



KASAMA

Newsletter of the Philippines Australia Solidarity Group

(Queensland Edition)

Vol. 7 No. 3

May-June 1993

\$2.00

INTERNAL REFUGEES

The Subanen of Zamboanga Peninsula A DISPLACED PEOPLE.... A VANISHING CULTURE

The Subanen people of the Zamboanga Peninsula are among the poorest of the poor, the most vulnerable, isolated, oppressed, battered and marginalised people in Mindanao today. The Subanen were once the majority of the peninsula's people. Today, they number approximately 300,000 individuals; only 12% of the population residing on Subanen traditional homeland. Beset by land grabbing, development aggression and counter-insurgency operations, they are at the edge of survival.

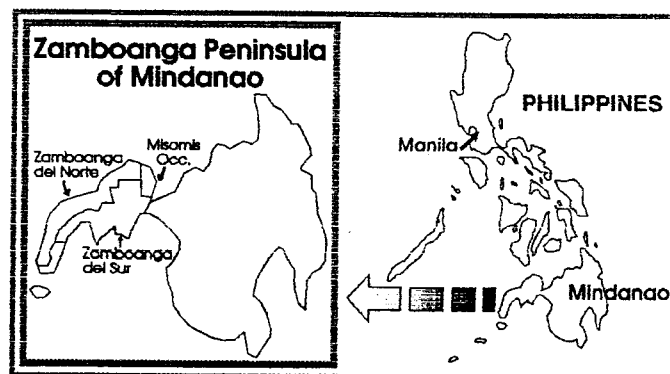
Before "civilisation" overtook the Subanen, their landscape of valleys, mountain ranges and undulating hills was covered in lush forest growth that provided honey, herbs, ornamental plants, rattan canes for weaving baskets, and lumber. Rivers and streams snake through the valleys where they used to have their settlements. Subanen means "dwellers near the river."

Some of the early Subanen fled from the valleys to higher elevations when the Muslims came between the 9th and 14th centuries. Then the Conquistadores claimed all the Philippine islands for the Spanish king in what has become known as the Regalian Doctrine. Later, the American colonial government created laws based on this doctrine and promoted transmigration to Mindanao of Filipinos from other islands. Finally, succeeding Philippine governments emulated the colonisers' example of "No paper title, no land."

Colonisation demanded that the Subanen completely abandon their way of life. While some were converted, those who refused to embrace Christianity took to the mountains. Thus, the Subanen became "highlanders" and, like the other indigenous peoples of Mindanao, squatters in their own land.



Large numbers of Subanen children and elders have died in the government's evacuation centers.



Map: C.P.C.A.

Mining and logging have totally denuded the Subanen's forests. The mountains of their ancestral domain are bare of trees, the soil eroded, and introduced water-hungry species are sucking the water tables dry.

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INTERNAL REFUGEES

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The Subanen culture struggles to survive amidst the dominant migrants. Their indigenous faith is marginalised, declared as paganism. Rituals have become luxuries of sort. Impoverished, the Subanens cannot even afford to practice their religion. Displaced, they can no longer perform the rituals connected to the land, the source of life and identity.

Militarisation has made the Subanen internal refugees and contributes to the threat of extinction of customary laws and traditions. Many have been forcibly recruited into paramilitary groups and pseudo-religious fanatical cults. These once peace-loving people are drawn into the government's counter-insurgency "total war."

As a result of military operations between October 1989 to May 1992 over 1,000 families comprising some 4,500 people have registered in evacuation centers in the area. But these figures do not represent the total picture as many people prefer to struggle it out in the homes of family and friends rather than go to evacuation centers where food is scarce and the military and para-military CAFGUs keep an ominous presence.

Thankfully, the Subanen are no longer silently enduring their misery. They are volubly defending their identity and dignity as a people. They are speaking out.

In their situationer of October 31, 1992 the Indigenous Center for Cultural Communities Development, a non-government organisation based in Pagadian City, sends this message:

LAMENT OF A DISPLACED PEOPLE

(Discussion document presented at the International Conference on Disasters and Development - The Philippine Experience, March 28-31, 1993, DAP, Tagaytay City, Philippines organised by Citizen's Disaster Relief Network)

How many times have they called us *baboy sulop* (wild pigs); deserving only the wild of the forests?

How many times have they cursed our tribe, saying we're dirty, uncultured and ignorant? Didn't we hear them say, "*Para kang Subano*" (You're like a Subanen) whenever one of their children will mess himself up in the dirt?

Didn't they laugh as we danced in thanksgiving to our *diwata* (goddess) for keeping us safe and our harvest bountiful?

Ten decades seem to be a long, long time ago. Way back then, we roamed Zamboanga Peninsula freely. The land was ours. Our forefathers had a bountiful life.

"While this report is only exploratory, we are hoping that national and international concern can be generated to look into the issue of ethnocide among the indigenous peoples of the Philippines, particularly the Subanen. From the most isolated Subanen village down to the evacuation sites, this report is also a solidarity call. As the Subanen Lumads struggle to stop the extinction of their people, we call on support from other indigenous peoples of the world."

We wish to acknowledge the authors of "*The Subanen of Zamboanga Peninsula: A Displaced People, A Vanishing Culture*", Julio Benitez and Editha Eco, whose text we have quoted from in the above article. This and other reports are available from the Halad Foundation (Western Mindanao). We would also like to thank Halad for assisting our exposure to the plight of the Subanen people.

We plead with you to extend solidarity and whatever financial assistance you can to the Subanen people. The Halad Foundation is a regional office of CDRN (Citizen's Disaster Relief Network) and we can guarantee that any material support you offer will certainly be received by the people themselves.

**Halad Foundation Inc. (Western Mindanao),
Mabini Extension, Ozamis City, Philippines.**



We lived in peace as land was held in common, the harvest being shared with every member of the village. We lived in harmony with nature as forests were allowed to regrow; the soil was allowed to refertilize; the water systems were never polluted, knowing that we drank our water from it; the birds and flowers were our brothers and sisters.

Then came the *dumadaong* (Visayan and Tagalog settlers). Our tribe was wary of them. But we decided to have an open mind and welcomed them to our land. First, they were respectful as they borrowed portions of our land to till. Generously we shared the land - land that is given to all by the *diwata* - with them, thinking that they too practiced communal living.

Later, we saw that they did not share their harvest with their neighbours, they sold it to them! They did not allow others to use the land, they kept it as their own!

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LAMENT OF A DISPLACED PEOPLE

◀ Continued from page 2

It was too late. "Our parents thought we will never run out of land. They thought that land was limitless. They did not foresee that time will come when man will have claimed land as his own; his private property. They did not foresee, too, that land will be sold and resold and in the process their children will have become squatters in their own land." (*A Displaced People, A Vanishing Culture*; ICCD).

And they pushed us to the mountains, in the wilderness, among the *baboy sulop*.

Oh, ten decades, indeed, it is too long ago. Way back then, we were the majority in the peninsula. Now, Subanen people account for less than 300,000 individuals. Where have our people gone?

◀ 72 children below ten years old died in a hamlet designated by the military in Dumurok, Siayan, Zamboanga del Norte in 1990.

◀ 17 people succumbed to measles and gastric infections in an evacuation center in Marupay, Jose Dalman town, Zamboanga del Norte, 1990.

◀ 14 children and adults died from starvation in an evacuation center in Josefina, Zamboanga del Sur, 1990.

◀ 20 children died when measles broke out in an evacuation center in Tonggo, Tudela, Misamis Occidental, 1990.

◀ 57 Subanens died in six instances of massacre between 1988 and 1990 (documented cases only).

◀ 10 Subanen men were "salvaged" between 1989 and 1992 (documented cases only).

◀ Over 20 people died when measles struck in a Subanen village in Dumalinao, Zamboanga del Sur in 1991.

◀ 22 people died in a measles outbreak in a resettlement village in Gatub, Lakewood, Zamboanga del Sur in 1992.

Yes, silently - no government report, no news article in the national media - most of our people went to their graves. Yet, that is not all the answer there is to the question.

◀ The majority (about 75%) of the 1,433 internal refugees in the Zamboanga Peninsula are Subanen (1989-1992).

◀ Oplan Strike Back and Oplan Strike Back-Alpha were launched by the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) in Mt. Paraya of Zamboanga del Norte in 1992 and had displaced Subanen Lumads now languishing in the resettlements of Katipunan and Sergio Osmeña in the same province. Over 60 houses were burned down during the said Oplan.

◀ Oplan Rainbow, a major military offensive launched in Mt. Malindang in 1991, displaced over a hundred Subanens and burned six houses.

◀ 210 Subanen families are now suffering from sickness and hunger in Timunan and Dilud resettlements after being displaced by various military operations in neighbouring villages in the past two years.

Deaths and displacements do not end there. The Subanen people are also threatened by various government-sponsored development plans, as follows:

◀ The Lakewood Tourism Development Plan envisions constructing a multi-million dollar tourist resort in the interior town of Lakewood that will displace some 200 Subanen living around the lake.

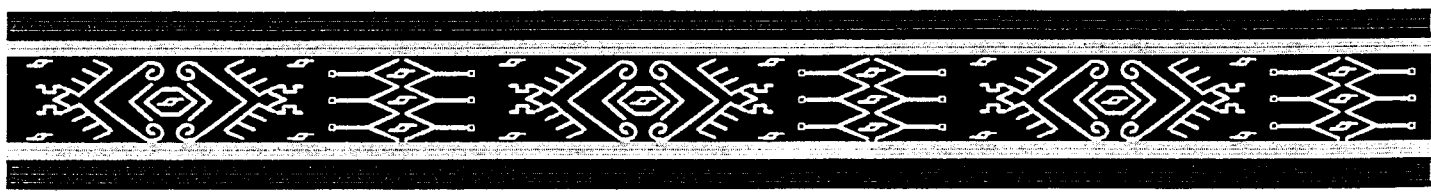
◀ The Dumpoc Dam, a hydrothermal power development plan, threatens to displace some 72 Subanen families in Dumpoc, Imelda, Zamboanga del Sur.

◀ The Mt. Malindang Development Plan, which includes turning the range into a tourist spot and tapping its waters for a hydrothermal, will affect the lives of over a hundred Subanen in the area.



Ten decades and we have kept our silence - a semblance of what the government and the majority calls peace. Now, as we are left with no place to go - for even the *baboy sulop* scampered to nowhere when bombs fell or when the development machines started to roar in the forested mountains where the *dumadaong* drove us before - our options are getting limited. Death in hunger or death in bullets. Or fight back.

**DO NOT PUSH US TOO FAR.
DO NOT DRIVE US TO NOWHERE.
HELP US EXPAND OUR OPTIONS.**
The Subanen of Zamboanga Peninsula
March 1993.



The Last Step Before Heaven by Ada Bush

An unexpected invitation to join a group of UP students on a field trip to the summit of Mt Pulog was too exciting to decline. And so I was, if not the least experienced, certainly the oldest trekker in this group facing the challenge of the second highest mountain in the Philippines. The peak of Mt Pulog, or 'bald' mountain, stands 2,938 meters (9,640 feet) above sea level.

This sacred mountain is an area of special significance within the ancestral domain of the Ibaloi people of the Cordillera. Its peak is the final resting place of their ancestors. Even lowlanders say, "On moonlit nights you can hear the beating of the ceremonial gongs of the spirits."

Our party travelled the first 64 km out of Baguio City in two jeepneys mostly along unsealed roads. For the best view the more intrepid sat on the roof hanging onto the rails and ropes securing the luggage. Inside, we forced our eyes open against stinging dust to see the awesome beauty of the mountain range. The drivers' skill ensured that we lost not a single bag nor 'top deck' passenger.

The land before the forest starts has been heavily cleared, first by logging concessions for lumber and now by the local people for subsistence farming and cash crops to be sold in the market, so the forest starts suddenly.

We had our lunch by the Forest Ranger's hut - as far as vehicles can go - and before us lay an 8 km hike. My backpack felt like a bag of bricks even though I was carrying the lightest weight and the others looked like mountain goats leaping up the trail in front. At first it didn't seem to matter to me, I stopped to rest often just to listen to the pictures of sound the forest paints; pictures heard only when you escape the urban drone. But before long, I dropped to the back of the group, stopping now to ease my growing shoulder pain and wishing I could absorb the strength of the mountain people whose lives are embedded in the rock and soil.

The climate at this altitude has caused the oak trees to grow dwarfed, knarled and covered in moss. In lay terms it is called a "mossy" forest because of its appearance. A diversity of plants grow beneath the oak canopy, tree ferns rose above my head and small ferns in the gullies swayed with the breeze promising secret gardens beyond. But to stray from the path is forbidden as human activity will only degrade its virgin state even further. A sign pinned to a tree by a flow of sweet cool water reminded:

Take only pictures.

Kill only time.

Leave only footprints.

Keep only your memories.

The forest ends as abruptly as it begins. Beyond the tree line the vegetation is primarily grasses; carpet grass and dwarfed bamboo that grows a maximum of only 1.5 meters in the more sheltered crevices with perhaps a lone tree for company. We were above the blanket of cloud that waters the mossy forest, in a treeless environment where the temperature drops below freezing, the wind bites through your clothes, and the sun is fierce. This is said to be the only surviving natural grassland in the Philippines. Exhausted, chilled and feeling very sorry for myself, I finally arrived at the campsite.

Mountain tops are good situations for reflection. Watching the sun rise from the summit with a clear 360 degree view across the provinces of Benguet, Ifugao and Nueva Vizcaya, I tried to imagine how the lowlands spread below would have appeared before the coming of 'the strangers'. Where logging has occurred pine trees have replaced the forest and erosion has spread because pine does not hold the soil as well.

Land and water management was a customary practice of the indigenous peoples for thousands of years before the invaders came to exploit their wealth, forcing change upon systems that had sustained their communities for generation upon generation. And yet today, when environmentalism is number one in the popularity polls of concerned citizens the world over, it has again become fashionable to blame the victims; in this case the kaingineros, the forest dwellers, the small farmers and fisherfolk, the indigenous - the very people who know their environment intimately.

Before climbing the mountain a simplistic solution seemed obvious to me: "Just plant more trees." At the summit I began to think more clearly about what trees to plant where? who would plant them and why? and who would benefit from the planting?

If the world is just 'one big global village' sharing a common future environmentally speaking, then we should all be suffering and enjoying the costs and benefits of 'development'. Prof. Antonio Contreras goes straight to the heart of the matter when he says, "before a common future can be articulated, all people must first be allowed to speak."¹ Otherwise the sentiments of environmental romantics, like me, will be co-opted into maintaining the existing power structures and we will merely achieve protection of a privileged environment for a privileged elite.

Since I returned from Mt Pulog many Filipinos have told me they have never been able to afford such a trip and may never be able to in their lifetime.

1. "Politics of Environmentalism in the Philippines: Issues in Decolonization and Resistance" - a paper presented at the Consultation Dialogue held at the University of the Philippines College Baguio, sponsored by the Cordillera Studies Center, on August 12, 1992. Antonio P. Contreras, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor, Department of Forest Management, University of the Philippines Los Banos College of Forestry.

MILA WILLS

"WE were expecting her to spend easter in Sydney," said Mila's sister Ofelia Santos, as she controlled herself from yet another sob.

Her sister, Milagros "Mila" Wills, 36, was brutally murdered last Saturday morning inside her unit in Morningside, a Brisbane suburb. With Mila during the attack was Marissa, her seven-week old daughter with the man charged for her murder.

Police investigating the incident believed that the attacker used a "light coloured piece of timber" in bashing Mila's head causing a large hole in her skull.

Felipe Mercado, Mila's brother who lives in Sydney, thought the weapon used was likely to be the kitchen stone pestle since it was obviously freshly-cleaned when they checked the kitchen cupboards.

Mila was sent to the hospital at around 8 o'clock, five hours after she was attacked by her de-facto husband, Bruce Hughes, 38, who claimed to be an ex-military man.

She died the next day after doctors from the Princess Alexandra Hospital turned off her life-support system.

Mila Bordador Wills arrived in Australia 11 years ago after marrying Harry Wills, an Australian she met in a deaf and mute institute in Manila. Their union produced a daughter, Melissa, now six years old.

In 1990, Mila separated from Harry and moved to her Morningside unit with their daughter Melissa. Their separation, according to her close friends was caused by her in-laws interference to prevent Mila's mother to come to Australia.

Mila's mother, Marciana Bordador came to Brisbane on a temporary visa in 1988, but was forced to go home when the Immigration Department refused her request for extension.

"Despite her disability to hear and talk, Mila lived a very normal and happy life," said Cynthia Mowat, Mila's confidante.



Foreigner's view of the Filipina

At Large

Rina Jimenez David

IF A 6555, ex-Maclean and for Yap, does not fit in with the 1980s, it is a sign that the world is changing. The Philippines must change to fit the 1980s, it is the Philippines.

Woman brutally bashed in bed

DETECTIVES last night were investigating the slaying of a Brisbane woman, Mila Wills, 36, who was brutally bashed in her bed last Saturday morning. The woman was found in her bed, with a large hole in her skull, and was pronounced dead at the scene. The police are looking for a man who is believed to be the attacker.

Baby faces future alone

By JO DUFFIN

A FIVE-month-old girl faces a future alone after her mother, Mila Wills, was brutally murdered last Saturday morning. The girl, Marissa, is now in the care of her grandmother.



3800, brother of murdered woman Mila Wills. Photo: TED HOLLIST

Another Filipina killed by husband in Australia

By Daniel Agoncillo

PHILIPPINE groups in Brisbane, Australia, are shocked to learn that another Filipina has been killed by her husband. The woman, Mila Wills, 36, was brutally murdered last Saturday morning. The police are looking for a man who is believed to be the attacker.



MILA WILLS, 36, was brutally murdered last Saturday morning. Photo: TED HOLLIST

"But sometimes, she was worried taking babies to the doctors and explaining what was wrong."

Mila then met Bruce Hughes and bore him a daughter. The relationship soured after 18 months and the two separated November last year.

Mila Wills is the 15th Filipina violently murdered in Australia since 1980, making Filipinos the ethnic group hardest hit by cases of domestic violence.

The statistics prompted the Filipino community in Brisbane to create an inter-organisation committee that will monitor the case of Mila Wills.

"We hope to see justice in here," said a leader of a Filipino community group in Brisbane.

His fear was not at all baseless. A few days after Mila's murder, a man convicted of killing his Filipina wife in Sydney was set free for lack of evidence.

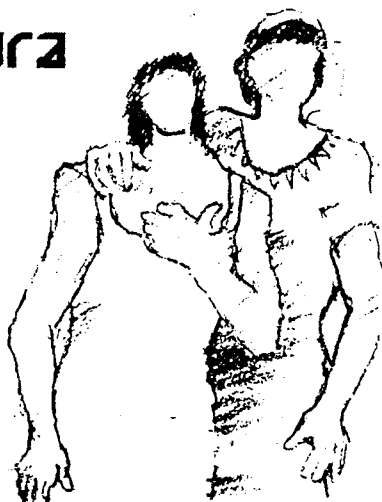
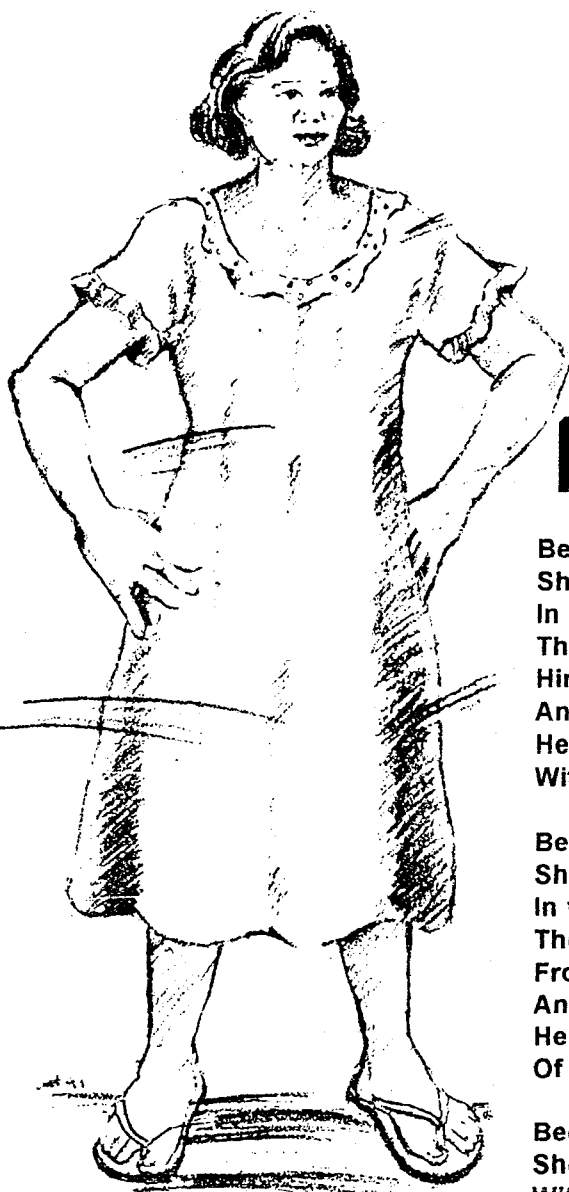
The Centre for Philippine Concerns-Australia (CPCA), a national network of Filipino groups and individuals in Australia, shared the same disappointment but would not be reluctant to rally, in case whitewashing occurred.

"We strongly condemn the ruthless killing of Filipino women in Australia," said the Centre's co-ordinator. "Mila Wills was thrice violated, first as a woman, then as a Filipino migrant and as a disabled person."

Mila's body was flown to the Philippines on April 10th and buried in her hometown, Meycauayan Bulacan.

Emere Distor

Adora Faye de Veyra



Housewife

Because
She could not comprehend
In her narrow surroundings
The mysteries
Hinted by a whistle
And leering eyes
He bathed her
With a pailful of insults.

Because
She could not catch
In the midst of countless chores
The question he threw
From the pailful of insults
And riddles
He gave her a taste
Of fists and kicks.

Because
She could not shield
With her weary arms
With reason washed out
By a pailful of insults
The censure
Of cousin sibling father
Queries of her children
Neighbours in-laws
And insistent meddlers

Then
She could only cling desperately
To the miracle of a promise:
"Love, it won't happen again."

From *Dreams and Woes: Songs of Poor Women*
Jointly published by GABRIELA
and Institute of Women's Studies

Maybahay

Dahil
Hindi mallrip
Sa sikip niyang paligid
Ang mga talinhagang
Dala ng paswit
At matalim na titig
Pinaliguan na lang
Ng isang baldeng mura.

Dahil
Hindi masambot
Sa gawain niyang samut-samot
Ang pinukol na tanong
Ng isang baldeng mura
At palaisipan
Pinatikim siya
Ng kamao at sipa.

Dahil
Hindi masangga
Ng bisig niyang patampata
Ng matwid niyang binansot
Ng isang baldeng mura
Ang mga talinghaga
Ng kamao at sipa
Mga palaisipan
Ng isang baldeng mura
Ang paghuhusga
Ng pinsan kapatid ama
Mga usisa ng anak

Kapitbahay biyenang
At kung sino pang
May ganang mangulit
Kaya

Habol na lang niyang kumapit
Sa hiwaga ng pangakong
"Mahal, hindi na mauulit."



TWILIGHT IN THE CORDILLERAS

By DANA BATNAG

(Extracts from the original article printed in *Philippine Graphic* June 7, 1993)

ONCE upon a time, in the Cordilleras, was a river the government wanted to dam. There was an energy crisis at that time, and the dam, the government said, would ensure a stable supply of energy for the country in the future. But the Kankana-eyes and the Kalingas, through whose land the river flowed, opposed the project. The dam would flood their rice terraces and submerge their burial grounds.

The government insisted on damming the river. The Cordillerans fought back.

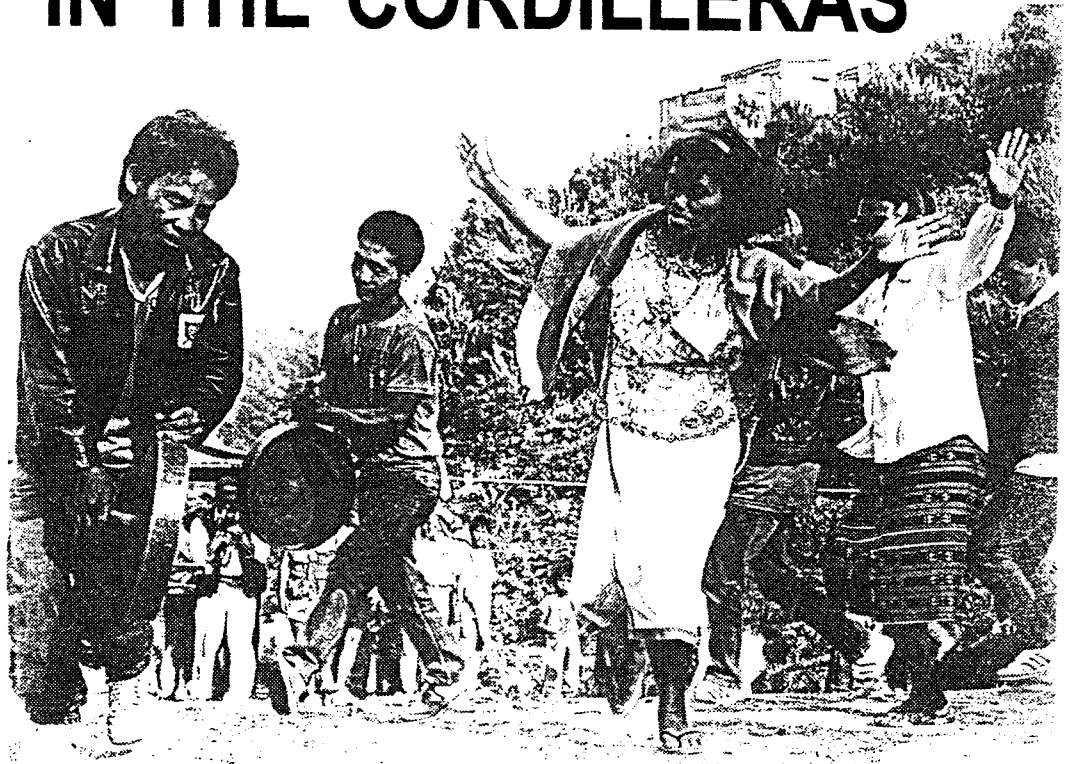
Communities that had been at war for generations forged peace pacts, or *bodong*, for a cessation of intervillage, interclan and intertribal hostilities.

Village meetings were convened. Bontoc elders went to the capitol to plead with the government. When this failed, the people stoned government vehicles, dismantled camps, burned government equipment, and hurled the construction materials into the river. This went on for years: the government insistent, the Cordillerans unyielding. Land for them is sacred - "the womb from which springs life.

Several years later the communities were already waging a guerilla war against government troops. One day, soldiers stole into one of the villages in Kalinga and killed one of the peace pact holders. Instead of being frightened, the death of a leader only united the Cordillerans and made them more determined to hold on to their land. Eventually the government called off the project.

And every year, on April 24, the Cordillerans would gather to observe the death anniversary of Macli-ing Dulag, the murdered peace pact holder and one of the leading oppositors to the Chico River Dam Project. Later, other tribes joined in, and the event was moved from one Cordillera province to another. It became known as Cordillera Day.

Since then, the people of the Cordilleras have gathered yearly to remember what they have gone through, and to draw strength from one another in their



The *patong*, a Cordilleran dance, was performed over and over

PHOTO: GERRY ATKINSON

continuing struggle. Every year they would add another chapter to the story of the indigenous peoples, their lands, and the government.

This year's Cordillera Day was held in Sagada, Mountain Province, in a valley bordered by gold mines and rice terraces. At night the dancers cast giant shadows on the steep mountain walls, their reflections moving just a shade too late, as if the shadows were ghosts of ancient spirits imitating the dancers, relearning forgotten movements. At daytime the rice stalks bowed and waved, bright green under the hot summer sun.

The participants (from Manila) arrived on the eve of the 24th, after a gruelling eight-hour trip from Baguio and a one-hour hike down to the mines. Those who brought tents pitched these on a scraggy hill beside the terraces; those who brought nothing either struck an acquaintance with those who had tents or slept on the ground, shivering in their *malongs* and sleeping bags.

The nights were cold, but some of the locals brought gin, and (we) made friends with the locals. The *patong*, a Cordilleran dance, was performed over and over by those who knew how and those who wanted to learn the dance. The bronze *ganza* boomed through the night as the shadows moved in time with its incessant beat.

The workshops began the following day. The stories told were the same, stories that have been told and retold every Cordillera Day, with only the details different. They were tales of oppression, of militarization, of tribes and peoples marginalized by and in a dominant culture.

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Beginnings of an Indigenous Women's Movement in Asia

From the Jan-March '93 EDITORIAL of CHANEG the quarterly journal of the Cordillera Women's Education and Resource Center, Inc.

MORE than two months have passed since the First Asian Indigenous Women's Conference was convened. For those of us who were involved in organising this event, however, the memories are still very fresh. This has been an experience of a lifetime for those of us who have long wanted to meet and share with our counterparts from the region. It has reaffirmed our faith and belief in the actual and potential force of indigenous women to help bring about substantial changes to this world.

While the indigenous women in Asia are one of the most oppressed and marginalized sections of society, they are also a strong source of hope.

The sharing given by almost 100 indigenous women who came from 13 Asian countries and from Guatemala, makes one realise that the "civilized" world has not really gone very far. It is very ironical that in spite of all the conventions and declarations passed by the United Nations Assembly and ratified by many of the Asian countries, the human rights situation of indigenous women have not significantly improved.

What the indigenous women are saying now, however, is enough of such inhumanities. Enough of subjugating people because they are women, they are poor, or they are indigenous. The first step which is needed in pursuing a struggle for liberation and self-determination, is the recognition of one's oppression. Indigenous women have been told that the natural order of things is that there are definite roles and tasks which are distinct for women and for men. It is their responsibility to bring up the children, take care of the sick and aged, and provide domestic and sexual services to their husbands.

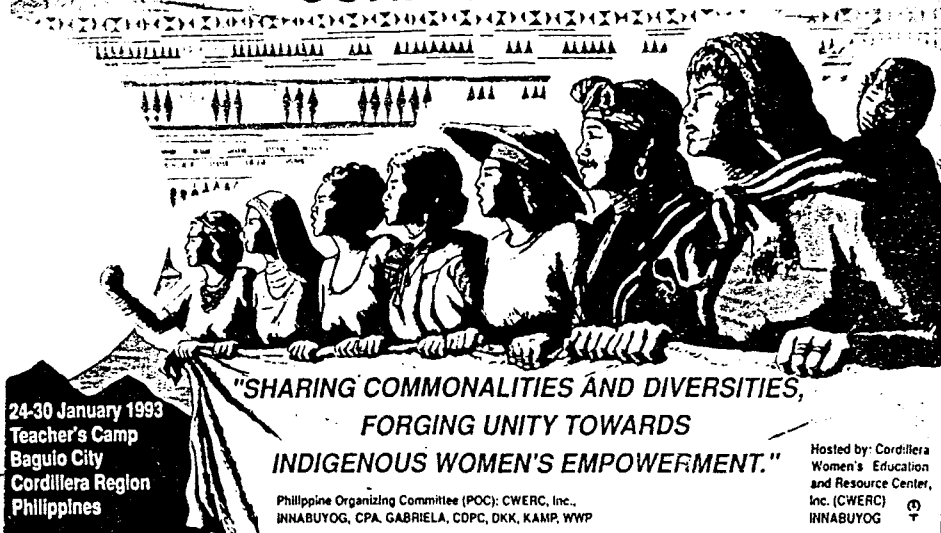
They should not complain if the big chunk of the national budget goes to payment of foreign loans and to the military instead of health services, child-care, or budget for increasing food sufficiency. They should not interfere in political matters because that is not their role. They should leave it to the men, to those who are educated, to the ones who have the resources to buy votes during elections.

They should not complain if they are beaten by their husbands. This is not an issue of political significance. It is a private affair which should be settled between them. If they get raped this should be settled amicably with the perpetrator they should just keep quiet, because if it become public their chances of catching husbands will be decreased. In India countless tribal and "dalit" women get raped every hour but nobody complains or their chances for marriage get ruined. Not being able to marry is a fate worse than death.

The most significant accomplishment of the First Asian Indigenous Women's Conference was the collective consciousness which evolved among the participants. The consciousness that as indigenous peoples and as women we are presently experiencing similar pattern of oppression. The prevailing global economic and political order, which is mainly controlled by rich northern nations and transnational corporations, plays a key role in perpetrating our oppression. We are aware that this is not the natural order of things and we are convinced that if we can pool together our strengths and talents we will be able to make a difference.



FIRST ASIAN INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S CONFERENCE



"SHARING COMMONALITIES AND DIVERSITIES,
FORGING UNITY TOWARDS
INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT."

24-30 January 1993
Teacher's Camp
Baguio City
Cordillera Region
Philippines

Philippine Organizing Committee (POC): CWERC, Inc.,
INNABUYOG, CPA, GABRIELA, CDP, DKK, KAMP, WWP

Hosted by: Cordillera
Women's Education
and Resource Center,
Inc. (CWERC)
INNABUYOG

CORDILLERA WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND RESOURCE CENTER, INC.

OUR BEGINNINGS

The Cordillera peoples' movement for self-determination started to gain ground in the mid-seventies. The main push for this is the government imposition of the Chico River Dam Project and the 200,000 hectares logging concession granted to the Cellophil Resources Corporation. The Kalingas and Bontocs opposed the Chico project and the Tingguians and Kankanaeys, the Cellophil concession. The opposition gathered substantial support from the other sectors within and outside the region.

Even before the Philippine Republic came into being, however, the Igorots have consistently defended their ancestral lands from invaders and colonizers. They succeeded against the Spanish but not against the Americans.

What roles did the Igorot women play in these heroic struggles for the defence of the ancestral domain? They were not the warriors but they were the ones who ensured the sustenance of whole communities. They produced food, reared the children, took care of the aged and the sick. They nurtured the ancestral land which is their partner in

ensuring food supply and other basic needs. They protested against cadastral surveys being made by the American colonial government which violate their customary concepts of land ownership and land use.

In the more recent protests, aside from doing all these, they also took part in dismantling tents of surveyors, lying down in front of bulldozers and, setting up human barricades.

Colonization and the penetration of cash economy into the region led to the erosion of the natural economy which had women as the primary producers. Environmentally sustainable agricultural practices of the indigenous women were considered unscientific and backward. Subsistence production and women's work which did not generate cash were classified as non-productive activities. The degradation of the ancestral land and the whole ecosystem came together with the marginalization of the women.

Home-grown patriarchy was reinforced by the colonizers' culture, religion, education, economic and political systems. The problems of gender discrimination in the economic and political realms, marginal production, literacy, lack of social services, inappropriate development programs, domestic and state violence, and commodification, continue to beset the Cordillera women.

It is within this context that the CWERC was set up in March 1987. Problems confronting women will continue to be second priority for as long as the women themselves are not organized and empowered. A people's movement cannot be comprehensive enough if it does not address the issues of women. It cannot be comprehensive enough without the dynamic participation of women. The organizers of CWERC believe that the full potentials of the Cordillera women are not yet unleashed to make a difference.

OUR VISION

♀ A broad and dynamic women's movement in the Cordillera which is working for the elimination of inequality and oppression based on gender, ethnicity, class, nationality and race.

♀ A Cordillera society which is self-determining, self-reliant, self-sustaining, and gender-fair.

A Cordillera society further characterized by the following:

♀ Where direct people's democracy is practiced through traditional and non-traditional people's councils wherein women and men are equally represented.

♀ A society which respects and protects women's rights and the indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination.

Continued on Page 12 ▶



PHOTOS: GERRY ATKINSON

TWILIGHT IN THE CORDILLERAS

◀ Continued from Page 7

In Benguet, the miners are asking for exemption from the mining law, which was based on the small-scale mining system practiced in Mindanao. To the Cordillerans, mining is a communal practice passed on from one generation to another; there are tasks assigned to each sector of the community. Organizing them into a cooperative, as mandated by law, would give importance to one sector (for instance, the men who mine the gold) at the cost of another (the women and children who mill the ore).

In Mountain Province the Kankana-eyes are still mourning the death of Chris Batan, a Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) worker. Batan was killed while documenting cases of human rights violations during Marcos' time, in preparation for the class suit filed in Hawaii against the former dictator. The suspects are members of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGU) in Betwagan town.

The Kankana-eyes are bracing themselves for tribal war between the relatives of Batan and those of the suspects. There is a peace pact between the Betwagan folk and the Lias people, both of the Kankana-ey tribe, and Batan's killing is a blatant violation of the *bodong*. The Betwagans must themselves punish the murders to avert a tribal war. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Mountain Province refuse to consider even the possibility of one, but reporters who have followed the story say it is not far fetched.

In Marag, Kalinga-Apayao, military operations continue. The valley was declared a no-man's-land way back in the Eighties, but not everyone left. Whole communities chose to endure the bombings rather than give up their farms. As the military imposed a food and medicine blockade on the area, the people were slowly isolated. In the summer of 1991 a mercy mission led by priests and nuns penetrated the first two barangays of Marag Valley. Stories of children dying of measles and malnutrition came out. Residents of Marag went to congressional hearings to ask for a stop to the militarization.

Two years and at least a dozen mercy missions later, however, families remain trapped in the valley, unwilling to leave their farms and hesitant to put their trust in the same people who have been bombarding them regularly for the past several years. Meanwhile in nearby Paco Valley, 11 families, or 44 people, are missing.

There are other stories. In Abra, a just-released political detainee was shot dead by an unknown assailant as his family was preparing to celebrate a homecoming celebration on Black Saturday. Last March a Kalinga mother and her two children were seriously injured when newly graduated CAFGU members allegedly strafed their house. The Ibalois of Benguet, according to a Cordilleran, have lost their language and now speak Ilocano. The Kankana-eyes of Mountain Province and the Kalingas,

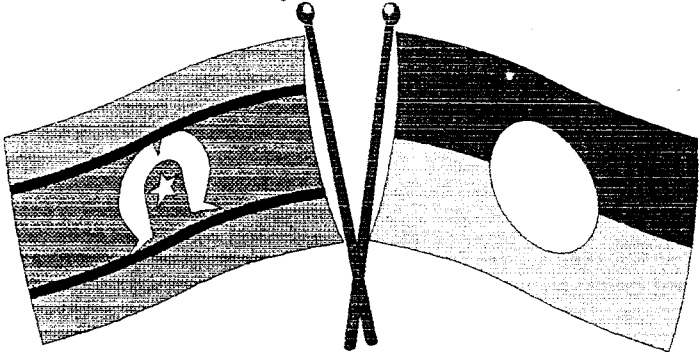
though relatively still culturally intact, are torn by tribal wars as the CAFGUs armed by the military eventually use their firearms to harass other tribes instead of to keep peace in the Cordilleras.

"The Cordillerans are dying," one leader said two nights after Cordillera Day. The speaker belongs to a tribe that has kept its traditions intact through several generations. His daughter was wed in the traditional way and he himself was taught some of the rites by his father. He has organized his people and he tries his best to help preserve the pride in their culture that has kept them alive through the generations.

Still the Cordillerans laugh and sing and dance. On the next Cordillera Day, they will gather to commemorate those who died fighting so that the tribes may live yet another day. They will gather in the midst of ricefields bursting with life and fill in the details of the epic of their twilight as rice stalks wave in the wind, bowed by the weight of golden grains.

"We will sing our lives, we will dance our lives," said Fr. Eduardo Solang of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA). They will tell and retell the sad story of the Chico River Dam project, of Macli-ing Dulag, and of the Cordillerans. From the story of their struggle they will renew their strength and faith in each other. In their twilight they will sing and laugh and dance, not letting the shadow of death rob them of their zest for life.

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For a Just and lasting Peace...
NO TO ETHNOCIDE
Stop TOTAL WAR



The Sept./Dec. '92 issue of KASAMA reported on the arrest and detention of 16 Philippine NGO workers and delegates from various people's organizations who were attending a National Consultation on Ethnocide on August 23, 1992 at Parang, Maguindanao. In February 1993 we were able to follow up the conclusion of this case.

The Maguindanao 16 (as they became known) were delegates from a number of NGOs and POs including EMJP (Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace), PAHRA (Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates), NCCP (National Council of Churches in the Philippines), and Lumad, Moro, Subanen, farmers, and peace groups.

During their 16 days of detention from August 23 to September 8 they received the support of many progressive individuals and NGOs who mounted a campaign for their release. Sr. Cres Lucero of Task Force Detainees Philippines (TFDP) was with the first group of visitors they were allowed. The campaign raised donations locally of food and clothing and organized publicity. One detainee became seriously ill with malaria. She was transferred from the military camp to a hospital for treatment.

To make it appear that they are leaders of the NDF/CPP (National Democratic Front/Communist Party of the Philippines), the military fabricated ranks of positions the 16 supposedly hold. They were even pressured to agree to being labelled "surrendered" for use as a showcase of government propaganda in the current peace talks with insurgent groups and military rebels. They steadfastly refused, insisting that their case be heard in court. On September 3, 1992 they issued this statement.

"We, the Maguindanao 16 political detainees who were illegally arrested by the intelligence units of the PNP-ARMM regional command, wish to make the following declaration:

1. The military raid, searches and arrest were all illegal, done without any search or arrest warrant and conducted without the raiders being in uniform, without identifying themselves to us, and denying us our lawyers. We were not informed of the charges against us and we were detained for more than 30 hours without any outside communications.

2. We hold that there is nothing illegal in conducting a consultation on the topic of ETHNOCIDE, a cruel by-product of the current Total War Policy of the government, characterized by the massive displacement and loss of tribal and ethnic identities, ancestral domain and culture of our various indigenous peoples. Ethnocide likewise is a result of massive anti-people development projects that encroach on the lands of our ethnic brothers and sisters. The problem is national in proportion threatening the Cordillera peoples in the North down to our Mindanao Lumads in the South.

3. We view our arrest as part of the pattern of harassment and attacks on genuine non-governmental organizations and people's organizations that have chosen to work among the people, including those that work for the human rights of the Philippine indigenous peoples. We fear for the future, we fear for the resurgence of the terror that was the repressive dictatorship.

4. We cannot reconcile our arrest with the Ramos government's current peace initiatives. Unless, as we suspect, we are being made a bargaining chip or a pawn in its convoluted approach to peace -- an approach designed to cover up its essential program to continue the Total War strategy. We want no part of this sham peace initiative even as we insist that the Ramos government set us free if it is to be consistent with its peace posture.

WE HOLD TO OUR INNOCENCE. WE DEMAND OUR FREEDOM. WE WANT THE TRUMPED-UP CHARGE OF SUBVERSION DROPPED. WE ASSERT OUR RIGHT TO PURSUE OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR PEOPLE, INCLUDING OUR INDIGENOUS BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

MAGUINDANAO 16 - September 3, 1992."

Continued on Page 12 >

MILITIAMEN KILL IGOROT LEADER TRIBAL WAR FEARED

From reports by Frank Cimat and Alfred Dizon
NORTHERN DISPATCH

MOUNTAIN PROVINCE -- Chris Batan, a 26 year-old Igorot activist on a mission to investigate and document human rights abuses in barangay Betwagan, Sadanga town in Mt Province, was shot dead at about 3.30 p.m. on Feb 23 by members of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) in the area.

Batan was gunned down in the presence of the two other mission members, Fr. Eduardo Solang, an Anglican priest, and Mila Fana-ang of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance.

Fr. Solang said they were approaching the Betwagan Bridge when five to six militiamen fired at them. Batan was hit in the leg and grazed on the stomach by the first volley. As they tried to assist him the attackers moved in for the kill, shooting Batan in the chest. Solang and Fana-ang rushed back to Bontoc to report the killing. Fana-ang later identified one of the CAFGUs who shot Batan as Augustine Agfawan, the same militiaman who harassed her and other NGO workers last September.

Betwagan elders retrieved Batan's body before nightfall. But the town elders reported that they too were fired upon by armed men although no one was hurt. The killing of the outspoken Igorot leader has raised fears of a tribal war erupting between tribesmen of Betwagan and Lias, the hometown of Batan.

Chris Batan was a member of the PIGSA, a progressive Igorot student group. He later became a community organizer of the Benguet-based Mining Communities Development Center. At the time of his death he was working for Task Force Detainees (Mt. Province) and was chairperson of the Lias Youth Organization and vice-chair of the Mt. Province Youth Association. He was also one of the organizers of the recent dialogue between the 56th Infantry Battalion and Cordilleran NGOs to stop harassment of tribal activists in the area.

During a dialogue held in Bontoc in March, NGOs based in the province criticized the military for targeting them as "communist terrorists" and cited several cases of CAFGU atrocities.

Meanwhile, on May 5, peace pact holders of Lias and Betwagan engaged in the custom of *kinet* to assure a peaceful settlement of the inter-tribal dispute by traditional means.

On May 9, Agfawan pleaded "not guilty" to the murder charge in arraignment proceedings at the Regional Trial Court. The court was jam-packed with tribesmen from Betwagan and Lias. Agfawan's application for a postponement of proceedings until June 24 was granted.

◀ Maguindanao 16

Continued from Page 11

On September 8, they appeared in court where the judge ordered bail of P6,000 (Aus.\$400) each in the custody of prominent Mindanao leaders. In October, the anti-subversion law (RA1700), was repealed, so, the case was dropped.

The bail money was eventually returned and most of the personal effects that were seized were finally released on February 24, 1993. A few items, like diaries and address books, were kept.

In total, the costs of the Campaign to secure their release amounts to some P200,000 (over Aus.\$13,300) plus the hospital bill. Neither the 16 individuals nor their organizations can afford to shoulder the burden of these costs. Your assistance can still be sent to Task Force 16, c/- TFDP, Rm. 305, Usman Manpen Bldg., Magallanes St., Cotabato City, Mindanao, Philippines.

Maraming Salamat...

*Sama-sama nating ipagpatuloy ang
pakikibaka para sa tunay na Kalayaan
at hustisya.*

Mabuhay tayong lahat !

Maguindanao 16

CORDILLERA WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND RESOURCE CENTER, INC.

◀ Continued from Page 9

♀ Where ecologically sustainable and gender-sensitive technologies and agro-forestry practices are developed and used for meeting the basic needs of the majority.

♀ Where the symbolic and wholistic relationship developed between indigenous women and nature is reinforced and propagated as an ethic.

♀ Where basic needs become basic rights and women's rights are regarded as human rights. Where rape and battering are regarded as community issues.

♀ Where women's reproductive and productive roles are equally valued and supported - where child-care and household work becomes a responsibility of men, women and the whole society. Where democratic family and matrimonial relations prevail.

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UWAWI

A Dance-Drama-Musical by Dap-ayan ti Kultura ti Kordilyera

"Uwawi" was first presented during this year's celebration of Cordillera Day in Pidlisan, Sagada, Mountain Province. Cordillera Day is celebrated every year on the 24th of April, the death anniversary of Chico martyr, Macliing Dulag. "Uwawi" is DKK's (Dap-ayan ti Kultura ti Kordilyera) first attempt at putting together a dance-drama-musical.

"Uwawi" is the story that a Kalingga woman, Aggani, sings to her infant son, Manchevva. *Uwawi* is the Kalingga word for lullaby.

Aggani tells the story of her village on the banks of the river Chico: why the settlement site was chosen; how the early settlers prospered; what calamities befell the *ili* (village) during her youth; how Aggani's generation and that of her mother's fought against what, to the *ili*, would have been a final calamity - the Marcos government's Chico River Hydroelectric Dam Project.

<i>Uwawi</i>	<i>Uwawi</i>
<i>Charan inam</i>	Blood of your mother
<i>Charan amam</i>	Blood of your father
<i>Sika nan tiponan na</i>	You are the coming together
<i>Tawid non pita.</i>	Your inheritance is the land.

Aggani also tells the story of the things which constitute the inheritance of the children of her *ili*: besides the land, the *gangsa*, *gusi*, and *tinali* (gongs, jars, and beads) that her ancestors acquired by selling hard-won harvest surplus. Some of the jars are now gone; they were sold so that medicine could be bought during a malaria epidemic. Some of the beads have been exchanged for education. A *gangsa* is missing from the clan's set of gongs; Aggani's husband had to sell it so that his family would not starve during the period following his father's death and his own departure from the *ili*.

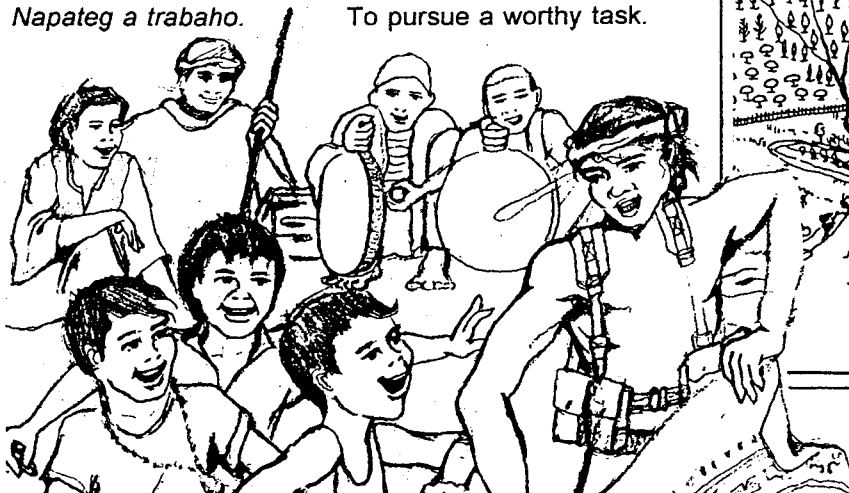
<i>Uwawi</i>	<i>Uwawi</i>
<i>Anosam pay opong ko</i>	Be patient, my child
<i>Awan pay ni tatang mo</i>	Your father is not yet here
<i>Napan isuna't adayo</i>	He went to a distant place
<i>Napateg a trabaho.</i>	To pursue a worthy task.

Aggani's husband, Dangoy, is the son of Banataw, a village leader who was killed by soldiers in the course of the dam resistance. After Banataw's death, Dangoy felt that only by leaving the *ili* could he carry on the struggle his father once led.

Aggani's story of the dam resistance is also the story of her and Dangoy's romance. Aggani's *uwawi*, then, is the tale of the child Manchevva's legacy and origins.

The music for "Uwawi" is derived almost wholly from indigenous Kalingga melodies and rhythms. The exception is with the Chico classic, "Kalingga, Bumangon Ka," whose melody is an adaptation of an American song. Most of the choreography is also based on Kalingga dance and work movements, but many steps and gestures have been borrowed from other cultures.

"Uwawi" is the product of collective experimentation. The storyline was devised through discussion among four people, two of whom later concentrated on composing the lyrics for the songs while the other two conceptualised the movements. The storyline changed as the songs took shape and the movement details were worked out by the choreographers/directors and cast as the story unfolded and the songs were completed and learned. To meet the Cordillera Day deadline, the entire production process was completed in less than a month. Additional changes have been made with every performance.



PROFILE: CHESTCORE

COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATION, SERVICES AND TRAINING IN THE CORDILLERA REGION



CHESTCORE is a non-stock, non-profit, private organisation promoting community-based approaches and strategies in health care in the Cordillera Region and provinces of Northern Luzon. In solidarity and in co-ordination with national and regional health program networks, the CHESTCORE envisions:

- A Philippine society where poverty, powerlessness and all forms of oppression have been eliminated; where basic needs are recognised, in policies and practice, as basic rights; and where each citizen shall have the opportunity and power to develop one's potentiality and creativity through the democratic and participatory processes of its institutions.
- A health care system which is nationalist and relevant, accessible and responsive to the needs of the oppressed majority; health roles shall be the responsibility of the state and shall be shared by health workers and the entire citizenry.
- The direct involvement of the indigenous peoples of the Cordilleras in the entire process of their social and economic development.

In the pursuit of this vision the CHESTCORE assigns to itself the task of facilitating the establishment and management of community-based and community-led health care programs in the Cordilleras and Northern Luzon. Specifically, the CHESTCORE aims to:

- Facilitate the training of community health workers as the primary actors in the establishment and management of Barrio Health Committees and community-based health programs.
- Mobilise and organize a broad network in support of community-based approaches to health care.
- Extend direct and appropriate health services to members and allies of established health programs in the Cordilleras and Northern Luzon.
- Contribute in the over-all efforts at formulating alternative and relevant development policies, especially those affecting the indigenous peoples of the Cordilleras.

COMMON MEDICINAL PLANTS OF THE CORDILLERA REGION

(Northern Luzon, Philippines)

A Trainor's Manual for Community-Based Health Programs

Published by CHESTCORE,
(Temporary address: c/- CWERC, 16 Loro St.,
Dizon Subdivision, Baguio City, Philippines)

YOU would be surprised to see how many of the 122 species entries in this manual also grow in Australian bushland and home gardens. In 490 pages this is a serious study written in lay-English for use by herbalists in the field with limited access to chemicals and equipment.

Each entry includes the plant's botanical name, common names, description/habitat/distribution, and detailed illustration. Most importantly it specifies which part(s) of the plant is used medicinally and how it is processed. Recommended dosage and, where appropriate, precautionary notes regarding toxicity and contraindications are also noted.

Part two deals with the harvesting, treatment, preparation, and storage of the crude drug. This section even illustrates the equipment you need to establish a herbal pharmacy using low-tech indigenous materials.

Part three lists the major constituents plus abstracts of pharmacological studies and clinical documentations of the plants discussed in the text.

The book costs 80 pesos from CHESTCORE. But if you can't travel to Baguio, just send an international money order for Aus. \$30 to the address above. This will cover the Printed Matter Air Mail postage, packaging,

Illustration: Geoffrey Carantes



THE CORDILLERA HEALTH SITUATION

The Cordilleras is a region endowed with an abundance of natural resources. It contains the headwater of nine major river systems in Northern Luzon, supplying precious water and hydroelectric energy to the region and the outlying lowland areas. Within its vast mountainous terrain sit valuable reserves of metallic and non-metallic minerals, generating billions of pesos annually for small and large-scale mining ventures. Additionally, close to forty percent of its total land area, or 738,700 hectares, are still considered forest areas, serving as constant sources of food, fuel, and building materials.

It is a region inhabited by courageous and ingenious peoples. The world-renowned rice terraces bask as a shining example of the Cordillerans' ability to carve a living out of the harsh terrain. The culture of the different ethno-linguistic groups demonstrate the principles of ecological conservation and equality among individuals. And the Cordilleras' history speaks of the peoples' countless struggles against overt foreign domination and the continuing advocacy for self-determination.

These riches, however, cannot guarantee the quality of life nor the health of the indigenous Cordillera peoples.

Today, government figures show that clearly 57% of children in the region aged below seven years suffer from malnutrition. This naturally results in high susceptibility to communicable diseases, characterized by seasonal epidemics in the communities. Diseases which could otherwise be prevented hound and kill the region's children with pneumonia and bronchitis constituting the leading causes of mortality among infants.

Meanwhile, access to expert medical advice and adequate medical facilities is limited to the town and provincial centers. It is not unusual for a sick person to hike, or to be carried, for half a day in reaching these facilities. Compounding this situation further is the prohibitive costs of professional medical care. The poor state of health in the region can primarily be attributed to government mispriorities and the commercialization of the health industry.

More importantly though, the health problems of the Cordilleras can be explained in the light of the broader politico-economic situation of the nation as a whole. This situation is characterized by the continued subservience of the ruling elite to the demands of profit and resources-hungry foreign interests. A subservience manifested through government policies which are largely anti-people and anti-development.

No wonder that the vast wealth of the region does not redound to the well-being of the Cordillera peoples. No wonder too, that the peoples' right to participate in the political and development process is continually being ignored and oftentimes ridiculed. It is thus in this light that the Cordillera region's health situation should be addressed.



(Illustration: Geoffrey Carantes)

CHESTCORE

Sample Power Rates (in Pesos)

	1988	July 1992
Light (120 kw)	102.59	267.39
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Source: National Statistics Office

Energy Capacity vs Demand
1986, 1991, 1996 (projected)
(in megawatts)

Year	Capacity	Demand	Excess
1986	5,788	3,078	2,710
1991	6,108	4,075	2,033
1996	8,539	6,004	2,535

Source: NPC, 1991-96 Power Development Program

Cartoon by Pol Medina Jr. and Tables from 1993 IBON Survival Calendar

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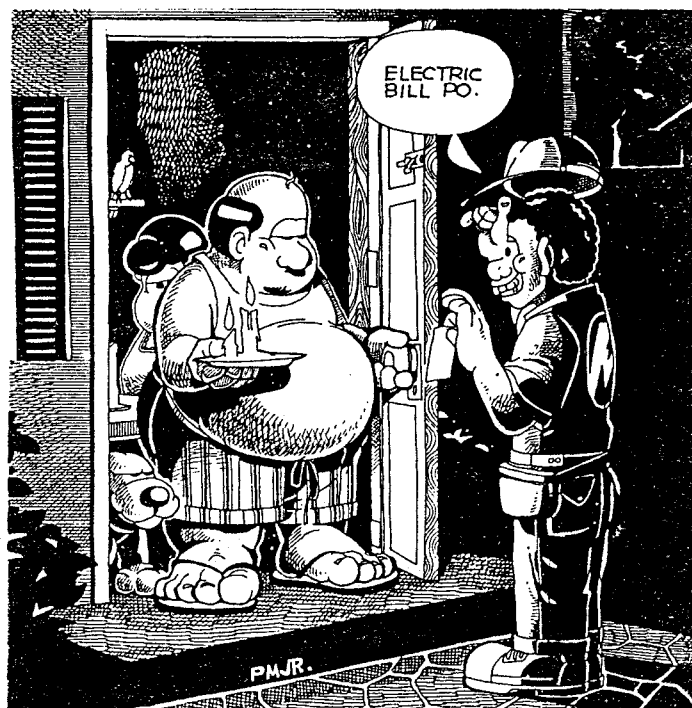
- ✓ Would you like to know more about P.A.S.G. QLD.? Please let us send you a copy of our Aims and Objectives and Constitution.
- ✓ Contact us if you would like to know about organised exposures with non-government peoples' organisations in the Philippines.
- ✓ Cash donations for solidarity work are always greatly appreciated. Please let us know if you wish to contribute to a specific project.
- ✓ SUBSCRIBE to the Newsletter. \$15 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 \$25 membership fee includes 6 issues of the Newsletter. We hold regular monthly meetings in Brisbane.

WRITE TO:

The P.A.S.G. Co-ordinator, PO Box 174, St. Lucia Qld. 4067
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Philippines Australia Solidarity Group 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 a wide range of Philippine NGOs and 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.



KASAMA ...means companion or comrade

The month's delay of this issue may have confused some readers, so to recap the mailings for this year: the first issue of 1993 was a report of the LAKAS tour of Australia, followed by a current issue of *Chaneg* rather than our usual newsletter for March/April. Included with this issue for May/June is a copy of *Wassani* the Summary Report of the First Asian Indigenous Women's Conference (see page 8). You will also receive a copy of the Jan/March *Chaneg* instead of a July/Aug issue of *Kasama*.

On page 12 you will find the subscription rate for *Chaneg*. We hope that the two issues we're distributing will tempt you to take out your own sub and make direct contact with C.W.E.R.C.

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