia, Dr Purificacion Quisumbing, said child defenders can cite the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in November 1989, which also applies to the Philippines since it is a U.N. member. (IPS/Crysta Rara)

1991 A YEAR OF OPLANS

A Report from

the Philippine Solidarity Group - Toronto

THE YEAR 1991 was one of massive and intense military operations launched by the Aquino government's armed forces against the New People's Army (NPA) in the Philippine countryside. According to various nongovernment human rights observers however, the effect of such operations has largely been on innocent civilians, mostly women and children, and in specific areas, on indigenous peoples.

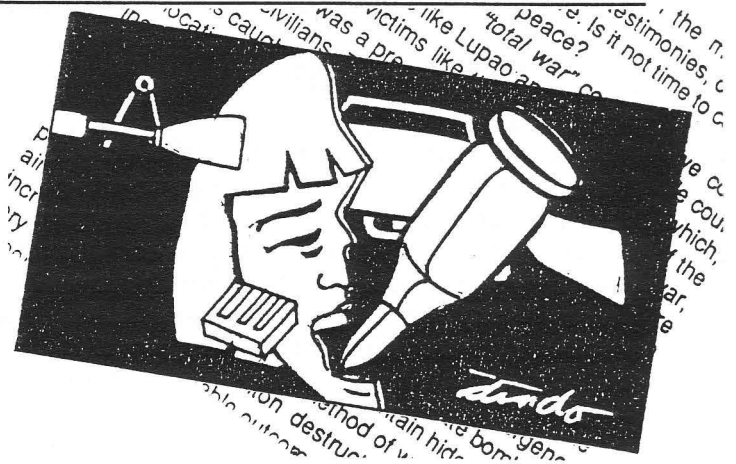
Instead of seriously pursuing negotiations with the revolutionary and popular movement for a comprehensive resolution of the country's basic ills, the government and its military establishment boast of being able to crush the insurgency before Mrs Aquino's term ends in May 1992. Meeting this deadline appears to be their principal concern.

They continue to treat the insurgency as a mere peace and order problem, and insurgents as common criminals. This attitude and position of civilian and military leaders is the main stumbling block to the efforts of peace advocates, as well as the revolutionary movement represented by the National Democratic Front (NDF), to seek a peaceful resolution to the ongoing armed conflict.

What is therefore significant to note with regard to the human rights situation in the country this past year, is the intensity and breadth of the forms and methods by which human rights are being violated.

Even as individual arrests, torture, salvaging and detention of leaders and members of the progressive movements in urban and rural areas continued, Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), in its year-end report noted that these declined in number compared to last year's. The church-based human rights organisation said that there is an apparent shift from victimisation of single individuals to "victimisation of many individuals at the same time".

According to TFDP, the most glaring indication of this 'shift' is the growing frequency of displacement cases. Some 15 fact-finding missions conducted in 1991 by human rights NGOs have verified several mass evacuations. This shift, however, only serves to underscore the real meaning of the government's "total war": the target is not only the armed component of the insurgency but also the suspected support network;



and, therefore, not only military action, but population control as well is employed.

The TFDP partial year-end report indicates that from Jan 1 to Sept 30, 1991, there was a total of 63 cases of forced mass evacuation in the wake of military operations in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. These involved over 5,000 families in some 80 villages. Heightened direct military action employing aerial and ground bombardment and strafing, combined with economic and food blockades and massive forced evacuation was most pronounced in Mindoro, Samar, Negros Oriental, the Cordilleras, and in northern and western Mindanao. A series of "Operation Plans" (OPLANS) were launched by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in these areas - local versions of the national OPLAN Lambat-Bitag (the strategy of gradual constriction), as they allegedly pursued NPA guerrillas.

The Cordilleras Under Fire

Populated by the indigenous Isnegs and Aggays, Marag Valley in Cagayan-Apayao has been subjected to successive military operations from October 1990 to the close of 1991. Oplan Salidummay claimed the lives of 121 people (over 100 of them children who died of various illnesses which spread during and after these operations). Oplan Silawan which commenced in September 1991 encompassed other towns in Kalinga-Apayao as well; this latter, even after the Department of Justice and both chambers of Congress had conducted their own investigations and hearings, and made recommendations towards giving justice to and indemnifying the Marag residents.

According to the Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace (EMJP), in Marag Valley alone, as of October 1990, the military had dropped a total of 137 bombs, fired 241 rockets, 150 howitzer shells and 2900 rounds of machinegun ammunition.

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1991 A Year of OPLANs

(* Continued from Page 3)

In an operation which involved 25,000 troops, 88 houses and 19 rice granaries were burned; 26 houses were either bombed or strafed; 3,032 cavans of rice were burned, destroyed or unharvested; and thousands of pesos worth of property were lost. Two residents were summarily executed by the military and four wounded during the bombing operations.

A Department of Justice investigating panel reported in August that some 300 villagers had resettled inside a huge cave near their homes after soldiers looted their houses and confiscated their crops. The mission also submitted to the justice secretary the names of soldiers accused of raping and forcing Marag women to perform perverse sexual acts.

On November 13, 1991, the clergy and lay officers of the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Philippines passed a resolution calling for the immediate withdrawal of the AFP 702nd Brigade from Mountain Province. According to them, the "mere presence of combat troops inside or near communities put the villagers in constant fear of fighting, indiscriminate firing, harassment and misbehaviour of the soldiers; the manoeuvres and military operations outside the communities prevent the people from going to work in their fields, gardens, pasturelands, forests and other villages."

Forced Mass Evacuation in Agusan-Surigao Sur, Mindanao

Oplan Rolling Thunder (now Oplan Stranglehold) ostensibly aimed at crushing the backbone of the communist mass base, has only ruined the lives and properties of innocent civilians. Five hundred and ninety-five families composed of 2,868 individuals from nine sitios of San Luis and Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur left their homes and farms when the AFP's aerial offensives were launched from April 28 to May 3, 1991. The EMJP reported that around 70% of the evacuees, composed of Lumads of the Manobo tribe moved deep into the forests while others scattered in church grounds, relatives' and friends' houses in neighbouring villages. More than a thousand farmers and residents, including municipal and village government officials, were threatened by the military and forced to pledge allegiance to the Philippine government during a series of anti-

communist seminars. In Surigao del Sur, thirteen families fled their homes in Han-ayan on June 12 as military helicopters hovered over the area.

Economic and Food Blockades

To "deprive the fish of water," the AFP control the activities and the lives of the population in alleged communist-infested areas. TFDP reported 4 cases of economic blockade involving a total of 32 families and 8 villages. Food blockades were imposed mainly in war-torn areas in Luzon affecting over 300 families. In Sugod, a coastal village east of Pagadian City in Western Mindanao, a Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGU) team and four AFP companies conducted house-to-house interviews and village meetings on the activities of insurgents in the area. In this village populated by fisherfolk and peasants who live below the poverty line, the Special Operations Team ordered the people to stop the operation of a fishpond and a consumers' cooperative since these were alleged support mechanisms for the NPA.

Counterinsurgency and 'Development'

The Cordillera Resource Center for Indigenous People's Concerns, however, noted that military operations peaked as announcements were made of starting up development projects (e.g. dams, geothermal plants, logging and mining). This is clear in the case of the Abulog-Gened Dam Project in Apayao and the Zinundungan Valley Development Plan, the geothermal projects in Pasil and the Saltan Dam in Balaban and Pinukpuk (all in the northern highlands).

Rich in forest resources, Marag Valley in Apayao in the north and Andap Valley in Surigao in the south have been host to timber concessions. But the indigenous people of Marag (Aggays and Isnags) and Andap (Manobos) have resisted the incursions of big logging concessionaires on their ancestral domain in the past. It is no coincidence that these areas continue to be heavily militarised.

The intensification of military operations in these areas have led local residents to believe that these are intended to facilitate the re-entry of logging concessions. In Andap, moreover, the Andap Valley Development Project will convert the area as a host for palm oil plantations and mining grounds of gold and carbon from which foreign transnational firms in the area will reap huge profits.

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PHILIPPINES: THE KILLING GOES ON

HUNDREDS BRUTALLY KILLED SINCE 1988, SAYS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

AT LEAST 550 unarmed people have been killed by government or government-backed forces during the past 3 years, says Amnesty International in its latest report entitled Philippines: The Killing Goes On. It says the military has, in effect, been given free rein to fight the armed opposition and thereby encouraging human rights abuses.

"The authorities have frequently sought to portray the victims as legitimate targets in their long-running campaign to defeat armed opposition groups. But the facts tell a different story. Whole families have been gunned down. Villagers working in their fields have been shot dead. Women have been raped by gangs of soldiers before being killed. The most inhuman forms of torture, including castration, have been inflicted on people targeted for death. No section of society has escaped, although the socially and economically disadvantaged and the politically weak have been the most vulnerable."

One incident cited occurred in August 1990. Nineteen members of one family, including a pregnant woman and six children, were murdered by soldiers who came to their home to arrest a suspected Muslim rebel. "The military claimed he killed two soldiers while resisting arrest," Amnesty said. "He was gunned down trying to escape and the others were lined up in front of their house and shot dead."

It said the current pattern of human rights violations emerged during the Marcos

regime, when "protecting national security" and "combating the armed opposition" were excuses used to justify the brutal crushing of virtually all political dissent. Crushing the opposition still influences much of the government's policy and military strategy today, even though democratic institutions were supposedly put in place in 1986. Amnesty noted, "There had been hopes for an improvement in the human rights situation...". The most serious violator of human rights is the 'total approach' counter-insurgency strategy which gives regional military commanders considerable autonomy in fighting the armed opposition and has spawned an uncontrollable array of unofficial militia and 'vigilante' groups.

The report also said that "The armed opposition has also been responsible for political killings. The victims have included residents of rural communities, trade unionists, government officials and opposition group members suspected of spying for the military." But, stressed Amnesty, "The violence of opposition groups, however, can never be held up as an excuse for the government meting out its own brutality."

The government says it has investigated alleged human rights violations and brought those responsible to justice, yet virtually no one in the military has ever been punished for extrajudicial executions or other serious violations. "In fact, in only one of the 85 detailed cases in Amnesty's report has anyone been brought to justice."

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RAPE IN CUSTODY EQUALS TORTURE

Throughout the world today, government agents use rape and sexual abuse to coerce, humiliate, punish and intimidate women.

When a policeman or a soldier rapes a woman in his custody, that is no longer a private act of violence. It becomes an act of torture for which the state is responsible.

In December 1990, Cherry Mendoza was arrested with a friend, Cecilia Sanchez, while they were out walking. During interrogation, Cherry was beaten, raped and possibly drugged. Cecilia was also sexually abused.

The two women were held for four months on charges of subversion before being released on bail. Cherry Mendoza has filed an official complaint about her treatment.

SEND A CLEAR MESSAGE TO THE PHILIPPINES GOVERNMENT THAT THEY ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE RAPE AND ILL TREATMENT OF WOMEN IN CUSTODY.

1992 Amnesty International Women's Action

Indigenous Peoples' Solidarity Declaration

We are the Kanaks of Kanaky, Moluccans of Molucca, Aborigines of Australia, Burakus of Japan, East Timorese of East Timor, Agtas and Igorots of the Philippines. We are the indigenous peoples attending the International Peace Festival in the Philippines 1991. Also with us are the friends of Jharkhandis of India, native Hawaiians of Hawaii, Samis of Norway, Maoris of Aotearoa, Tamils of Sri Lanka, native indians of America and Canada, and the different ethnic groups of Vietnam, Indonesia (specifically the Ache) and the Philippines. We were also joined in spirit by the other indigenous peoples from all over the world who share with us our common problems, struggles and aspirations. We have discussed together our situations and our programs. Together we have come up with the following declaration:

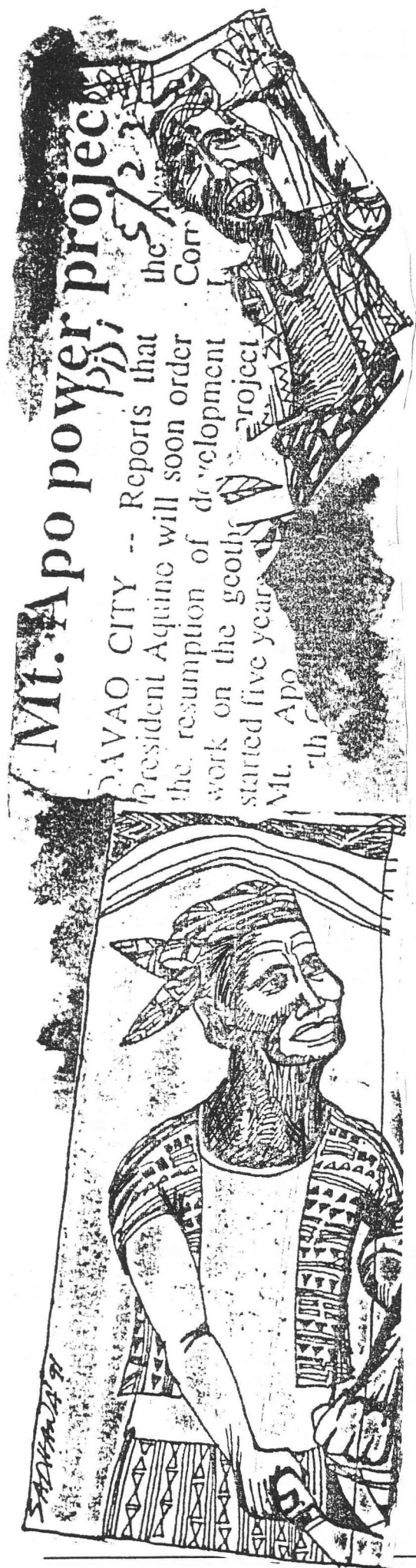
We have spoken in different tongues but we speak with one voice - the voice of the LAND, for we are peoples of the land. We affirm our unity with Mother Earth - LAND from which springs forth our life and our identity as peoples. Our forebears have nurtured our ancestral domains and have passed on to us the responsibility of ensuring the survival of our identity as peoples.

But we are threatened by oppressors who do not recognise our humanity. We are being threatened by colonialists - both from foreign lands and from our own countries - who think nothing of exterminating us in exchange for the natural resources found in our territories. Governments have implemented programs, such as the transmigration policy, that has caused the death of our cultural identity. Our cultures are looked down upon and we are treated with disdain and discrimination by those who claim to be more civilized than we are. Worse, projects in the name of the majority have displaced us and caused us to live in marginalized states. And yet when we protest against these injustices, the full might of armies are unleashed upon us, causing untold pain and sufferings. Indeed, we the indigenous peoples have been and remain the most oppressed and exploited among peoples.

Today, even as others talk about a "new world order", we the indigenous peoples continue to be denied our birthright of claiming a place of our own. We continue to struggle, sometimes even with those working for social change, for the basic right to be heard. Indeed, for many of us, PEACE has come to mean the graveyard.

Yet we are peoples in struggle. We derive inspiration from our forebears who have instilled in us the principles of self-determination. We aspire for the recognition and respect of our identities as peoples. From this recognition and respect will emerge the realization that those taken from us should be returned without pre-conditions. From this also shall arise a relationship based on mutual respect and benefit on the basis of cooperation. Only when such has been achieved shall we be truly self-determining, charting our own economic, political and socio-cultural destinies based on our own needs and capacities.

To hasten the process by which these shall be achieved, we commit ourselves in strengthening our peoples' movements and consolidating our relations with one another and with peoples aspiring for human liberation. We shall strive to make our movements compatible with our social values and shall employ ▶



◀ methods of struggle that are available and appropriate for us. Further, we shall endeavour to facilitate the education and exchange network among the indigenous peoples and to pledge our support in launching campaigns for the dissemination of such information. At all times and venues we will militantly put forward our agenda for survival.

Again, we reiterate we are peoples of PEACE and our immediate objective is to achieve self-determination for ourselves, but our ultimate objective is to march forward with other peoples to achieve human dignity, social justice and lasting peace.

AFFIRMED by the participants of the Indigenous Peoples Workshop during the International Peace Festival Philippines 1991 and ADOPTED by all participants of IPFP, on 14 Sept 1991 at Los Baños.

PROFILE: KAMP

(Kalipunan ng Mga Katutubong Mamamayan ng Pilipinas)

KAMP is composed of 9 genuine indigenous peoples organizations from all over the Philippines. Years of colonial rule have institutionalized discrimination among the Filipino majority teaching them to regard tribal communities as second class citizens and therefore expendable. This present condition urged the consolidation of our ranks because in organization lies our power. We are pushing forward with our positions on land, collective rights, governance, poverty and self-determination, not only to pursue our legitimate demand for participation in national affairs but also for survival.



* Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA) * Lumad Mindanaw (LM)
* Aguman Dareng Malukang Keng Aeta (AMA), Nueva Ecija/Samahan ng mga Katutubo sa Floridablanca (SKF), Pampanga * Samahan ng mga Katutubo sa Sierra Madre (SKSM) * Lubos na Alyansa ng mga Katutubong Ayta sa Sambales (LAKAS)/Samahang Maghahalaman sa Tumangan (SMT)/PAG-ASA * Naguyo-uyunon/Tagbanua Ka'y Boong (NAGTAGBO), Palawan * Kaisahan ng mga Katutubo sa Sierra Madre (KKSM), Rizal * Samahan ng mga Katutubong Agta na Binabaka ang Suliranin Tungo sa Adhikain (SAKABINSA), Rizal
* Samahang Pantribo ng Mangyan sa Mindoro (SPMM)

Get to know us! We publish a bi-annual magazine, Tibalyaw. Overseas subscriptions cost US\$15 from: KAMP, Rm. 701 Web-Jet Bldg., 64 Quezon Ave (cnr BMA St), Quezon City, Philippines. Phone: 712-09-51 local 14.



Where there is Oppression, There is Resistance

IN 1492, Christopher Columbus 'discovered America' and laid claim to the Indigenous Peoples' territories in the name of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain.

In 1992, 'America', Spain, and the governments of some other countries will celebrate the quincentenary of Columbus' 'discovery'. While some wish to believe that the subsequent colonization of the 'Americas' and other areas paved the way for 'civilization' and Christianity to grow and prosper, many people think otherwise. Protest actions have been mounted against this celebration of invasion and the Indigenous Peoples continue to tell the real story of their ancestors.

Filipinos are greatly affected by the 'discovery' of America'. Inspired by Columbus' journey, Ferdinand Magellan set sail from Spain reaching the Marianas in 1521 and landed on the island of Samar on March 17th. These 471 years of colonizers and neo-colonizers have witnessed the attempted genocide of the Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines.

The 'discovery' myth romanticized the conquest, rape and pillage by European powers, genocide of the native peoples and subjugation of the Third World. For the Third World and all the Indigenous Peoples, the term "500 years of colonization" is not accurate enough. They have not remained passive - with 500 years of colonization also came "500 YEARS OF RESISTANCE".

RAMOS: CIVILIAN OR MILITARIST?



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People became aware of his ambitions during the past four years as surveys proliferated projecting Ramos as the leader needed to save the country from crisis.

Ramos' unwavering support for his commander-in-chief paid off. Cory returned the favour by backing him for the presidency. Announcing her choice of Ramos over Ramon Mitra at the EDSA commemorative rites in February, she gave him full, open and unrelenting support. With the entire bureaucracy as a campaign machine and government finances for patronage and dole-outs, a lot of politicians were manoeuvred to the side of Lakas EDSA-NUCD, Ramos' political party. Through the almost unlimited exposure he enjoyed on government-owned media (3 television stations and a network of public radio stations) EDSA-NUCD reached the majority of the nation's grassroots. But, his credibility was still somewhat tarnished by the criticism of the churches for his role in the Marcos dictatorship.

The May 11 elections were unique. For the first time, national and local elections were synchronized. Voters simultaneously elected officials for every level of government, from president down to mayors and city counsellors. Nation-wide 87,770 candidates contested some 17,000 positions. A voter in Manila, for example, would have had to write in 35 names. The president is elected for a fixed term of 6 years (beginning on June 30) on a 'first past the post' basis. In other words, a candidate does not need an overall majority. The system is the result of ratification of the new constitution in 1987. Typically, however, the rich, famous and powerful dominated the national elections.

Bio-data: FIDEL "EDDIE" V. RAMOS

(Lakas ng EDSA [EDSA Power] party)



Born: March 18, 1928 in Lingayen, Pangasinan. Education: Bachelor of Science, US Military Academy (West Point); MBA, Ateneo de Manila University; M.S. in Civil Engineering, University of Illinois. Received military training through the years in America.



1952: Member of the Philippine Expeditionary Forces to Korea, he was a reconnaissance platoon leader of the 20th Battalion Combat Team.



During the war in Vietnam, he was operations commander of the 1st Philcag team as well as Presidential Assistant on Military Affairs, 1968-69.



1970: Became chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Intelligence Service.

1972: On September 21, Marcos declared martial law. Thousands of people were imprisoned; democratic rights suppressed; mass media was silenced; and Congress was abolished.



1975: Ramos became Director General of the Philippine Constabulary.

1982: Vice Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).



1986: After the EDSA Uprising, AFP Chief of Staff.

1988-91: Appointed Secretary of National Defense.



1992: Elected President of the Republic of the Philippines.

As we go to press, the Philippine Congress and the national election commission COMELEC have indicated that it would be able to proclaim Fidel Ramos as president by June 30.

1991 A Year of OPLANs

(Continued from Page 4)

This therefore betrays the fundamental reason behind the violation of the Filipino peoples' basic democratic and human rights. As surmised by the indigenous peoples of Marag Valley, counter-insurgency is a mask for the protection and the preservation of foreign and local elite interests in the country.

AMNESTY REPORT

(Continued from Page 5)

The entire process of investigating violations and bringing people to justice is, in fact, biased in favour of the military. "Investigations and prosecutions take place within the military system, and even the Philippines' Human Rights Commission and civil courts tend to accept soldiers' testimony without question. Witnesses, lawyers and activists are often threatened and sometimes even killed if they take on the military."

The report is available from the Amnesty International office in your state at \$8 plus postage.

INDIGENOUS WOMEN, ENVIRONMENT, and SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PART III

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

MILITARIZATION AS A PARTNER OF 'DEVELOPMENT'

Militarization came along with all these attempts to wrest control over the land from the indigenous women and men. All throughout history, indigenous peoples were subjected to the worst forms of militarization for them to surrender their lands to colonizers and business corporations. The symbolic existence of indigenous women with the land was destroyed all in the name of development.

The worst form of destruction to the ancestral domain and environment were done by multinational corporations and government agencies. Open pit mining, indiscriminate logging, short-lived big dam projects, and other destructive infrastructure were pushed through with the help of oppressive laws and militarization.

Presently, several indigenous people's communities in the Cordillera are being subjected to severe aerial bombings and strafing. Marag Valley in Apayao where the last remaining tropical rainforests within the Cordillera are located is one of these places. It was learned that logging concessionaires are supporting these military operations because they would like to pursue their logging operations which were stopped by Aggays and Isnags (indigenous people living in this area).

RESPONSES OF INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Indigenous women in the Third World did not take all these lying down. While their roles in written history remained invisible, the women were in the forefront in many of the struggles launched against efforts of government or multinational corporations to dislocate them from their beloved ancestral homelands. The struggle against the World Bank-sponsored Chico River Dam Project in the Cordillera region in the Philippines is just one of the many fine examples. The Chipkko movement in India is another.

In the Chico Dam struggles, the indigenous women in the Cordillera organized themselves and trekked to the site where the surveyors set camp. They dismantled the tents of the men and carried these to the town capital. Together with men, they were

detained several times in the military barracks because of their stiff opposition to the government project.

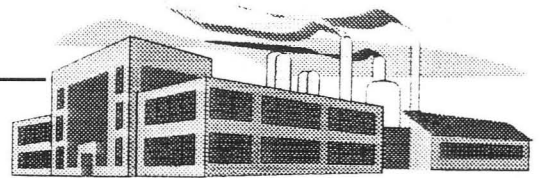
However, they did not allow themselves to be cowed and continued resisting until the World Bank and the Philippine government were forced to cancel the whole project. This experience was cited by Waldon Bello in his book Development Debacle as one of the worst setbacks suffered by one of the most sophisticated international financial institutions. This defeat was offered by pre-industrial tribal people.

The resistance offered by the Mainit women in the Cordillera against the biggest mining corporation in the Philippines, Benguet Corporation, is another. When they were offered cash by the company, the women and men discussed among themselves how to react to the offer. The women said that if they get the cash they may be able to buy what they immediately need. However, this will mean that their ricefields will be gone forever. Where will they get the next supply of rice when the cash runs out? They decided to stick it out with their fields and forests and fought the mining corporation. This also happened in the mid-70's. Up to now the mining corporation is still trying to convince them to have their lands mined.

Challenge to Feminists, Environmentalists and Development Activists
TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE:



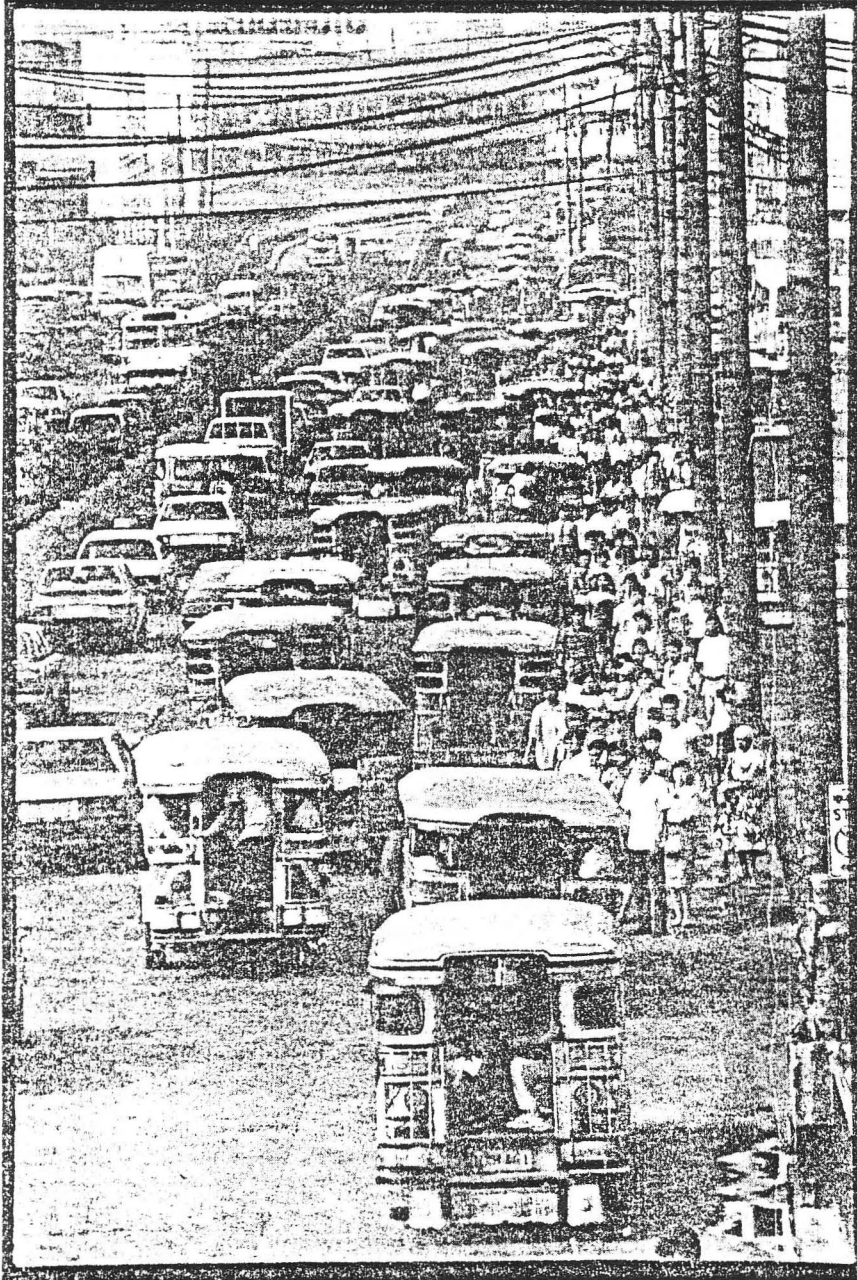
Detail of a pen and ink drawing by Ben Cabrera from the series, Images of Women in the Cordillera.



THE POLLUTED METROPOLIS

BY EVA S. DIAZ

Reprinted from the "Philippine Daily Inquirer"
in FEEDBACK Vol.2 No.1 Jan/Feb 1991



PHOTOGRAPHS BY GIL NARTEA

MOUNTAINS of stinking garbage. Rivers and other waterways black with toxic wastes. Air heavy with fumes and smog and dust. And the jarring noise from the traffic, radios in jeepneys, and the factories.

All these contribute to the deterioration of life in Metro Manila. They take their toll on everyone who leaves her house and hits the streets on her way to school or to work every morning. In the past 30 years, surface, air, water and noise pollution in the metropolis has built up unchecked and today threatens the health of Metro Manilans.

At least four government agencies and some private sector associations, as well as hundreds of government officials and non-government entities are carrying out anti-pollution drives of one sort or another. And yet, thousands of persons suffer each year from respiratory diseases such as asthma and pneumonia that medical experts say can be traced directly to the patients' prolonged exposure to polluted air, water and environment in general.

Indeed we have plenty to think and worry about in so far as our environment is concerned. A recent study financed by the Asian Development Bank looked into the state of pollution and environmental degradation in Metro Manila.

Aside from identifying the sources of pollution, the study said that a huge amount of money is required to bring about some order in the fight against pollution so that the rate of deterioration could be checked and reversed. The study revealed that at least 4,000 tons of garbage are generated daily by Metro Manilans, but only about 3,400 tons are collected. ►

FEEDBACK is published by the Center for Environmental Concerns, 3rd Floor, Constanica Bldg., 71 E. Timog Avenue, Quezon City 1104, Philippines. Overseas Subscription: US\$30 for 6 issues.

A Profile of the Centre for Environmental Concerns was printed in this Newsletter Vol.5 No.6 Nov/Dec '91.

Some 600 tons are left scattered in the streets or clogging canals, esteros and the drainage system. Last September, about 4,000 tons of garbage piled up daily in the streets of the metropolis because trash collection have virtually come to a halt. The uncollected garbage was believed to be one of the causes of the big floods last August. Rotting garbage is even worse. Aside from fouling the air, uncollected trash is a threat to one's health.

The ADB study also said that most of the rivers running through the metropolis have been "so polluted that they have become biologically dead." No fish or any other living object can survive in them. Some of these rivers are unsafe for swimming or bathing.

The study also identified noise at extremely high levels, especially that generated by factory machinery, that can damage the ear permanently.

The study was conducted to determine the extent of pollution in the metropolis and to come up with possible solutions. But as Dr. Nelia Cortes-Maramba of the UP College of Pharmacology said, "We don't need elaborate measuring devices to say there is air pollution in Metro Manila. You just have to see how dirty your hanky becomes after travelling from your home to the office and you will agree that there is too much pollution around us."

Car, Factory Fumes Poisoning City Air

"Air pollution in Metro Manila has turned from bad to worse." - "The metropolis has now acquired a canopy of pollution, a dark haze resembling the dark clouds of a coming typhoon." These are some of the observations of health and medical experts studying the worsening problem of air pollution in Metro Manila. And the increase in asthma, pneumonia and other diseases of the lungs over the past few years tends to support these observations.

Prof. Elma Torres of the UP Institute of Public Health, who is conducting pollution monitoring research, was herself affected by the polluted air. Her doctor advised her to rest for a month last year and to avoid exposure to smoke and smog. But since she

teaches at the Taft Avenue area near the Philippine General Hospital which is one of the heavily polluted areas in Metro Manila, Torres had to go on leave just to avoid the smoke. Her doctors said her mild coughing could have led to asthma or bronchopneumonia if she continued being exposed to smoke, dust and other pollutants.

At least four government agencies are involved in pollution monitoring and control. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is the lead agency with its National Capital Region office as its implementing arm. The other agencies are the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), which is also under the DENR, the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), the Metro Manila Authority (MMA) and the local government units.

No Accurate Data

None of the agencies can give accurate data on the extent of air pollution in the metropolis. "We don't have data that will show the extent of the problem," is the usual reply given to the researchers.

Pollution monitoring in Metro Manila began in 1976 when the National Pollution Control Commission (NPCC) was created "to provide for the prevention, control and abatement of air pollution from motor vehicles. But former NPCC officials said hardly any funds were provided to ensure the implementation of pollution control rules. A recent study funded by the ADB said this "exemplifies the lack of national government support for the implementation of pollution control policies."

Lack of money also lead to the junking of pollution monitoring devices which all conked out several years ago. In 1987, the EMB was formed with the merger of the NPCC and the National Air and Water Pollution Commission (NAWPC). Given the same NPCC function but also suffering from lack of money, the EMB was reduced to a policy and regulatory board which cannot even enforce the rules for lack of police powers.

Meanwhile, cases against factories and industrial firms are piling up. And the environmental situation in Metro Manila is not getting any better.

"The metropolis has now acquired a canopy of pollution, a dark haze resembling the dark clouds of a coming typhoon."

The Philippines Australia Solidarity Group (PASG) Queensland welcomes membership of individuals who support the struggle of the Filipino peoples for independence, freedom and democracy. 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 from Philippine trade unions, religious groups (Christian and Non-Christian), women, peasant organisations, rural and urban-based groups, teachers, environmentalists and the indigenous peoples. PASG QLD 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.

Indigenous Peoples from the Philippines Attend Earth Summit in Brazil

Following their very successful speaking tour in Australia, Ben Jugatan and Palawig Cabalic of LAKAS (see the centre pages of the previous Newsletter), accompanied by Sr. Menggay Balazo, travelled to Brazil for the Earth Summit in Rio. The Cordillera People's Alliance (CPA) is also represented. We hope to bring you their impressions of this U.N. Environment and Development Conference in our coming issues of the Newsletter.

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JOIN PASG QUEENSLAND OR SUBSCRIBE TO ITS NEWSLETTER

- ✓ Would you like to know more about P.A.S.G. QLD.? Please let us send you a copy of our Aims and Objectives and Constitution.
- ✓ Contact us if you would like to know about organised exposures with non-government peoples' organisations in the Philippines.
- ✓ Cash donations for solidarity work are always greatly appreciated. Please let us know if you wish to contribute to a specific project.
- ✓ SUBSCRIBE to the Newsletter. \$12 for 6 issues by post in Australia. (a portion of your payment covers the cost of complimentary copies to other groups in the region.)
- ✓ Join PASG QLD - the annual \$22 membership fee includes 6 issues of the Newsletter. We hold regular monthly meetings in Brisbane.

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*They pulled out our fruit,
They cut our branches,
They burned our trunk,
But they could not kill
our roots.*

