



# KASAMA

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## PHILIPPINES 2000: an Old Formula with a New Name

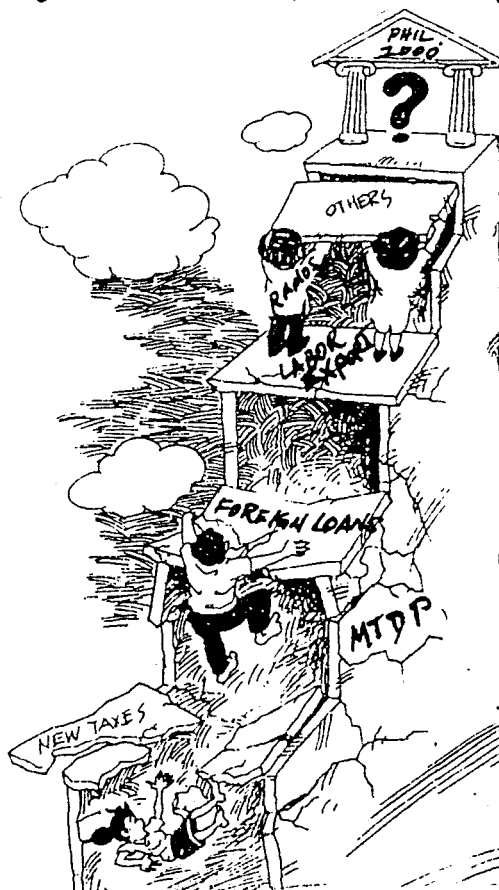
WHEN President Fidel V. Ramos addressed the opening of the Philippine Congress' second session last July 26, he described the state of Philippine economy as having a "window of opportunity". He extensively charted the road to economic recovery and development by using what he called the strategic framework - Philippines 2000, his centerpiece envisioning rapid industrialisation of the Philippines by the year 2000 and achieving the status of newly-industrialized country (NIC) joining the ranks of Asian tigers like South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore.

In order to finance the huge budgetary requirements to initiate and sustain Philippines 2000, the government will encourage more foreign loans and investments, more taxes and more exports.

The plan may not be original but it certainly speaks of noble objectives: alleviation of poverty, remarkable growth rate, unemployment reduction, increased per capita income, etc. Several administrations that passed presented the same thing. But as in past administrations, the formula was not good enough. The country still has a staggering foreign debt of US\$30 billion, unemployment rate is 8.3%; underemployment 32.9%; inflation rate increased by 53% over the past 3 years; and the list goes on.

The question at hand is not in the nobility of goals or what is written. As in the past, how can an economic development plan that is foreign-dominated and export-oriented be viable? Will there be industrialization through dependence on foreign borrowings and investments, and intensified export.

The basic formula of this NIChood strategy is to make the country a major processing center for consumer and capital products for export to the outside market. For it to materialize, it should give tremendous



A.P.M.F. News Digest

dose of favorable conditions for foreign investments and loans. Critics contend that increased borrowings would mean taxes; and favorable atmosphere for investments would mean low wages. Aside from these, the short-cut path places its bias on industry and not agricultural development. After several decades of experience with this same kind of formula, the Philippines remained technologically backward. Does this sound viable?

And where do OCWs (Overseas Contract Workers) come in? With the formula presented by Philippines 2000, Pres. Ramos stressed that, "...We will champion exports as the key to sustainable economic growth."

More exports means more aggressive marketing of labor. The official trips of Pres. Ramos and Labor officials to Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Hongkong, China, Taiwan and Middle East are geared towards promoting labor export. When this happens, as it is happening now, government will not

hesitate to pull down wages in order to capture job placements and will disregard factors that it perceives will affect its marketing strategy negatively (i.e. bilateral labor agreement, welfare protection, etc.).

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## PHILIPPINES 2000

(• CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

And for what? The answer is simple. Remittances from overseas contract workers has become the top dollar earner, bringing in billions of dollars to the country. For sure, these remittances will be tapped, as in the past, for servicing foreign borrowings.

In this regard, it is high time that OCWs should push for measures that would put an end to factors causing labor outmigration, such as: (1) work for the democratization of land ownership to boost agricultural production, create livelihood opportunities and market goods for Filipino industries; (2) work for the redirection of national priorities, particularly the utilization of revenues derived from remittances of overseas Filipinos, to generate jobs for unemployed and underemployed and to provide adequate social services to the people.

**Asia Pacific Mission for Migrant Filipinos NEWS DIGEST Sept. 1993 Editorial.**

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# KASAMA

## means companion, friend, comrade

This Nov/Dec 1993 issue marks the completion of seven years of the newsletter's continuous publication. The production team is very proud to have carried on the Qld group's tradition of presenting the views and concerns of Filipinos at home and abroad. Occasionally we have received articles from non-Filipino friends and solidarists. Please do not feel so shy. We look forward to hearing more from you. Given the constraints of time and space we have as well been able to include a little material from other solidarity formations. Thank you all for sharing with us your celebrations and your lamentations.

On Sunday, Oct 10 in Brisbane's King George Square we thrilled to hear the Archbishop of Capetown Desmond Tutu speak of solidarity, liberation, peace, and the struggle for reconciliation, justice, and equity. He reiterated a message so obvious, so simple that it is echoed globally in all language, "Where there is injustice society can never have true peace. There can be no stability unless there is justice."

In the tradition of showing respect for an elder statesman through cultural sharing, the Wakka Wakka Dance Group welcomed Desmond Tutu to the land of the Jagera people on which stands Brisbane City Council's Town Hall. Daniel Yock sang. His beautiful voice flowed with hope and visions of the future that embraced the assembly.

Five weeks later, on Nov 14th, Danny died in police custody. We mourned and marched with thousands in a silent protest that was heard around the world - even in Capetown. Please Archbishop, don't forget you said, "We certainly are going to be supporting the indigenous people in their legitimate cry. And, an international community that at the moment sets high store by human rights, is going to support them as well."



Acknowledgements of material used in this issue where not otherwise credited: Page 5 - illustration from *Diliman Review* 1988 Vol.36 no.5; Pages 6, 8, 10, 11 & 13 - illustrations from *You Are Not Forgotten - Symbols During Martial Law*; Page 9 - illustration by Karl Gaspar; Page 14 - *JP Review* 1990.

## Killer of deaf-mute Filipina in Morningside convicted of murder - other deaths and disappearances remain unsolved

THE atmosphere in Court 13 was suffocating, not only because of the envelope-like structure of the room but also due to the cross examination thrown at the man accused of bashing to death Mila Wills, a deaf and mute Filipina in Morningside last April. Bruce Hughes appeared to be calm and very composed as he answered question after question coming from both the prosecutor and his lawyer. Insisting that he was provoked by the deceased, Hughes held on to his statements which later on were viewed suspiciously by the jurists largely because of his inconsistencies.

In the course of the trial we found out that Hughes was interviewed twice by the police. Both interviews took place in Mt Gravatt station and were recorded by detectives Brian Jackson and Wayne Doss. The statements given during the first one were eventually discredited by the second interview when Hughes admitted he was so confused and incoherent that he decided not to tell Jackson and Doss that he was in fact the perpetrator.

When asked why he changed his first statement, Hughes said one of the detectives had promised to help him gain custody of Marissa, his child with the murdered woman. Doss denied the allegation and said all he could remember with regards to "promises" was the chicken and chips for Hughes' lunch and nothing had been mentioned about child custody. The chicken and chips saga became the focus of the first day of trial and many spectators wondered if confession under duress (if it

were the case) would be used by the accused as a technical excuse.

It was never discovered what weapon was used by Hughes to bash in Mila's head. Earlier reports suggested that a light coloured piece of timber killed Mila, while her relatives theorised that it could be the pestle since it was suspiciously hidden in the sink's drain pipe. The attending doctor from the Princess Alexandra did not specify, nor speculate, what the weapon could be but, whatever it was, the damage to Mila's head was great and comparable to injuries one could obtain from a car accident. According to Hughes, the timber he used to bash Mila to death was thrown somewhere in Lytton Road on his way to his place in Hemmant at around 6 am. After taking a shower, he chatted with his landlady (as if nothing happened) then drove to Mila's unit in Morningside to start his masquerade.

As stated in his first police interview, Hughes called the attention of Mila's neighbour downstairs when Mila didn't open the door and asked if he could use the fire exit ladder going to Mila's verandah to check why she didn't open the door for him. Playing his role

almost credibly he raised the alarm by apparently 'discovering' that Mila had been attacked.

People living in the unit downstairs didn't hear anything suspicious on the day Mila was killed. The baby produced by the 18-month relationship of Mila and Bruce was crying for a while but neighbours took no special notice.

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Mila and eldest daughter, 1989 - courtesy of Bordador family.

## OLD AND NEW TORMENTS IN CENTRAL LUZON

THE catastrophe that is Mount Pinatubo with its accompanying lahar rampages and months-long floodings continue to haunt and torment central Luzon.

Initially affecting some 1.8 million individuals in 595 barangays, the eruption caused huge losses and setbacks among several sectors including social services. Once touted as the rice granary of the country, central Luzon saw 136,021 hectares of prime agricultural lands covered in thick lahar and sand which will become tillable only after several years and appropriate soil technology. The unemployed in the region ballooned to 176,000 alongside the displacements of more than 40,000 baseworkers.

Dire is the situation in the second year when lahar crept its way to nearby provinces, claiming more lives and properties. Meanwhile, inflation in the region grew by 15.51 per cent. For 1993, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Philvocs) estimated that lahar threatens to bury a further 307 barangays in the next onslaught of 727 million cubic meters of the dreaded erodible materials. There are, as of June, 77 evacuation centers and eight bunkhouses in the region accommodating at least 21,967 families.

Congestion in evacuation centers is a common experience as well as the lack, if not absence, of water, electricity and other basic social services. Glaring cases of largely uneven ratio in basic facilities continue to be reported - two comfort rooms for 530 persons while one water pump is shared by 397 persons. The psycho-social effects of living under such circumstances definitely tear down the victims' moral fiber. The lack of livelihood opportunities has simply reduced the victims on the waiting edge of agencies' mercy and goodwill.

To all these, government has responded with great insensitivity. Dwindling relief supplies and other forms of assistance is hard to reconcile with reports of huge donations and loans from local and foreign sources. Neither is the slow-paced, inappropriate and inadequate manner with which the government manages the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the region.

The Pinatubo coffers have been tainted with corruption. The Carague-led Task Force Pinatubo has yet to account for the reportedly unspent P2 billion while some P10 billion remain up for audit. The thrust of the agency in making model communities out of resettlement sites through productivity centers managed in a top-down scheme revealed this government's eschewed priorities. With social services taking a fallback and resettlement programs still investors-focused, one suspects which framework is being used and in what context.

Of late, the public works department topped the list as one of the graft-ridden agencies. The construction of sabo dams and other lahar-retarding structures turned out to be milking cows of unscrupulous private construction firms carried out, of course, with the blessings of local officialdom. And while a more pragmatic lahar expert opines to let nature take its course, the Mount Pinatubo Commission as of June 25 released P1.8 million for 371 infrastructure projects. Resettlement, a resounding demand of victims, and with a declared allocation of P2.7 million for 86 projects, has not yet received a single centavo. Clearly, social services placed last with a fund allocation of only P0.93 million with no releases to date. Through all these, victims sent cries of protestations, charging that funds do not reach their intended beneficiaries. Undoubtedly, the Marcos edifice complex is still deeply ingrained in the system. And for whom? For big business?

While central Luzon has yet to reel from the continuing and widespread effects of the Pinatubo disaster, while the majority of its people have yet to muster enough strength and courage to overcome their marginalization, and while the victims have time and again demanded that Clarke Air Base and private, idle lands be used for resettlement and livelihood prospects, the Ramos government chooses to look the other way around.

Like his predecessors, Ramos wants that the Philippines, by the year 2000, achieve the status attained by Singapore, Korea, Indonesia, Taiwan and Thailand. But its master plan for economic recovery opens the country to fresh rape and plunder of the labor force and the already fragile environment for the moneyed and the powerful.

Two years of insensitivity to the demands of the victims. Two years of loud but hollow promises. What do the victims and people in this battered region stand to gain next when disaster responses, particularly in the areas of rehabilitation and reconstruction, have been pursued and are still being pursued outside of the people's welfare and interests?

Any effort, plan, or attempt where our vulnerability as a people is again at stake deserves its place in the junk and gutter. Only in the organized and concerted action of the victims will they see the real light of democratic conditions and decent life.

Editorial Sept. 1993 - *Regionline* - publication of the Central Luzon Center for Emergency Aid and Rehabilitation Inc. (CONCERN), B. Mendoza St., San Fernando Pampanga, Philippines. CONCERN is a regional center of the Citizens Disaster Response Network (CDRN).



# CONCERN

# PEASANTS IN THE PHILIPPINES: AN OVERVIEW

*(Background paper produced for the Centre for Philippine Concerns Australia "100 Years of Struggle 100 Years of Solidarity" Conference, Sydney, October 17/18, 1992.)*

AGRICULTURE remains the primary source of income for more than seventy percent (70%) of the Philippines' total population. About 900 billion pesos (Aus. \$52B) or 60% of the country's gross national product is from agriculture. The trend is towards increasing agricultural production.

Ironically, despite the big share agricultural producers contribute to the nation's income, the Filipino peasants remain poor. Most of them do not own the land they till, are heavily indebted to landlords, their lands are grabbed and eventually become hired farm hands or jobless.

As a result of an increasing number of unemployed, peasants and farmworkers are forced to accept very low wages. Actual income is only one fourth the legislated minimum wage of 85 pesos (Aus. \$5.00) a day.

Out of the 15 million labor force in the countryside, 2 million are jobless and 7 million are working for an income much lower than their basic needs, especially those in sugar and coconut plantations.

Cost of farm inputs and prices of prime commodities continue to increase while farmers' and peasants' income decline. Studies show that 50 million of the 62 million population live below the poverty line.

## **Landlessness**

According to the Philippines Peasant Institute, an independent non-governmental research organisation, 75% of farmers are landless. The majority are tenants or leaseholders and farmworkers. On the other hand, a great



portion of cultivated lands are concentrated in the hand of a few big landlords.

Government data show that only 20% of the population control 80% of the lands tilled. Most plantations are owned by big landlords and foreign investors. In Mindanao for instance, 131 agribusiness corporations, of which 52 are foreign-owned (like Dole, Del Monte and Firestone), control more than a third of the total land area.

**(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 ►)**

## PEASANTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

(- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

### Increasing Production Costs

Since the introduction of the Green Revolution Program in the 70s, agriculture became synonymous with imported petro-chemical fertilisers and pesticides, foreign technology, laboratory produced high yielding varieties and costly farm infrastructures.

This resulted in high production costs and debt burden to farmers. This also gave way to foreign control over the whole production cycle, from planting to distribution. A 12% fertiliser price increase in the world market, for example, reflects an increase of 25% to 40% in the local prices due to market monopoly.

### Absence of Credit and Marketing Support

High production cost is compounded by the absence of meaningful credit and marketing support for the small farmers. With de-regulated interest rates farmers simply cannot afford the loans from the banks, that is, if they are deemed credit-worthy. Most government-funded loans go to plantation-type farming, aquaculture and export crop projects and not to small farmers.

These conditions drive them to informal money lenders - usurers who charge an average 120% interest per annum.

The government agency, National Food Authority, tasked to rationalise prices of staple grains proved futile against monopoly traders with its very low procurement fund coupled with bureaucratic red tape and official corruption.



### Programs and Policies

Based on the IMF-WB "economic restructuring scheme", the government implemented import liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation as anchor policies of a free market economy. These meant less support to farmers and peasants, unfair competition from monopoly traders, high prices of farm inputs and more incentives to foreign investors. It only ensured that the agrarian economy remain export-oriented and import-dependent - the very hallmarks of a neo-colony.

The Aquino government's centrepiece program, Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, proved a dismal failure both as a social justice measure and economic catalyst with only 22 hectares of private land redistributed and a continuation of Marcos' land reform figure to show as accomplishments halfway through the ten-year program.

### Militarisation and Human Rights

The Amnesty International report aptly summed up the human rights situation: "the killing goes on". By unleashing the Total War Policy against the armed resistance, the government has unsheathed a sharp sword against the people in the rural areas. The use of heavy artillery, aircraft bombing, helicopter gunships and deployment of more combat troops resulted in tens of thousands of displaced peasant families or refugees and thousands of victims of massacres, involuntary disappearances, arbitrary arrests and other atrocities.

Para-military and vigilante groups which are notorious for their human rights record were legitimised and renamed Civilian Armed Force Geographical Units (CAFGUs), in mockery of the Constitution's intent to disband them.

### Peasant Initiatives

Peasants, farmers, rural workers, peasant women and youth and fisherfolk continue to organise themselves to defend their ranks and struggle for genuine agrarian reform, social justice and basic human rights. Broad-based sectoral coalitions like the Congress for Peoples' Agrarian Reform (CPAR) and crop-based alliances like Coconut Farmers (KAMMPIL), were established to implement reforms through peasant initiatives. These included parliamentary tactics and grassroots action like people-initiated legislation, land occupations, mass campaigns for economic and political concessions and building self-sustaining communities.

The positive impact and initial victories won in these areas have steeled the determination of the peasantry to free themselves from structures that perpetuate poverty and injustice.

Gino Lopez

I am angry now,  
at what  
Christianity has done  
to so many women  
like Jo  
turned their anger  
toward themselves.  
called them immoral  
because they sell their bodies  
when,  
what they do is so often  
out of love for families.  
out of desperation  
for food,  
in a country  
exploited by others,  
who  
with full stomachs,  
are able to call  
the Jos' of the world  
immoral.



Illustrations and Poem reprinted from: *You Are Not Forgotten - Symbols During Martial Law*  
Published 1988 by Socio-Pastoral Institute, P.O. Box 439, Manila, Philippines





# CHURCH WOMEN RESPOND TO SOCIAL ISSUES

## Interview with Sharon Ruiz-Duremdes - Filipino Theologian and Feminist

**Kasama:** What are the new issues facing Filipino women under the Ramos government?

**Sharon:** They were not new issues at all, but almost the same ones we've been facing even before the Ramos government and previous administration. The most striking issues of course are the images of Filipino women under the realities in different conditions. I see three specific images, first the image of poverty and the violent images of hungry people who do not have the means to feed hungry children, parents who cannot provide the basic necessities of life, there is a general feeling of not being able to accept extreme poverty. The second image is exploitation. There are strong moves against the image of women as sex object in the media and the shameful debasement of women as a victim of prostitution which has become an escape from the poverty that disabled them to get a necessary education and proper job. Not to mention that fact that even when they do get to land a job, these women could also be subjected to discrepancy of wages for the same work men do. The last image is that of marginalisation where women are always seen as a property of her master and would be helpless without the care of a patriarch. The macho image that made women inferior. Unfortunately, even during the Ramos campaign, noticeable was the lack of clear agenda that would address these issues confronting women.

**Kasama:** How does the Church respond to these issues?

**Sharon:** That would actually depend on which church you're referring to. The National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), an agroupation of Protestant Churches, has a program unit assigned to tackle women's issues and raising



consciousness. The unit has always been in constant dialogue with women within and outside the church to help each other and identify commonalities in our struggles. We have sponsored activities, one of which is in connection with the Year of Church Solidarity with Women and this dramatised how the church in general can help in addressing the issues of poverty, exploitation and marginalisation of women. In the past, it was difficult for women in the church since there was a strong bias in understanding the bible in a very conservative manner as we are a product of the historical conditioning that women should be silent, submissive and subservient. Coming out from that particular background, there are glimmers of hope when a women's movement within the church sector called Association of Women in Theology (AWIT) was created (a counterpart of the Association of

Religious Women in the Roman Catholic Church). AWIT was primarily composed of theologically trained women who are sensitive to the gender issues and therefore have tried to understand deeply how to become women ministers, be involved in the patriarchal system, and other roles women in theology could play in addressing gender issues. There are lots of re-reading and re-interpretation of the bible to be done according to a women perspective.

**Kasama:** So, do you see an emerging concept of feminism within the church system?

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**—Standing—  
Together '93**

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# PHILIPPINE TOOLS OF SOCIAL ANALYSIS

By Karl Gaspar

WHEN I first came to Australia, the people of Action for World Development (AWD) were interested in knowing about the tools of social analysis used in the Philippines.

Then we called it structural analysis. It was introduced in the Philippines in 1976 by the FERES agency, based in the University of Louvain, Belgium. It is a Marxist tool for analysing society.

The group responsible in setting up a seminar where the participants learned how to use this tool was co-sponsored by the National Secretariat of Social Action, Justice and Peace (of the CBCPO), the Asian Social Institute, the Jesuit's Institute of Social Order, the office of Human Development under the FABC and the like. From 1976 on, this tool has been used by many justice and peace groups in the Philippines.

The following are the basic assumptions of this tool:

- There are different systems that constitute the whole of society, e.g. economic, political, cultural, etc.
- There are sub-systems within each of these systems e.g. under the economic system, you would have the sub-systems of land ownership, trade and commerce, banking, and the like.

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**Sharon:** Yes, very much so, as it is tied with the theology of struggle. When you talk about feminism within the church, you talk about women who have departed from the traditional way of understanding the bible which they know to be a very patriarchal book. To question the doctrines and dogmas of the church which silence women may not be very popular to some male members of the church. For us, however, to see the feminine images of God being projected, we are, in a way, being empowered. To be empowered means to be seen as women created in the image of God and as a mover in the transformation of the church and society.

**Kasama:** Were there negative signals coming from male members of the church in connection with "feminist theology"?

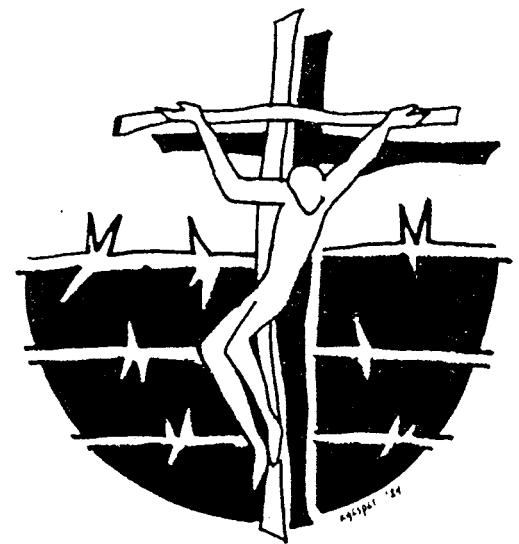
**Sharon:** We are pretty sure that there were lots but fortunately, we are also receiving approval from male theologians who are sympathetic to gender issues. They usually come out with supportive statements with regards to our campaigns and we wish that they will do it more often.

On October 8, during the Brisbane tour of the Philippine - Australia Ecumenical Conferences, the speakers very kindly agreed to contribute to Kasama. Karl wrote (and typed) his two articles while we interviewed Sharon and Bishop Sarte.

But of course, it should not be misinterpreted that we need their support in order to legitimise the women's movement within the church. Those men who are threatened are those who have been used to the system and are very comfortable with it, or those who just don't know how to respond to gender issues, and those who'll just throw a smear campaign that we are just power hungry "misguided women activists." Perhaps the reason why we work effectively with women in the grassroots level is that they are easier to work with than those people entrenched in the hierarchy.

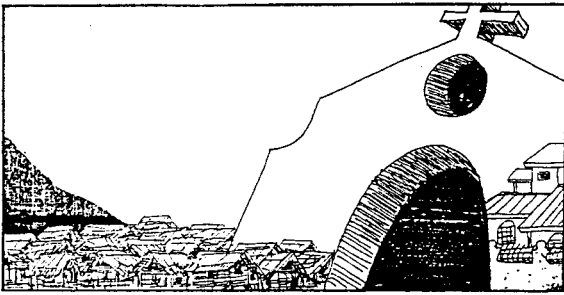
**Kasama:** What role does the church play in the peace process?

**Sharon:** In the light of his vision for the year 2000, Ramos initiated his kind of peace process. Since the Catholic and Protestant churches have a large following and moral credibility and clout, Ramos co-opted the church into his kind of peace process. At the very top level, the National Unification Commission (NUC) had prominent church personalities in its key positions and, in fact, the General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines was brought onto the NUC to urge all levels of the church network to be part of the mechanism that would involve them in the peace process.



I was included in one of the convenors groups since I believe that we should give it a try to present the people's agenda. So our role is to bring all people from all levels of society under one NUC umbrella. From the right to the left, the church become a venue of consultations where they were asked two questions: one, "What do you think are the root causes of the insurgency?", and the second question was, "What do you think the government should do to make these insurgents come down from the hills?"

It was unfortunate that the national report came as very different from the answers from the region where I was involved. Our report did not see amnesty as the answer to insurgency



## PHILIPPINE TOOLS OF SOCIAL ANALYSIS:

(- Continued from Page 9)

Or in the political system, you would have the sub-system of Congress, the legislative body, judiciary, the insurgents, the military and the like.

► All of these systems and sub-systems are inter-related. This inter-relationship can either be one where they reinforce each other, or one where they are in conflict with one another.

► There is a dominant and a determinant system. The dominant system is that one which will protect the determinant system so that no change can take place in that society. If one were to effect radical changes in society, he will need to change the dominant system first which is like a blanket that protects the core of that society. That core is what is referred to as the determinant system. Unless the determinant system is changed, the whole society will not change.

After levelling off on these assumptions, then the group (which should be a small group, thus, if one is handling a big group they have to be subdivided into small groups) will then go through a process of analysing each of the sub-systems under each system.

It is important that the group has at their disposal data that will help them to do the analysis. This presumes that data has been researched and collected earlier.

Thus under the Economic System, one needs to look at the following:

- The system of land ownership - who owns the vast tracts of land, who are these landowners, what is the situation of the tenants, what is the system of shares, etc.
- The banking system - same sort of questions
- The industrial sector - same
- The trade and commerce, the real estate etc.
- Supplementary questions - where are the trade centers located, the banks, the factories (this way one is able to see the urban-rural or center-periphery dynamic)
- In this economic system, who benefits? Who are marginalized? In what ways? Why?

Under the political system, the questions to answer include the following:

- Who has political power? How was this power derived and accumulated? How is this power exercised?
- What sort of government is it, what system, how are laws made, who executes the laws, who interprets the laws? Who are in control of this government? What parties are involved?
- What is the role of the military? How many are they? What power do they have? Where comes the source of that power?
- Are there rebels? Who are they, how strong are they? Why are they rebelling against the government?
- Who benefits from this political system? Who do not? Why?

Under the cultural system, the following sub-systems need to be looked into:

- The educational sub-system
- The health sub-system
- The media sub-system
- The culture and arts sub-system
- The religious sub-system (different faiths etc.)

The sort of questions one asks of these follow the same sort of trend, to establish who has control and who gets marginalized? What sort of messages they send out to the people and for what reason. Who owns these and for what reasons do they have such ownership.

Given all the answers to the questions - which involve bringing in and analyzing the data at hand - one makes conclusions per system. Summary statements are drafted for such conclusions.

Then one looks at the three systems (economic, political and cultural) and from the summary findings, one makes a conclusion which of these is the determinant and which is the dominant.

After going through this tool in analyzing Philippine society, the AWD group used it to analyze Australian society. In the course of the exercise, they realized the value of the tool but thought that it needed to be adjusted to Australian realities. As far as I can remember, the AWD study group came up with a manual which put together their own output.

One might ask whether this tool is still that popular in the Philippines compared to the late 1970s when it was introduced and popularized. At the grassroots level, we have further simplified the tool down to the basic framework. Part of the reality is where before it was easy to get people for a three-day seminar on structural analysis, now it is difficult to do this, except for those who are politicized. But among the middle class, including the students in university and in seminaries, this tool is still in use.

**Karl Gaspar**

# INTERVIEW: with Bishop Alan Sarte of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP)

**Kasama:** Please tell us of your involvement in the Philippine peace process.

**Bishop Sarte:** I was a co-convenor in the series of consultations on peace sponsored by the National Unification Commission in the Baguio/Benguet area. What we did was to gather the sentiments and aspirations especially of the grass roots people and we made it a point that the agenda for peace would really be the peoples' agenda.

**Kasama:** Who took part in these discussions?

**Bishop Sarte:** Basically the non-governmental organisations representing almost all the sectors in Baguio and Benguet.

**Kasama:** What were their main concerns?

**Bishop Sarte:** The purpose of the consultation was to bring in the sentiments of the NGOs and draw out the main causes of unpeace. It was made very clear in the consultation that there could be no peace unless the root causes of injustice are addressed, particularly the issue of land reform. It was also clearly said that the priority of the government should go to the basic services like housing, health, employment, instead of spending more money on the payment of foreign debt. The issue of foreign domination also came in. What was said is these issues should be addressed: There can be no peace unless there is genuine land reform, there can be no peace unless the issue of foreign domination is addressed, there can be no peace unless we give more priority to the social services for our people.

In the Northern Luzon area, particularly in Baguio and Benguet, the issue of open pit mining came in, also the situation of the urban poor in Baguio who are mostly indigenous peoples from the outskirts of the Cordillera, and the national issues like total war and the ongoing counter-insurgency programs of the government in the Cordilleran countryside - all these came into the various consultations that we held and these were submitted to the NUC.

**Kasama:** Is the issue of land reform made more complex by the Cordillerans' demand for the recognition of their ancestral domain?

**Bishop Sarte:** Well of course the concerns of indigenous peoples about their ancestral domain is another central issue that has come into the consultation because the aspiration of the Cordillera people is basically a recognition of their ancestral domain plus a genuine

autonomy in the region. I would say that the issue of ancestral domain is something which is quite different from the wider issue of genuine land reform.

**Kasama:** Is there ever a contradiction?

**Bishop Sarte:** There is no necessary contradiction - both are about land. But land reform is more of a concern for the lowland people, the peasants - the indigenous peoples have a particular concern regarding how the government will recognise their ancestral domain and related to this is the issue of self-determination, respect for their culture, their identity, their way of life as a people.

The non-Igorots, as well as the Igorots, are for a genuine Cordillera autonomy. They want to have a government which is run in accordance with their tradition, in accordance with their way of life. They believe their resources should be managed by themselves and not necessarily by the national government in which the tendency is that the benefit does not really go to them. So this is basically the issue of having genuine Cordillera autonomy.

**Kasama:** Is there going to be another election for a new Cordillera Autonomous Region.

**Bishop Sarte:** Yes, this is already in the Constitution and President Ramos has said he is committed to coming up with a new proposal for autonomy. As you remember the first proposal was rejected by the people. Only one province, Ifugao, brought in a yes vote.

(Continued on Page 12 ➤)



## INTERVIEW: Bishop Alan Sarte (UCCP)

(◀ Continued from Page 11)

**Kasama:** Can you sum up the message you are bringing to Australia on this tour?

**Bishop Sarte:** We want to say that our struggle in the Philippines continues and we are here because we believe that the people in Australia, especially our friends here, should continue to forge a stronger unity for and in solidarity with us in our struggle. We cannot win the battle by ourselves. We need the support of people of Australia and all the other peoples of the world in attaining a truly peaceful, just and free Philippines. Our victory in the Philippines will also be the victory of the people in Australia.

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## Killer of Deaf-mute Filipina

(◀ Continued from Page 3)

During the cross examination, he admitted it was when the baby was crying that he and Mila reached the peak of their argument. As Hughes shallowly described, Mila didn't really respond to the baby's cry and, with her effort to throw him out of her unit, Hughes 'snapped' and commenced his vicious attack on Mila from the door to her bedroom where he violently let out those fatal blows upon her head.

Listening to Hughes in court was no less like listening to any traditional politician - you'll get stuffed with inconsistencies. For a moment I thought I was watching *Order in the House*. Anyway, what was very apparent about Hughes was his obvious lack of respect for the deceased while claiming that all he cared about is his baby, the same baby whom he left with her dying mother on the 3rd of April.

The last day of the hearing was very tense as we waited for the verdict. Would it be murder or manslaughter? Not long after Mila was killed, a man charged of murdering his Filipino wife in Sydney was set free for 'lack of evidence' and of the 16 Filipino women murdered in Australia since 1980 (as far as our research shows) only three were convicted of murder and two for manslaughter, while the rest were released due to inconclusive evidence. To a very unfortunate extent, most of these cases are just filed under unsolved crimes.

It is interesting to note that all those convicted of murder were tried in the state of Queensland. The two earlier cases being that of Teresita Andalis (drowned by her husband David Mathieson in 1980) and Nenita Westhoff (shot by Antonio Juan Curado in 1987).

The Centre for Philippine Concerns-Australia (CPCA) with branches in five cities (Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney, Perth, Alice Springs, Adelaide) has caught the attention of media, feminists lawyers and issue-oriented politicians who are showing great concern about the increasing number of violent deaths and disappearances of Filipino women in Australia.

At the time of writing, the CPCA National Office in Melbourne has received a \$25,000 grant from the Commonwealth government's Office of the Status of Women for its community project called *Stopping Violence Against Filipino Women*, a national workshop aiming to bring agencies and community groups together to target possible solutions to stop offenses against Filipino women in Australia.

Likewise, CPCA with the help of feminist lawyers in Melbourne spearheaded the proposition to press for an inquiry to establish reasons and patterns of violent deaths involving Filipino women, many of whom arrived in Australia to become brides.

### Emere Distor

The Justice for Mila Wills Monitoring Committee would like to thank Romy and Helen Arnido, Felipe Mercado, Fely Santos, and all Filipino and Australian friends who seek justice for Filipino women violated in Australia.

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## JAIME TADEO RELEASED

JAIME TADEO, Chairman of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), the Peasant Movement of the Philippines, was released on parole on 6 August 1993, after more than three years imprisonment. (*The KMP's report of the case was printed in the July/Aug 1990 issue of this newsletter.*)

Jaime Tadeo was convicted in May 1990 on a trumped-up charge of 'estafa' (misappropriation of funds) originally brought against him under the Marcos administration in 1982.

At that time the government's National Grains Authority (NGA) - now defunct - alleged he had misappropriated a large quantity of unmilled rice while employed as manager of a farmers' cooperative. The NGA filed a civil and a criminal case in April 1982.

The civil suite was dismissed in 1985 for lack of evidence, but in 1987 Tadeo was found guilty on the criminal charge and sentenced to 4 to 18 years' imprisonment. The ruling was upheld by the Court of Appeals, and a petition for review was denied by the Supreme Court in January 1990. Tadeo was eventually jailed on May 10, one week after leading a mass mobilisation of peasant groups to the offices of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) to protest the government's bias for the landed elite and its failure to implement land reform.

## CULTURAL ACTION IN THE PHILIPPINE SETTING by Karl Gaspar

AS it was during the Marcos regime, cultural action remains integral in the Filipino people's continuing struggle for national liberation under the Ramos regime. One can even say that right now, cultural action has taken on greater importance because it remains a very potent force in drawing people towards analyzing the ills of society and encouraging them to act towards social transformation.

It is easy to understand why this is so. Philippine society - being still influenced by both rural and tribal influences - is highly symbolic. Myths and symbols play very important roles in the consciousness of the Filipino. Most people do not reach conclusions regarding their lives and what they need to do to achieve their goals and attain their dreams through rational thinking. They take into consideration other aspects of reality and bring these together in the process of taking options.

This is the reason why throughout the Filipino people's long struggle against the colonial masters (Spanish and American), they have not only taken up arms to drive them away, but they have also tapped the rich religio-cultural reservoir and used symbolic expressions to - so to speak - slay the enemy.

During the Spanish period, the people reinterpreted the Passion Story and sung this to encourage the peasants to join the revolutionary struggle. Rey Ileto in his book - "Pasyon and Revolution" - provides a detailed description of this phenomenon. During the American period, the theatre artists incorporated into the musical theatre, known as zarzuela, calls for the defeat of the American occupation troops. During the Japanese occupation, the Filipino guerillas composed songs and wrote poetry in order to rally the people to defeat the Japanese imperial army.

This is a very rich cultural legacy for the Filipinos. No wonder that when Marcos became the people's enemy, there arose another peak in the cultural action history of the Filipino people.

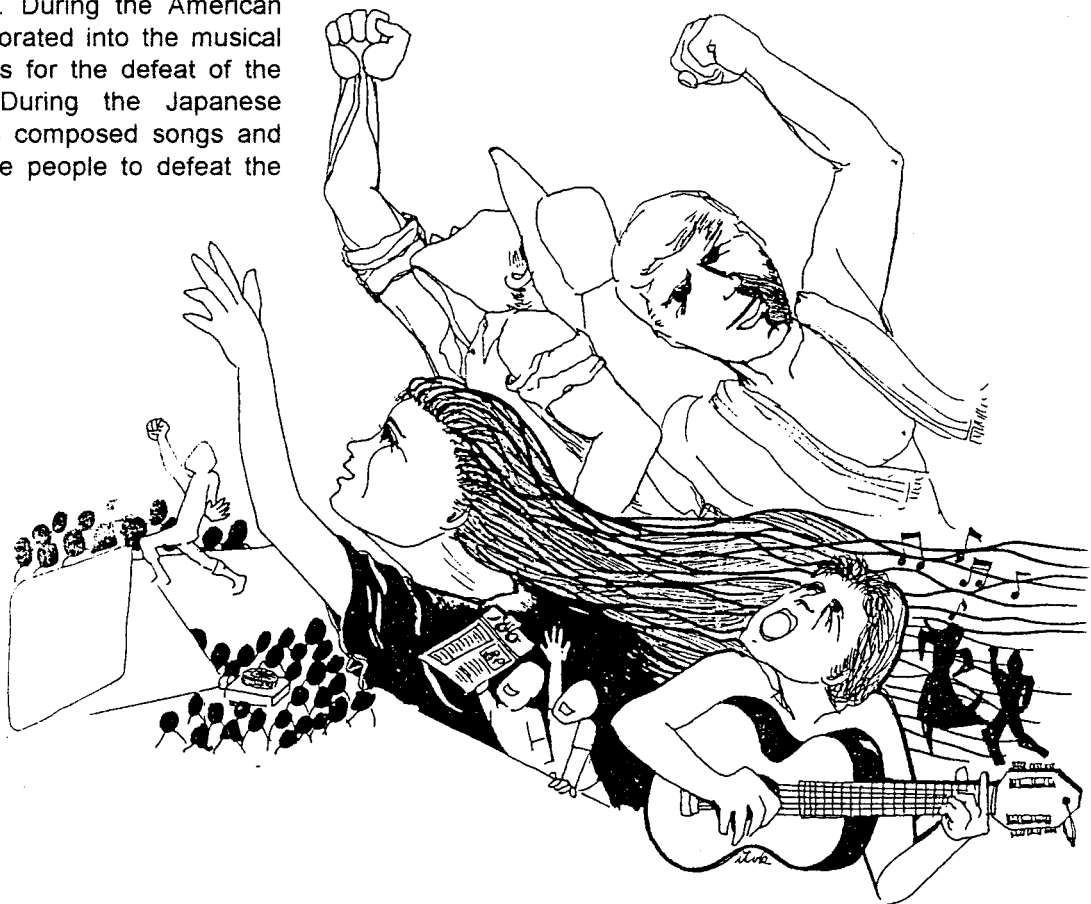
The first to get involved were the students in most universities in the urban centers. Using the theatre, music, song and dance, they took to the streets and did a variety of cultural actions. When martial law was declared and consequently Marcos detained hundreds of political prisoners, they became artists and cultural workers even in prison. They

produced a lot of crafts (cards, posters, pendants, T-shirt prints) which became very popular. These helped to agitate more people to join in human rights advocacy campaigns.

When the struggle expanded to the rural countryside, the peasants and ultimately the indigenous people got involved in cultural action. Legal institutions that helped to encourage cultural action, held theatre arts workshops and similar undertakings to develop grassroots artists. Even among the churches, there were cultural actions which were actually liturgical celebrations.

Today, the struggle is much more complicated than before and there are difficulties in mobilizing the people around issues. Whereas before it was easy to bring people for rallies and demonstrations on issues ranging from land reform to the end of the US bases in the country, today it is no longer that easy. Part of it is that the struggle has been going on for a long time and the people are tired of going out on marches.

But if one holds an indoor rally or a symposium where there is theatre, music, dance, symbolical liturgical celebrations, there will still be a crowd who will join. Thus, all over the country, cultural workers remain very much needed, as cultural action has taken on greater popularity for mobilizing people around issues affecting their lives.



## **Amnesty International Action Alert: Philippines**

### **HR Workers & Family Go Into Hiding**

AMNESTY International is concerned for the safety of two human rights activists: Ma Socorro, an education official with Amnesty International's Philippine national office and her husband, Niel Ballesteros, a worker with the *Kongreso ng Pagkakaisa ng Maralitang Lungsod* (an organisation that works with the urban poor).

Ma Socorro and Niel Ballesteros were abducted at 8.30pm on 11 October 1993 from a grocery shop in Quezon City by six armed men who introduced themselves as policemen. They were taken by car to a house where they were interrogated in separate rooms for approximately two hours.

Ma Socorro was questioned about her work for Amnesty International within and outside the country, and about whether she had any links to the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

Niel Ballesteros was also interrogated and agreed, because he feared for his and his wife's safety, to become a military informant and to report secretly on the activities of an alleged leading communist figure.

The two were then taken back to their house in Quezon City and released at about 2am on 12 October. Since then their house was under constant surveillance so, fearing for their safety, the family have gone into hiding with their two young children.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Please send telegrams/telexes/express/airmail letters:

- calling on the authorities in the Philippines to take immediate and effective measures to guarantee the safety of Niel Ballesteros, Ma Socorro and their family;
- urging the authorities to investigate the identities of the abductors and to bring those responsible to justice.

#### **APPEALS TO:**

General Raul Imperial, Director General, Philippine National Police  
Camp Crame, Quezon City, Manila, Philippines  
Telegrams: Gen Imperial, PNP Camp Crame, Manila, Philippines

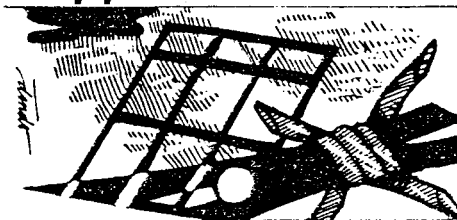
General Lisandro Abadia, Commander, Armed Forces of the Philippines,  
Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Manila, Philippines  
Telegrams: Gen Abadia, AFP Camp Aguinaldo, Manila, Philippines

President Fidel V. Ramos, Malacañang Palace, Manila, Philippines  
Telegrams: President Ramos, Manila, Philippines

#### **COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Sedfrey Ordoñez, Chairman, Commission on Human Rights,  
IBP Building, Doña Julia Vargas Ave, Pasig, Manila, Philippines

Amnesty International, International Secretariat  
1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom.



### **400 Filipino Political Prisoners Amnesty Wants Urgent Review**

SERIOUS human rights violations, including extrajudicial execution, "disappearance" and arbitrary detention, have occurred in the context of armed conflict between government forces and the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), outlawed until mid-1992. The majority of victims of human rights violations are civilians whose peaceful political, social, religious or human rights activities have brought them into conflict with government policy and practice. Such people are frequently accused or "labelled" by the military of being NPA sympathisers, and their organisations named as "fronts" for the CPP/NPA. Once labelled in this way, individuals are portrayed by the security forces as legitimate targets within the counter-insurgency campaign.

In May 1982, after Fidel Ramos was elected president of the Philippines, a series of peace initiatives were introduced, including moves toward negotiation of a political settlement with the CPP/NPA. An amnesty program was announced and in the ensuing months a number of political prisoners were released, including some prominent CPP/NPA leaders. However, by September 1993 more than 400 political prisoners were estimated to remain in jail in the Philippines. Many of these prisoners are accused of criminal activities, such as illegal possession of a firearm. Some have been convicted, others have been detained without charge or trial for many months pending court hearings. Amnesty International believes that among this group are prisoners of conscience, detained solely for peaceful political activity. Available evidence suggests that the charges against such prisoners have been fabricated in order to provide a credible legal basis for the detention of those whose political activities are unacceptable to the security forces.

Amnesty International urges the Government of the Philippines to treat its review of all cases of political prisoners as a matter of high priority. It calls upon the authorities to ensure that all those detained solely for non-violent political activities are immediately and unconditionally released.

Amnesty International, International Secretariat  
September 3, 1993

## Evacuee Salvaged by Soldiers

JOVITO TULDOG, aged 25, was brutally murdered apparently by soldiers of the 50th IB (Infantry Battalion) of the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) at Barangay Calayucay, Pamplona, Cagayan province on 29 September 1993.

Jovito was an evacuee who had fled the Marag Valley region of northern Luzon, where military counter-insurgency operations have been intensive. When the corpse was recovered he was found to have been stabbed three times and to bear marks of torture all over his body. He had been shot in the mouth and one side of his face and head were completely blown off. The suspected killers are still at large.

The killing appears to have been entirely arbitrary and followed an incident in which soldiers threatened and intimidated the victim's father and two others who were fishing with dynamite at the river about one kilometre from the 50th IB military camp during the early hours of the same day.

As they passed by the camp on their way home they were stopped by soldiers. Shouting insults and threats, the soldiers accused them of violating the policies of the "new administration", which, they said, requires the people to inform the military of their movements. The three fishermen explained that they had indeed asked permission to go fishing and said that the soldiers knew they would use dynamite as they had been unsuccessful in the previous day's catch.

On hearing the commotion, relatives and neighbours went immediately to the camp and managed to persuade the soldiers to release the three men. Before they were allowed to leave the camp, however, the soldiers made one of the female relatives sing for them, and ordered the villagers to fetch a bottle of wine.

In the evening of the same day, Jovito volunteered to take the wine to the soldiers and he left for the camp at around 6pm. Two hours later villagers living nearby heard cries for help, followed by a gunshot, but were too frightened to investigate. Shortly afterwards, a soldier informed a neighbour that Jovito Tuldog had been shot dead after attempting to grab a gun from one of the camp guards. The following morning relatives went to the camp.

Amnesty International has recorded more than 90 extrajudicial executions by government or government-backed forces in the Philippines since the beginning of 1992. The killing of unarmed civilians, including elderly people, women and children, most commonly occurs in rural areas. The government's counter-insurgency strategy has included "clearing" operations, which have forced about one million people to leave their homes in parts of Negros, Mindanao, Mindoro and northern Luzon

since 1987. Conditions in many of the evacuation centres are poor and hundreds of people, many of them children, have died of preventable diseases. People who have attempted to return to their homes after temporary evacuations have often been accused of being rebels or rebel sympathisers; many have been threatened, ill-treated or extrajudicially killed by the military and government-backed paramilitary troops.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Please send telegrams/telexes/express/airmail letters:

- deploring the brutal killing of Jovito Tuldog and calling for an immediate investigation,
- calling for the suspected perpetrators to be disarmed, suspended from duty, and promptly brought to justice in a civilian court,
- calling for the authorities to halt harassment, intimidation and threats against people forced to leave their homes as a result of military operations,
- urging the government to ensure strict control over all officials authorised to use force and firearms.

### APPEALS TO:

Brig. General Edgardo Batengga, Commanding General, 5th Infantry Division Philippine Army, Camp Opi, Gama, Isabela, Philippines

Lt. Col. Alexander Aleo, Commanding Officer, 50th Infantry Battalion Philippine Army, Barangay Bucau, Luna, Kalinga-Apayao, Philippines

### COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Franklin Drilon, Secretary of Justice, Department of Justice, Padre Faura, Manila, Philippines

Hon. Renato de Villa, Secretary of National Defense, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Philippines

Sedfrey Ordoñez, Chairman, Commission on Human Rights, IBP Building, Doña Julia Vargas Ave, Pasig, Manila, Philippines

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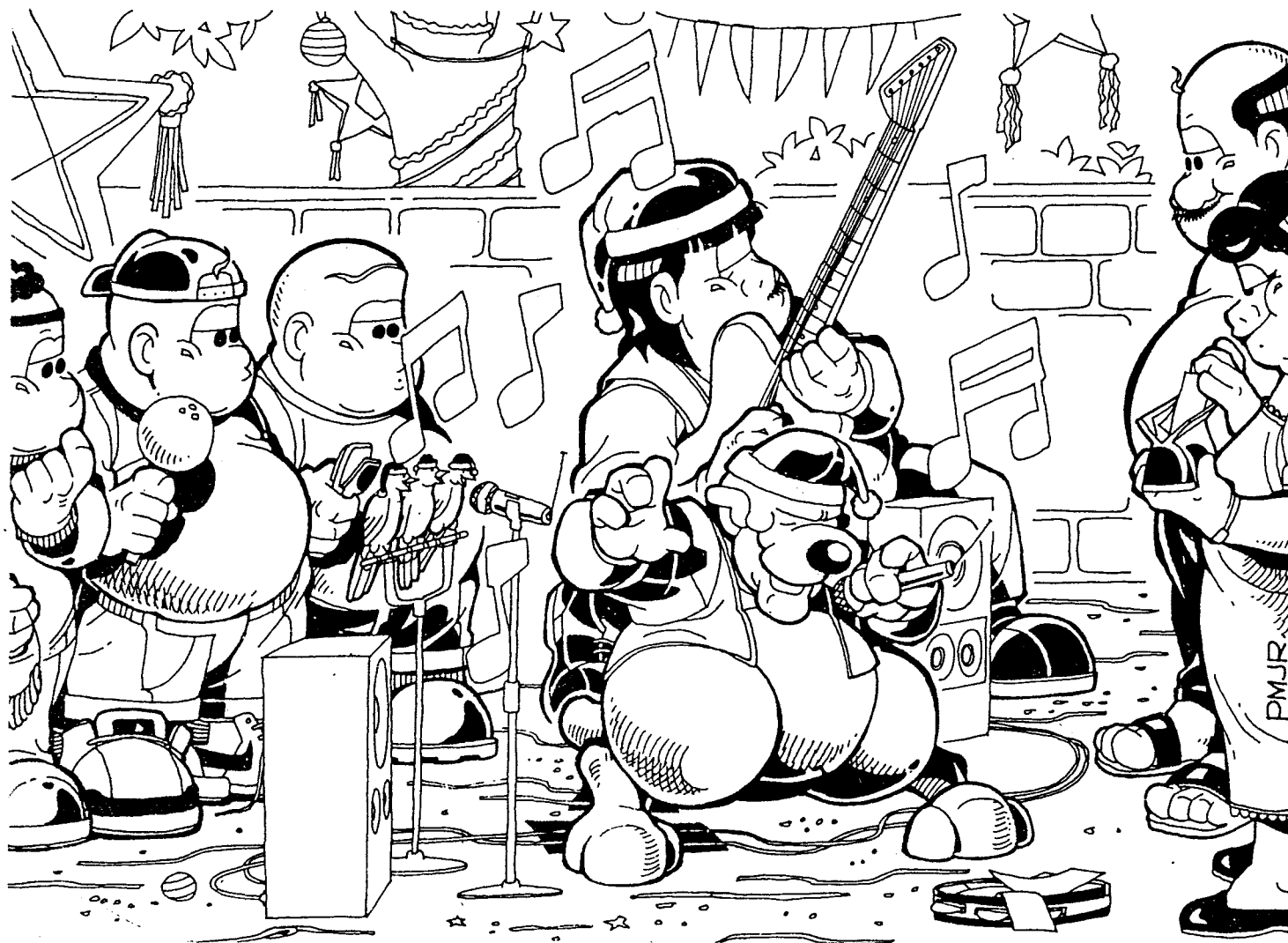
***"While the government of President Ramos has expressed commitment to the protection of human rights, in practice it has done little to ensure that soldiers and paramilitaries are brought under control. Few of the suspected perpetrators of human rights violations are withdrawn from service and no member of the security forces is known to have been convicted for a human rights offence since President Ramos was elected."***

Amnesty International, International Secretariat,  
London - 1st November 1993

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# BAGONG TAON, BAGONG BUHAY NEW YEAR, NEW LIFE



Cartoon by Pol Medina Jr. from the 1993 IBON Survival Calendar

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