



# KASAMA

Newsletter of the Philippines Australia Solidarity Group  
Queensland

Vol. 8 No. 1

January-February 1994

\$2.00

## Australian Aid

### Project Threatens Eviction of Over 200 Families in Mindoro

A SIX-MILLION DOLLAR Australian Government aid project on the island of Mindoro, Philippines, intends to develop 700 hectares of farming land to introduce new agricultural technologies and threatens the more than one thousand current occupants of the land with eviction. This project is being undertaken in cooperation with the Philippine Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) and the local Mindoro College of Agriculture and Technology.

Of the almost one thousand people who will be affected, three hundred are indigenous tribal people known as "Mangyan". The Mangyan have been in continuous occupation of the land for centuries. In the late 1930s the then American regime in the Philippines gave the Mangyan people very limited recognition of their right to the land by declaring part of the land now in question as a "reserve for the use of the non-christian tribes".<sup>1</sup> However, even this limited recognition of ancestral land rights was dishonoured by the Philippine government when in 1951 about 3,700 hectares was reserved as an agricultural school.<sup>2</sup> Until now this area, except for a small portion of some 80 hectares, has been left unused by the agricultural school.

The first superintendent of the agricultural school in the 1950s promised that if the Mangyan temporarily moved their houses outside of the reserved area he would ensure that they received money and land titles. The indigenous communities moved their barrios but have almost continuously farmed within the reserve until present. The people gradually realised that the promise was never going to eventuate and, in 1981, they moved back to be close to their farms. The college administration entered into an agreement with the communities that they could continue to occupy the land for the next ten years. But, even before this agreement had expired the college administration began to harass the people.



Mangyan is a generic term for the tribes  
(Buhid, Irayas, Hanunoo) on the Island of Mindoro  
(Photo: Jean Cadot - *Philippines Un Pays Au Pluriel*)

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## AUSTRALIAN PROJECT: MINDORO

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In 1988 they used the college security guards to threaten and intimidate the residents of one of the communities. Again, in 1991, they brought in the military and with a tank and bulldozer they began to demolish houses close to the top of the road. At this time the college administration again attempted to entice the people to leave the area with promises of a new road to open up another area, fertiliser, and food.

Mang Pabling, one of the indigenous leaders says, "after waiting thirty years for one promise to come true, it will be more than sixty years before we will trust their promises again". He adds that, "our land is more than a few sacks of rice and fertiliser. We have been here long before there was a college and we intend to be here long after it and the Australians have gone." When it is explained that the reason they are being evicted this time is because of an Australian development aid project, Pabling breaks into vigorous laughter. Eventually calm, he explains how strangely odd these foreigners are to evict people and call it "aid".

The Mangyan people have been made the offer of other land, but it is a very small rocky area at the intersection of two nearby rivers. Mostly mountainous, it has only a small flat area that is already densely populated by lowland peasant families. Pabling's reason for not accepting the land is much simpler: "It is not our land. This is our land."

Along with the 300 Mangyan there are also more than 600 lowland peasants threatened with eviction because of the Australian project. These people are mostly the relatives of pioneering families from other provinces who settled in the area in the 1940s. Their almost 50-year association with the land also began long before the area was declared a school reserve. They have fought a long battle to have the area recognised under the agrarian reform laws of the Philippine government. While most of the 700 hectares has been recognised by the Department of Agrarian Reform as eligible for distribution to the current peasant occupants, the lure of the \$6 million Australian project has suddenly put a stop to the issuing of any new land titles.

The college administration has attempted to force the farmers to accept an agreement of usufruct (the right to use) over the land which the farmers have constantly rejected. Mang Poldo, the leader of the local

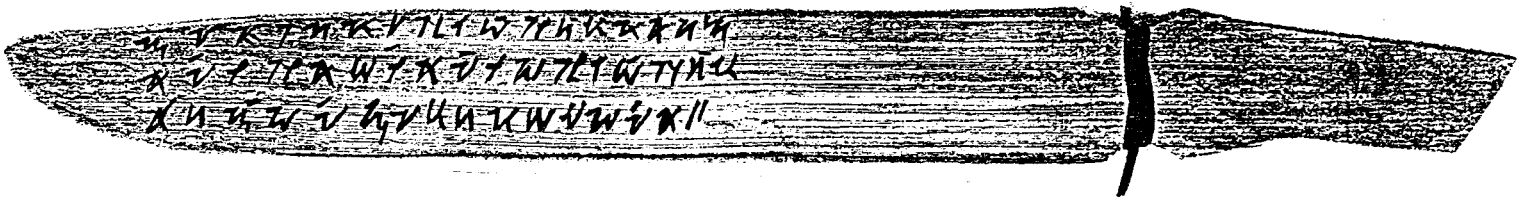
Photo: Jean Cador - Philippines Un Pays Au Pluriel



farmers' organisation SALAKMA, explains how this agreement gives them very limited rights and security of tenure. The farmers believe that if they do not accept the agreements, the government will offer to sell the land at a price beyond which any of them can afford and that the Department of Education will buy it so that they can implement the Australian project. They will again face the bulldozers, military and the tanks, and the demolition of their homes. Mang Poldo says, "we are willing to accept that rather than give up the fight for land that our families have been farming for nearly fifty years." Poldo also speaks with disdain at how they are always being referred to as squatters. "It is the college that is the squatter, we were here long before it was ever built."

On October 25, 1993 two members of the SALAKMA organisation journeyed to Manila to try and speak with Australian representatives of the project. They managed to arrange a meeting with a Mr. Carnegie, one of those involved in implementing the project for the Australian government.

On the crackling tape they made of their meeting can be heard the crude put-offs of an officious bureaucrat whose only concern is, "to get on with the project".



## Ancient Script Still Used

THE HANUNOO MANGYANS on the island of Mindoro, Philippines, still practise an original script which was in general use all over the country at the arrival of the Spaniards in 1521. This indigenous syllabic writing system, called Baybayin, is related to similar Indonesian and Indian writing modes. It was eventually replaced by the Roman alphabet.

The bamboo slat above, shaped in the form of a letter opener for modern use, has carved on it a poem called AMBAHAN; a sample of the more than 6,000 poems written by the Hanunoo-Mangyans.

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Si aypod bay upadan  
 No kang tinaginduman  
 May ulang mali kagnan  
 May takip madi kaywan  
 No kang tinaginduman  
 Ga siyon di sa adngan  
 Ga pagtangdayon diman.

You, my friend, dearest of all,  
 thinking of you makes me sad:  
 rivers deep are in between,  
 forests vast keep us apart.  
 But thinking of you with love:  
 as if you are here nearby  
 standing, sitting at my side.

From: *Treasure of a Minority*, Antoon Postma, Manila, 1972.

For more details please write to: Mangyan Education Center, Bait-Panaytayan, Mansalay, Or. Mindoro, Philippines.

In response to the farmers' attempts to explain their plight he tells them that, "I don't understand the problem because it is not our problem," and, "It's the Australians who are doing this, but it is not our project you should be talking to." Then in frustration he says, "there is not much point in telling me! It's not our dispute!" Then, the final bureaucratic closure showing little sensitivity to a group of semi-literate farmers: "put it in writing, the whole history and include all the relevant correspondence and we will read it ... but it is not us you should be talking to!"

If Mr. Carnegie's response is representative of the Australian Government then there are very serious questions that need to be asked about the morality of Australian foreign aid projects. Why is the Australian government willing to accept and be party to the intimidation and forced eviction of whole communities in the Philippines when it would never be tolerated at home? What level of hypocrisy is the Australian government involved in when it is able to make a pretence of supporting ancestral land claims at home but so willing to be involved in the denial of them in the Philippines?

We ask that you support the struggle of these indigenous communities and peasant families currently under threat of eviction because of this Australian government project in Mindoro. It would be of great help if you and others could urgently write to The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Parliament House, Canberra.

Your letter could outline the threat of eviction posed to these 200 families affected by this Australian government aid project to the Mindoro College of Agriculture and Technology in Alcate, Victoria, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines. You could call for the immediate termination of the project or a clear guarantee that none of the current occupants of the intended project site will be evicted. You could also ask the Minister to clearly outline the steps that he will take to ensure that evictions do not occur as a result of this project. As with any letter writing campaign the more people who can be enlisted to support it the more effective our impact. If you know of other people who would be interested, could you encourage them to write.

As a concrete demonstration of our solidarity with these communities we would like to collect the response we receive to our letters and give them to the people so that they can see that there are people in Australia who are actively supportive of their struggle. Could you send copies of the reply you receive to: Asian Development Foundation, 130 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, 3000, Vic. For further information contact: Rev. Richard Wootton by phone (03) 654-2747 or fax (03) 650 7019.

### Notes:

1. Proclamation of the Governor General Hayden 4th June 1935.
2. Presidential Proclamation 260, 22nd June 1951 (Quirino); also refer Presidential Proclamation 1831, 19th March 1979 (Marcos).

## Music Review: *Oh Africa!* by John Queripel

### Arranged and produced by Jim Taylor, Octagon Studios

THE best way to know John Queripel is through his music. An honest to goodness activist for decades, John's passion for peace and justice was converted into songs that could confront even the most passive individuals around. It is not surprising why pieces in *Oh Africa!* sound like gospel songs. All the lyrics haunt your inner being to function for the unwilling victims of oppression and injustice - a virtue obviously being exhibited by John and other artists included in the production of *Oh Africa!*

It is a bit sad that it took John and his artist friends so long to come up with the recording. Had it been earlier, the song about Father Romero is good enough to have been the theme song in the film of the martyred priest of El Salvador. All the songs carry strong messages of protest and solidarity with the oppressed and, most of all, they carry the message to reflect upon depressing situations being experienced by people from the over-exploited countries of the world.

When I first met John during his family's visit to Brisbane, he was limping. Jane, his Filipina wife mentioned that John was hit by a police truncheon during an anti-Aidex rally in Canberra. That was a couple of years ago. It was also the same time when he sang for us one of the pieces included in *Oh Africa!* John is a minister with the Uniting Church and when I heard his singing prowess, I thought he could easily pursue his performing career if he wants to take it seriously.

I have personal favourites among the songs included on the tape. *Sail Away* is a fine start. It is about a group of idealistic Australians led by the utopian socialist William Lane who sailed to Paraguay to establish a "New Australia". In his notes on the songs, John says he visited the village in 1989 now named Humberto Stroessner, a name he finds ironic as Stroessner was the father of Latin America's longest ruling dictator deposed not too long ago.

Romero is another choice. And if you have seen the movie about his life, John's song could be doubly appreciated as his low yet powerful voice reverberates not only the melody but also the substance of a very emotive song and singer. *Shall I not rage?* is about the plight of the sugar workers of Negros in the Philippines. The people of this island, which is the sugar capital, had been victims of big capitalists and landlords and, adding insult to injury, by militarisation.

Hating to appear commercially romantic, John explores another realm in the song *Love Tried, Love Lost* that has a catchy line which says, "love grows cold long before it's old". John's deep bass vibrato is undeniably passionate yet persuasive and is matched by Roz Kern's mandolin, Shayne Kerr's strings, Andy Maghacut's banduria and Ric Andino's synthesizer and lead guitar. *Oh Africa!* is definitely not your average collection of music, it is more of an overwhelming statement offering dignity for those who are too weak to fight for it.

Emere Distor

Copies of *Oh Africa!* are available from C.P.C.A., 84 Park Road, Woolloongabba, 4102 for only \$12.00 plus postage & packing.



John Queripel, offering his songs of dignity (Photo: Newcastle Herald Picture Service)

# CHINESE IN THE PHILIPPINES:

## From Segregation to Success - part one

by Emere Distor

THE CHINESE are said to have come to the Philippines mainly as traders since 300 BC. When the Spaniards came to Manila in 1570, they found a small settlement of 150 Chinese whose numbers eventually grew to a thousand when the Galleon Trade between Mexico and the Philippines began to flourish. The Chinese population increased tremendously at the beginning of colonisation as the Spanish settlement needed provisioning of goods and services and the enterprising Chinese saw the situation as a field of opportunities.

After 32 years of the founding Manila as a Spanish settlement, the Chinese population was already 20,000 in contrast to the Spaniards' 1,000. Geographically, the distance between Fukien and Kwantung provinces, from where most of the Chinese came to the Philippines, takes just a few days sailing in a junk. Another factor that triggered the influx of Chinese was the growing population in these parts of China and the apparent poverty that went with it. Fukien, where 80 per cent of the Chinese migrants came from, was composed of high and difficult mountain chains with infertile soil, while Kwantung, though a warmer and richer province, was already over-populated.

The political situation in China was directly connected with the increase of Chinese migration to the Philippines. Chinese immigration reached its peak after the Manchu conquest of China in 1644 since the fallen Ming Dynasty was urging their adherents to "either immigrate or join the local bandits." Constant trouble and famine in the south during the 18th and 19th century likewise drove adventurous and able bodied men to seek their fortune overseas and send money

home to support their families and contribute to the development of their own villages.

Even then, the Chinese were very patriotic and always looked back to China as home no matter how long their stay overseas. They were always classified as "birds of passage" who were willing to sacrifice under

the most humiliating circumstances in their willingness to save money and improve their families' lives. This tolerance to hardship combined with diligence and frugality made the Chinese workers successful even after the Spaniards constructed Parian, a Chinese ghetto in Manila, in their desire to control Chinese interaction with the Indios.

The Parian was erected in the 17th century originally for the Chinese traders and workers to systematise the collection of taxes and mainly to effectively segregate the Chinese from the rest of the inhabitants. It was also very obvious that the underlying imperial philosophy of Spain was the mission to Hispanise and Catholicise the Philippines. Since the Chinese were clinging to their own religion, intimate contact between the unconverted Chinese and the barely-converted Indios stood as a possible threat to the lasting conversion of the latter, which was, after all, the major Spanish concern.

Not at all surprising, the Chinese became hostile and distrustful toward the Spaniards and that is likely why the Chinese volunteered their services to the English in 1762. But the enter-

prising spirit of the Chinese turned the difficult situation of Parian to their own advantage. In the course of history the Parian, which began as a social need, ended as a commercial institution.



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## CHINESE IN THE PHILIPPINES

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The 17th and 18th century saw constant and serious battle between the Chinese and the Spaniards. Massacres from 1603 to 1820 killed tens of thousands Chinese whose increasing number was feared by the Spanish authority as a threat to their domination in the colony. It is interesting to note that after each massacre and expulsion of the Chinese, the colony's economy suffered since most of the Chinese were involved in essential trade and manufacturing of basic commodities.

From the late 17th century to the 18th century, a minimum number of Chinese immigrants were maintained in the colony. Expulsions alternated with massacres to control the entry of persistent migrants to the islands. One notable expulsion was the royal decree created by Governor Manuel de Arandia in 1755 expelling all Chinese except 515 who were Catholicised and the 1,108 who received religious instruction by the time the decree was enforced. Expulsions, however, did not reduce the number of Chinese to the legally desired 6,000 but they did help maintain the number at 20,000, of which 50% were concentrated in the Manila area while the remainder were scattered in other parts of the islands where they settled and built region-based Parian and Pariancillos.



By the 19th century, the Spanish objective to convert the Chinese to Catholicism was still only a moderate success. They might have converted the native all right, but the Chinese remained the problem of Spanish religious orders and so their original plan to have access to China as a mission field was shelved. Since the Philippine Chinese were steadily gaining grounds in Philippine commerce and industry, the Spanish government appointed Gobernadorcillos de Chinos to "act as intermediary between the Chinese community and the Spanish government." To be appointed, one should have four major qualifications: Catholic convert, wealth, connection with Spanish officials and influence over the Chinese community. With the given prerequisites, an obvious choice would likely come from the merchant class. As intermediary, the Gobernadorcillo functioned as judge in Tribunal de Sangley (a court used when conflicting parties were Chinese), to keep order, to keep registration of Chinese residents and to serve as spokesman for the Chinese community.

Another major function of the Gobernadorcillo was to constantly classify Chinese residents for tax purposes. Since he collected taxes for the government, the Gobernadorcillo very well knew the rates to be applied. Like the strategy of the Muslims in converting Hindus to Islam, different rates applied to Catholic and non-Catholic Chinese. Accordingly, to avail of reduced tax, most of the Chinese received baptism with its additional bonus of land grants, freedom to reside almost anywhere and a Spanish godparent "who could serve as bondsman, creditor, patron and protector in legal matters." It was indeed a shrewd business for some Chinese to be converted not because of faith but for material gains. So, for those Chinese who maintained their home-grown religion and culture, government regulations and policies were imposed.

Failing to control the number of immigrants, the Spanish government decided to make the Chinese a good source of revenue. The Spanish authorities taxed them more heavily than they did other foreigners. Chinese were subjected to various taxes: the cedula de capitation (head tax); capitation de chinos (industrial tax); cedula personal and travel tax. The Spaniards were exempted in paying direct tax other than a small amount for their carriages and horses.

Being subject to such discrimination from the Spaniards, the Chinese sought help from China which later sent Viceroy Chang Chih-tung to Manila to investigate. After visiting Manila and other parts of Asia, Chang returned to China in 1887 with two recommendations: a consul be appointed in the colony to protect overseas Chinese and literary colleges be established under the guidance of Chinese scholars.

• A Chinese barber shop (Don Whyte Picture Library)

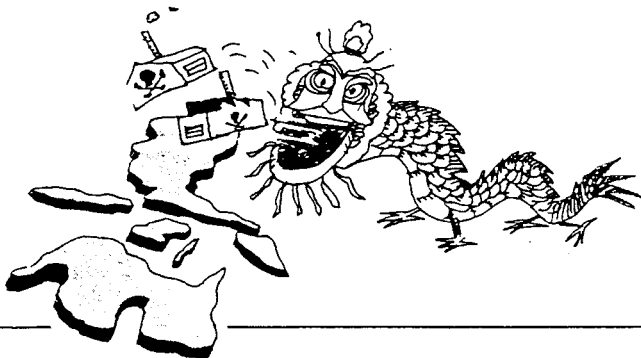


According to one historian, the Chinese in the Philippines experienced antagonism and discrimination that "would have caused any other race to immediately migrate and forever avoid the country." Despite these circumstances, the Chinese hurdled the stumbling blocks and succeeded in their economic activities in the archipelago. By the end of the 19th century, most industries were owned by Chinese merchants. The economic boom was explained as both quantitative and geographic. Quantitative in the sense that Chinese influence expanded from merchandising to other areas like manufacturing, mining, transportation and other industries traditionally owned by other foreigners. Chinese who were based in the provinces took hold of the major agricultural industries like sugar, indigo, rice, tobacco and abaca. Geographically, the Spaniards' attempts to induce the Chinese to agricultural jobs became a failure for the government but worked the other way for the Chinese. The mobility given to them to work in haciendas offered the Chinese new locations and markets to try their prowess in retailing and other profitable economic activities.

There were, however, deterrents to Chinese settlement in the provinces. Because of their material gains, settlers were always victims of professional robbery or casual village vandalism. Large-scale Moro piracy in most part of the archipelago resulted in the creation of Guardia-Civil in the provinces to protect Chinese properties. But what was more apparent as a result of Chinese economic prosperity was the antagonism availed to them by the Indios. Obviously, the natives saw the Chinese as the main economic competitors. To the Indios, Chinese intrusion brought economic dislocation especially to the wage workers.

Like the sentiment that was prevailing in Australia during the peak of coolie migration, the antipathy towards the Chinese was revived during the 1880s and 1890s. Although the Anti-Chinese movement was initiated by Spanish businessmen in Manila, the sentiment aroused the natives to join in the campaign, for the Indios believed that the Chinese would replace them given the opportunity. Chinese antagonism was proportionate to the level of Hispanisation among the Indios. It was therefore usual to observe strong anti-Chinese attitudes among Catholic families.

Part Two of this article will be printed in the next issue of **KASAMA**



RADIO DAYS BROADCAST NEWS

## RADIO DAYS BROADCAST NEWS

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RADIO DAYS BROADCAST NEWS

# WOMEN, WAR & HUMAN RIGHTS

By Lourdes Sajor

Extracts from the original article printed in *Laya Philippine Feminist Quarterly* March 1993

MOST of the wars in world history have always integrated rapes, war prostitution and sexual abuse of all kinds. But the case of the "Asian Comfort Women" of the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II is unparalleled in that the government itself systematically planned, ordered conscripted, established and controlled the army brothels, and forcibly abducted the women from the occupied territories and countries using the entire army apparatus.

The abduction, detention and mass rape of a large number of women in Asia during World War II should be understood as part of the war strategy to annihilate the enemy by demoralising and terrorising the population. When the Japanese Imperial Army invaded the continent of Asia at the beginning of the 1930s, it immediately started to build army brothels. After the Japanese invasion of China in 1937, this practice was systematically and officially implemented in almost all garrisons, including Northeast China (which the Japanese called Manchuria), other parts of China, the Philippines, Korea, the South Sea Islands and former Dutch East Indies (Indonesia), Malaysia, Indochina and even in Japan itself.

The tragedy is that most of these women were young girls between 11 to 20 years old, forcibly detained and repeatedly raped. Many of these women were kidnapped while washing clothes at the river, working in the fields, walking to the market. Others were induced by officials of the colonial government to be employed in factories with promises of good pay.

All these young women left home without imagining that they would become "jugunianfu" or comfort women for the Japanese Imperial Army. Many of these girls were so young that they did not even know the meaning of sex. Many of them were raped on their way to the brothels.

In the brothels, the comfort women usually had to service 10 to 40 soldiers a day, and generally more on weekends. Many who were infected by venereal disease were treated with large doses of harmful drugs and others had to

comfort women were summarily executed, others were ordered to commit suicide along with the Japanese soldiers. In other countries, they were killed in trenches.

Upon returning home, many of these comfort women carried the burden of shame and stigma. Because of their traumatic experiences, many could not marry or failed in their marriages because of their sense of guilt, sickness, or the isolation they suffered in their own community and society. For those women who came from poor and deprived backgrounds, the conditions they returned to were even harder, because they had been comfort women.

At war's end, the Allied Western nations did not force Japan to pay full and comprehensive reparations for the damages incurred during the war, nor did they punish all the Japanese war criminals as strictly as Germany. Some of them became members of the Parliament after the war. One reason was the nations in Asia were former colonies of the Allied Nations, and they were too weak to demand full war reparations including the prosecution of the war criminals.

There is much speculation regarding the silence of the Allied Nations regarding the information in its archives of these atrocities. Most of the revealing documents detailing the existence of the comfort stations and the conditions of the comfort women were taken by historians and researchers to the Washington War Archives. Some historians believed that the West treated the issue as an "Asian" matter. Secondly, the women as a whole 'are low priority', even when subjected to such inhumane treatment and gross human rights violation. In addition, the West wanted to rehabilitate Japan as quickly as possible.



LOLA ROSA HENSON: First Filipino comfort woman to tell her story in public. (Photo: Lito Ocampo)

undergo forced abortion. Most of the women who were injured in the process of torture and rape were never given any medical treatment and such abuses resulted in the death of a considerable number.

It is estimated that some 200,000 women from all over Asia were conscripted officially as sex slaves for the Japanese Imperial Army, 80 percent of them are from Korea. Historians estimate that fewer than 30 percent survived the ordeal at the close of the war.

At war's end, the Japanese soldiers abandoned the comfort women. In some military outfits, the



Whatever the actual reasons, it is distressing to know that the Allied Nations did nothing for the comfort women when it clearly knew of their existence.

Based on the testimonies given by the Asian Comfort Women, it is evident that more than one crime has been committed against every woman. Evidence points to crimes of rape, murder, forced labor, kidnapping, sexual slavery, torture, racial discrimination, massacre and genocide. Never before in Asian history have so many crimes been perpetrated against individual women on such a massive and systematic scale.

On December 6, 1991, the Korean Comfort Women belonging to the Association of Pacific War Victims and Bereaved Families, and on April 2, 1993, the Filipino Comfort Women of the Task Force for Filipina Victims of Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, separately filed class suits against the Japanese Government at the Tokyo District Court. They demanded post-war responsibility, compensation and reparations for the crimes against humanity Japan committed during World War II.

The class suits have different legal basis for claim. Korea was a colony of Japan for more than 30 years when Japan invaded other Asian countries. The Philippines was a colony of the United States when Japan invaded the country. The cases have different historical bases and perspective, but the demands are the same.

The Hague Convention of 1907 which provides specific regulation to protect civilians in occupied territories, which Japan ratified in 1912, provides a general prohibition of torture and other atrocities against combatants and civilians. It provides that prisoners of war "must be treated humanely." (Hague Convention, Regulations, Article IV)

Article 46 of the Hague Convention stipulated respect for the

lives of the person and rights of the family. This regulation prohibits violation of the basic rights of an individual or of his/her body. Thus it is obvious that rape and sexual abuse of women are a breach of this provision.

A penalty is imposed for any breach of the Hague Convention. Article 3 reads: "A belligerent party which violates the provisions of the said regulations shall, if the case demands, be liable to pay compensation. It shall be responsible for all acts committed by persons forming part of its armed forces." According to this provision, the Japanese government is liable to pay compensation for murder and rape cases committed by the Japanese Imperial Army in the occupied territories.

There is now a world wide concern for these victims. A number of the United Nations non-governmental organisations have invited the victims and their representatives to participate in the sessions of the UN Commission on Human Rights, its Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, and the Sub-Commissions's Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery.

The United Nations and the international community have also begun to address the issues raised by the women. At the Commission

and Sub-Commission sessions in 1992 and 1993, governments have joined the NGOs in making statements on these issues during the debates.

In February 1993, the UN Security Council decided to set up an International Tribunal which can try war criminals including organised armed rapists in the former Yugoslavia. A Special Rapporteur was appointed on the situation of human rights including abuses to women in the former Yugoslavia.

### Recommendations

1. Japan should formally apologise to the victims, survivors and their families.
2. Japan to pay full monetary compensation to the women who have come forward and been identified as victims of military sexual slavery.
3. Disclosure of all documents from Allied Nations and from the Government of Japan of related files concerning the operation of the comfort stations, how the women were treated and the manner in which they were transported.
4. Japan should include as reference in text and history books, the reality of violations of women's human rights in the form of sexual slavery as "comfort women", as a war crime of Japan.



DEMANDING JUSTICE: Filipino comfort women in a reenactment (Photo: AWHRC)



**TABAK**

# WHERE TRUE ADVOCACY SPRINGS

by Grace Saguinsin, Secretary-General, Tunay na Alyansa ng Bayan Alay sa Katatubo (TABAK)

A workshop discussion paper presented at the International Conference on Disasters and Development: The Philippine Experience, March 28-31 1993 at Tagaytay, Philippines

IN an attempt to evoke "enlightened self-interest" for its recent Cordillera Grand Draw, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office had an accompanying ad depicting the contemptible plight of our brothers and sisters in the Cordilleras. Poverty and calamities, so the PCSO ad trumpeted, conspire to consign the Cordillera people to their extinction.

Rarely do the *Kaigorotan*, and the Philippine indigenous peoples as a whole, find themselves at the receiving end of government's benevolence. For which the benefit draw must be spoken of as nothing but commendable.

Two things must however be disabused from the public's mind. First, poverty in itself is the indigenous peoples' lingering disaster. And it exists not merely for reasons that can be attributed solely to natural calamities.

Second, even then, calamities like droughts and landslides that afflict the area every now and then have been less and less nature-provoked. They are more the result of government's policy to open the Cordillera to exploiters, who have only rendered its landscape with scraped and blasted mountains, forests unrobed of their lush green cover, and raging rivers of death.

Sadly what is portrayed in the Cordilleras is but reflective of the present situation in which the indigenous peoples find themselves trapped.

Indeed, fundamental to the question of vulnerability to disasters is the issue of poverty, of which the tribal communities are not found wanting.

Poverty stems from well entrenched interests in Philippine society that have perpetually driven the indigenous peoples deep into isolation. As a result of unabated dispossession of their ancestral lands in favour of big business such as mining, logging and multinational firms, they have been forced to seek shelter under the shadow of volcanoes, in such marginal lands as mountain slopes, flood plains and hazard-prone areas.

Every cataclysmic disaster, in its onslaught of tribal communities, serves only to underscore the fact of indigenous peoples' marginalization. The Mt. Pinatubo eruption did show just that. So did the devastating earthquake in northern Luzon, the floods that recently

hit Agusan and Surigao provinces, and the long dry spell that hovered north to south.

Almost two years since Pinatubo's violent eruptions spewed megatons of deadly volcanic debris, hurtling most of central Luzon in a sea of mud and lahar, the Aetas (once proud inhabitants of the Zambales coastline and the lowlands of Pampanga and Tarlac) bear most of the burden of the calamity cross. Up to now, the majority of them remain un-resettled, still living in the confines of pathetic government evacuation centers. Funds allocated for their rehabilitation have been sparsely tapped and barely benefited them.

Death has also been known to discriminate in favour of the indigenous peoples. Of the 483 Pinatubo refugees who died in evacuation centers, 447 were Aetas, mostly children. The drought which struck Mindanao last year caused the exodus of 100,000 Lumads from their lands to avert deaths resulting from hunger. The ordeal proved too harsh for 124 who eventually succumbed to the severe shortage.

Natural calamities are one. Man-made disasters are another.

Actually, considering how they bestow upon the land a sacredness for which it cannot be exploited, and upon which they maintain a harmonious relationship with Nature, disasters of the former kind pale in comparison to the more compelling inequity mainstream society inflicts on the indigenous peoples.

To the indigenous peoples, greater is the disaster spelled by the continuous deprivation of their ancestral homelands. To this day, their ancestral territories continue to be appropriated for big business interests. In the name of "development" they are constantly being displaced to give way to hydro-electric dams, geothermal plants and other energy-tapping ventures.

The indigenous peoples have also borne the brunt of a counter-insurgency policy that brazenly lines them up as targets, now that as a result of further dislocation they are pushed to the uplands, in supposed territories of the NPAs (New Peoples Army).

Total War's howling bombs and bullets from warplanes and gunships have only given them up for dead, or dying from hunger and diseases exacerbated by food and economic blockades.

The unbearable travails of subsequent dislocation have taken a heavy toll on their children. Once bountiful, their *umas* have been rendered fruitless by soldiers who brought infernal fire to the crops and irrigated the soil with blood.

Militarization which employs the systematic destruction of the material, physiological and psychological imperatives for human survival has spawned the escalation of the internal refugee (IR) phenomenon among the indigenous peoples. In 1991, with 10,361 displaced families, they comprised almost half of the internal refugee population of 21,879 families. Geographically, this meant a one to one ratio between tribals and non-tribals of Luzon's internal refugees. Mindanao, on the other hand, witnessed seven out of ten IRs coming from the indigenous communities.

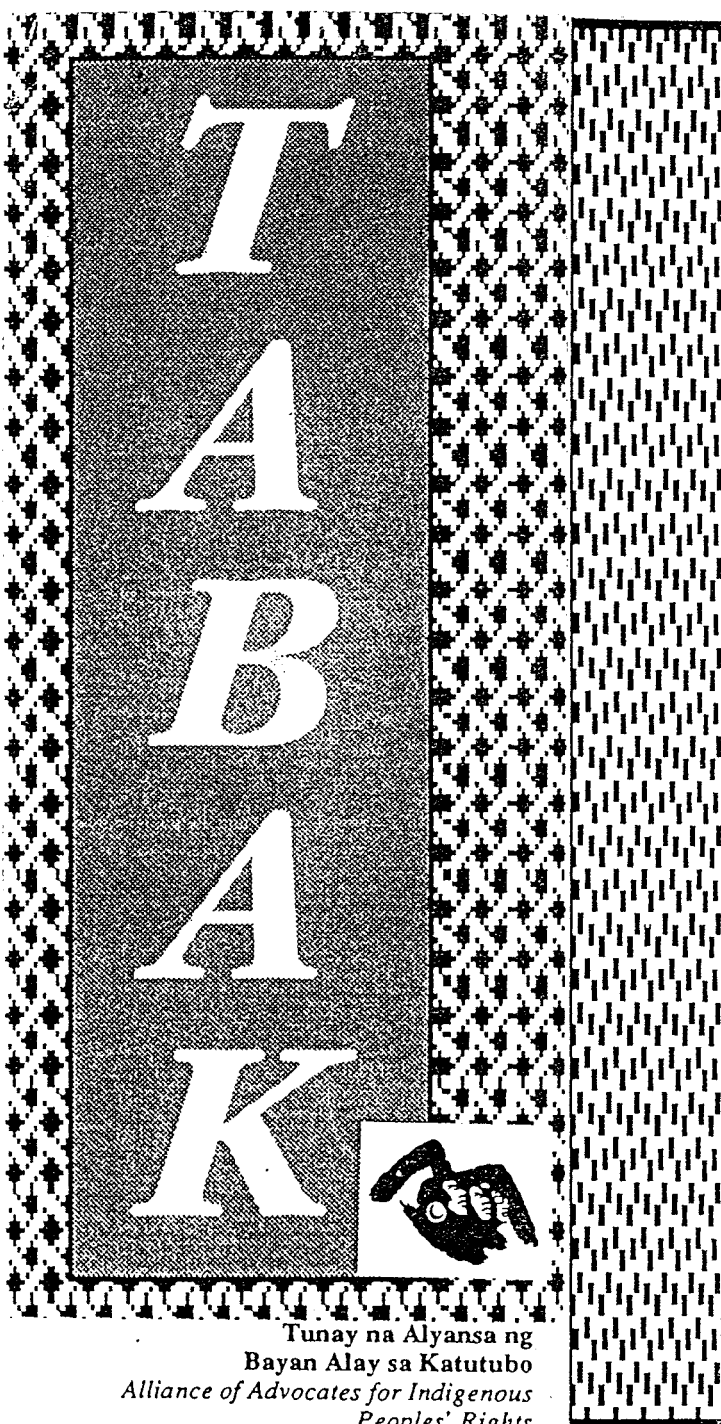
Behind the facade of Total War however is the most atrocious conspiracy to dispossess the indigenous peoples of their ancestral homelands. In all their destructiveness, counter-insurgency operations are mere ploys, such that intrusions of logging concessions have always been made facile in Marag Valley in Kalinga-Apayao and Mt. Diwata in Surigao del Sur. So have these been for a palm-oil plantation in Mt. Diwata; mining interests and a botanical reservation in Sitio Lantad, Balingasag, Misamis Oriental; hydro-electric dams in Zinundungan Valley and Abulug River; and a geothermal plant in Mt. Malindang in Misamis Oriental.

In Mt. Apo, five army battalions, one Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) company and an auxiliary force employed by the Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) are deployed to secure operations in the geothermal plant project site.

But what irony it is that development, by government's comprehension, must take the form of disasters that voraciously feast upon the indigenous peoples' ancestral territories. Given the unaltered development paradigm that has been the cornerstone of every dispensation's economic agenda, the indigenous peoples stand only to reap benefits which remain both illusory and detrimental to them.

As land is central to the issues of disasters afflicting the tribal population, and consequently of their development, so must intervention be focused towards resolving its question. Hence, relief provision, for most part, we abdicate to humanitarian organizations.

We believe the whole range of disaster mitigation processes must primarily seek to address the real causes of the indigenous peoples' poverty and marginalization. To increase their capabilities so that these offset their vulnerabilities, we take to mean committing ourselves to the task of advocating the rights of the indigenous peoples as popularizing their struggles and aspirations.



Tunay na Alyansa ng  
Bayan Alay sa Katutubo  
*Alliance of Advocates for Indigenous  
Peoples' Rights*

TABAK defines its advocacy work from this standpoint: an affinity with the causes the indigenous peoples espouse. We stand by their call for recognition of their rights -foremost of which are the rights to their ancestral domain and to self-determination as a people- of which we know to be intricately woven to the fabric of the national struggle for genuine emancipation.

As part of the Ancestral Domain Campaign Forum, TABAK similarly dedicates itself to the indigenous peoples common agenda, the embodiment of their basic rights as rightful members of society.

Continued on Page 15 ►

# Inquiry to Stop Violence Against Filipino Women

In December Anthony Brown for 4ZZZ Radio News interviewed Melba Marginson, National Coordinator of the Centre for Philippine Concerns Australia.

**Anthony:** I've heard that the violent deaths and disappearances of 18 Filipino women and their children in Australia in the past 6 years may become the focus of a national inquiry. Can you tell us about that?

**Melba:** This initiative actually is the culmination of the campaigns and lobbying that we have pursued since 1989. It all started in 1989 when 3 Filipino women were killed in Victoria within a matter of 8 months. The Filipino womens group here started to rally around this issue. And eventually Filipino women's groups in other states also did the same thing. And during the course of our work more Filipino women actually were killed. That's why early this year we documented around 16 murders and three disappearances of Filipino women in Australia just starting from 1981.

**Anthony:** I think that's an alarming rate of murders against people from one particular ethnic group.

**Melba:** It is hard to compare because there may be other ethnic groups which have a similar pattern, and it's just that perhaps we are the first ethnic group to voice out our concern.

**Anthony:** Would you like to see an inquiry similar to the Black Deaths in Custody Royal Commission Inquiry?

**Melba:** That's what we want to do. There is a group in Victoria of feminist lawyers who started working with us way back in 1989. We decided this has to be brought up to that level so that a lot of issues could be reinvestigated. These issues we reckon would probably be very, very useful in terms of not only informing government bodies and non-government bodies but as well to change community attitudes towards Filipino women.

**Anthony:** What sorts of things would you like to see this inquiry cover?

**Melba:** Many things, but the three main issues would be domestic violence, sex tours, and immigration laws.

**Anthony:** Why these three in particular.

**Melba:** Because these are the three issues that always crop up whenever there are incidents that involve Filipino women. Also, these are the three issues that have always been dealt with in all the researches, surveys and studies done through the years.

**Anthony:** I believe there is a causal link in a lot of these violent deaths and disappearances and other incidents of domestic violence against Filipino women in Australia and the fact that their Australian male partners are what is called "serial sponsors", is that correct?

**Melba:** Not always. But serial sponsorship is definitely one feature of the marriages, but not all marriages are actually characteristically through serial sponsorship. So, I guess that will be one of the issues that will be looked into in relation to domestic violence and immigration.

**Anthony:** Why do you think these Australian men behave so violently towards Filipino women?

**Melba:** It would be good to ask the men those questions, but from the point of view of women, we have a ready answer for that - it's because this is really a very patriarchal society. Men not only in Australia but around the world still think that they are really more superior than women. And, of course, on top of this very patriarchal attitude is the racist attitude toward third world women and, in particular, women coming from very poor countries like the Philippines and Thailand.

**Anthony:** I have also read that some of this has got to do with expectations of Asian women by Australian men. They expect them to be submissive and to look after them.

**Melba:** That's the vulnerability of women coming from poor countries which is preyed upon by opportunistic first world men.

**Anthony:** What do you think needs to be done now in the interim before this inquiry?

**Melba:** What we're doing at the moment is really organising Filipino women in different states through an empowerment program. Secondly, we continue on with our lobbying efforts. In fact just recently we got funding from the Office of the Status of Women to stop violence against Filipino women by way of conducting a national workshop where we will bring together representatives from government and community to really look at a final set of recommendations that both government and community can probably work upon.

**Anthony:** I believe as well that you would also like to see more restrictions placed by the Australian government on introduction agencies in this country.

**Melba:** Well that will be part of the recommendations. In fact, a lot of the past studies and researches have already identified that. There will be other things - like, for example, one good thing that cropped up in my discussions with Immigration is the need for a post-arrival orientation program for Filipino women so that we can continue monitoring their situation when they arrive here, as well as a massive community education program back in the Philippines before they come here. These will be part of that national workshop.

So many things have already been written about and government, in particular the Immigration Department, has already initiated commissioned studies and implemented some changes in the way they orient and interview women coming from the Philippines. All of this taken into consideration, plus the involvement now of not only government but also of a lot of community women who have dealt with domestic violence, especially social welfare workers and community development workers, will then be able to finally put an end to this saga.

It is a much abused issue here. Before we started our campaign the reporting had been really very sensational. But now the media has also started to become more objective in their coverage. So that's a good thing and this national workshop will definitely be very, very informative to all, not just the media, but also to the community.

**Anthony:** When will this national workshop be held?

**Melba:** We don't have the date yet, but the project will definitely start in January. We hope to be able to do it in a matter of 6 months.

## In dedication

To Mila Wills, a Filipina murdered in Queensland, we reprint the following poem from *You Are Not Forgotten! Symbols During Martial Law*.

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

*Rest gently, sister, now that you  
are home,*

*though millions are homeless,*

*though blood flows in the valley and  
the river,*

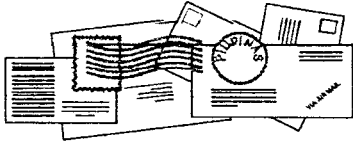
*though broken bones lie in the mud  
of the ricefield;*

*fireflies by the riverbank shall bring  
the stars to your graveside.*

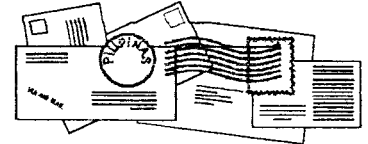
*Rest gently, for you are not  
forgotten.*



Lino-cut by Maria Marzec (16), Warsaw, POLAND



# Letters



Dec. 14, 1993.

We highly appreciate the support groups' efforts in making GABRIELA known to Australian and Filipino communities at any local activities in Queensland, and everywhere in Australia.

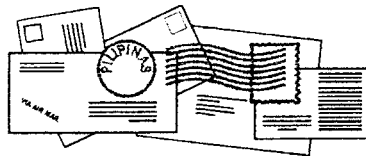
After coming back from the Bali conference on Violence Against Women (Indonesia) held in July 30 to August 7, 1993 the GCVAW staff were busy moving into a new office at #5 Surigao Street, West Avenue Homes, Quezon City, Philippines with fax number 232-606 and telephone number 98-69-69.

GABRIELA has been busy initiating or supporting activities for the past months. Among the impressive activities were the Filipino Women's Day of Protest last October 28 with more than one thousand women participants and November 25, International Day of Protest to End Violence Against Women with our sisters from abroad attending the marches and rallies. "Philippines 2000 and its Effect on Women" is one of the themes tackled by GABRIELA in an effort to oppose President Ramos' centerpiece program that the Philippines will become a newly-industrialized country by year 2000.

For the Women's Cause,  
Atel Hijos,  
GABRIELA Commission on Violence Against Women.

29 November 1993.

Warmest greetings from  
the CHESTCORE.



We wish to thank your group for featuring CHESTCORE in the May-June 1993 issue of your newsletter, KASAMA. We feel that the continued exposure of our institution in the mass media greatly helps in making other people understand the work we're doing in the communities.

We apologize, however, for not being able to inform you earlier of our new address. Our new office is located at: Resurrection Church Compound, #362 Magsaysay Avenue, 2600 Baguio City. You can send correspondence to: P.O. Box 379, 2600 Baguio City.

Thank you very much and warm regards.  
Jocelyn A. Apalla, RN.  
CHESTCORE (Community Health, Education, Services and Training in the Cordillera Region).

30 December 1993

Greetings for the New Year!

I know what you are thinking! That I am an ungrateful wretch who was out for a good time in Australia and never wrote back when I got home. That statement is a half-truth. True - I never wrote back when I got home. How could I? I arrived in Manila at 5:30pm on October 22nd from Melbourne. By the time I got to the NCCP dormitory it was around 9:00pm. By 1:00am the following day, I had to leave for the airport to catch a 4:00am flight to my home city. By 8:00am I was at a Peace Workshop sponsored by our council. It was a whole day affair. I was falling asleep during the sessions ... jet lag!! The weeks following saw me attempting to catch up on backlog that had accumulated in my absence. I had to get back to the grind, not to mention new assignments popping up ... plus domestic responsibilities!! It is true, no one whom I met in Australia ever received a note or letter from me since I returned. But the other part of the statement (...that I am an ungrateful wretch) is not true. And this letter is especially meant to express my profound thanks for your warm hospitality and solidarity with our cause which I know is yours, too.

We (the Western Visayas Ecumenical Council) are in the thick of preparations for our 6th General Assembly on January 11-13, 1994.

As I sit at my desk and hear the roosters heralding a new day, I just hope that 1994 will be a better year for our people. Thank you for allowing Karl, Bishop Alan and myself to share our life and work with you this past year. It is good to know that there are still Aussies and Filipino expatriates in Australia who have not given up on the Philippines. We, here at home, need that kind of spirit. I would appreciate hearing from you about what happened when we left. I know we didn't really make waves ... but maybe little ripples?

I am coming back to Australia in December 1994 for the National Assembly of the Student Christian Movement. Unfortunately SCM does not have big funds and I'll be unable to go anywhere outside the Sydney area. But who knows ... there may just be some generous soul who would decide ... to be generous.

I shall write again barring fortuitous events like the Second Coming!

Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz-Duremdes  
Iloilo City.



17 December 1993

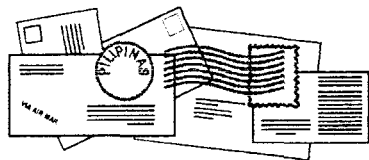
The national coordinating functions of the Philippines Solidarity Network of Aotearoa have been transferred to Christchurch where there is a committee of New Zealanders and Filipinos keen to get the show on the road again.

Our first priority is to revitalise the national Network, and then to rebuild links with kindred organisations in the Philippines, and in other regional countries, primarily Australia. Our foremost goals are to reestablish a functioning solidarity movement, and to place Philippine issues back in the New Zealand public arena.

One key way of achieving these goals is by means of a newsletter. We intend to publish quarterly, covering both Filipino news and New Zealand connections to the Philippines. We see a newsletter as an important outlet for information, an organising tool, and a regular source of income. We have given it a Filipino name "KAPATIRAN", which means "Solidarity".

"KAPATIRAN" will be available by subscription only. If you wish to subscribe send \$15 to PSNA, Box 2450, Christchurch, Aotearoa (New Zealand).

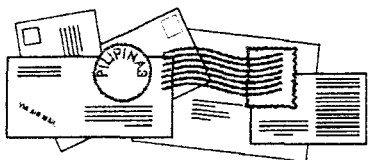
Mabuhay,  
Murray Horton.



01 December 1993.

The Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace, Inc. (Philippines) have moved their Manila office.

Please send all written communications to: EMJP, P.O. Box 1127, Manila, Philippines, 1009. For those who wish to visit, the new office address is: EMJP, 18-C Marunong St, Central District, Quezon City. For faster communications: Phone: (632) 922-4091 or Tel/FAX: (632) 924-3479



25 November 1993

The Ecumenical Forum for Church Response is happy to inform you that we shall be holding our 3rd General Assembly on February 28 to March 3, 1994. We hope you can help us defray some of the expenses. Any amount or form of help will be highly appreciated.

Also, may we request for a solidarity message. It would boost the morale of the assembly if plenty of well-wishers would extend their solidarity.

Please send your support and message to EFCR, P.O. Box 10359, Broadway Centrum, Quezon City.

Thank you very much and God bless.  
Yolanda Rafol-Esguerra, General Secretary.

## WHERE TRUE ADVOCACY SPRINGS

◀ Continued from Page 11

Our efforts towards this end have likewise led us to convene the Consultation of Indigenous Peoples' Rights Advocates (CIPRA) throughout the different regions and sub-regions in the country. Such has provided us with insights about how like-minded organizations live out their vision and mission as partners of the indigenous peoples. From this has sprung a common framework on intervention and support for the indigenous peoples' common agenda and plan of action.

This year offers an opportune time for concerted efforts at advocacy. Amidst the backdrop of murder and mayhem threatening their very survival as a people ushers 1993 as the UN-declared International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples. While the present situation of the tribal communities provides little reason to indulge in year-long celebration - except of course to revel in their resolute resistance against the forces of subjugation - all the more we find motivations to bring to the fore their plight and intensify the campaign for recognition of their rights.

Finally, government's brand of relief and rehabilitative intervention devoid of any development-oriented dimension in no way arrests the cycle of poverty and vulnerability of the indigenous peoples. Occasional acts of charity as the Cordillera Grand Draw will never amount to anything but lip service. They only serve to perpetuate marginalization.

Given its proper orientation, however, such intervention remains yet to assume full circle, sans the aspect of advocacy work.

Because advocacy regards others' cause as one's own, and henceforth strives towards their realization, it serves as a beacon against any intervention that tends towards triumphalism.

True advocacy springs only from the recognition of the peoples' own strengths, of their crucial role in their own development.

**Tunay na Alyansa ng Bayan Alay sa Katutubo (TABAK) - Alliance of Advocates for Indigenous Peoples' Rights**

**Mailing address: TABAK, P.O. Box 44-103, UP Shopping Center, University of the Philippines, Quezon City, Philippines**

**Office address: TABAK, 1098 Del Monte Ave. cor. Hermosa St., SFD, Quezon City, Philippines**

**Telephone No.: 986-342**

Nominal Wages (in Pesos)				Employment			Daily Cost of Living (in Pesos)		
	1987	1990	1991	Labor Force	July 1991	July 1992		Sept 1991	Sept 1992
NCR	58.65	91.00	127.83	Participation	65.2%	65.1%	Philippines	206.99	224.59
Outside NCR	57.66	89.27	107.00	Employment	90.1%	91.4%	NCR	241.48	268.84
Plantation	48.05	85.58		Unemployment	9.9%	8.6%	Outside NCR	199.55	214.56
Non-plantation	36.87	63.38		Under-employment	22.1%	20.6%			

Source: Department of Labor and Employment NWPB

Source: IBON Estimates

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

## JOIN PASG QUEENSLAND OR SUBSCRIBE TO ITS NEWSLETTER

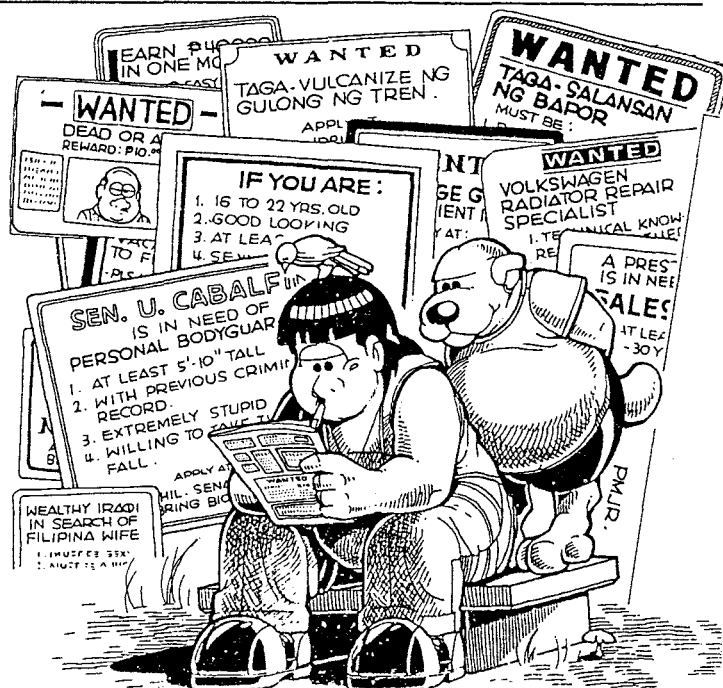
- ✓ Would you like to know more about P.A.S.G. QLD.? Please let us send you a copy of our Aims and Objectives and Constitution.
- ✓ Contact us if you would like to know about organised exposures with non-government peoples' organisations in the Philippines.
- ✓ Cash donations for solidarity work are always greatly appreciated. Please let us know if you wish to contribute to a specific project.
- ✓ SUBSCRIBE to the Newsletter. \$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  
or PHONE: (07) 891 5877 or FAX 24 hrs: (07) 891 6944

**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

On January 26th we proudly marched with the Indigenous Peoples in remembrance of those who died during the past 206 years of Australia's colonisation. In February, Leoncio Sanic of Achin Ixin (People of Corn) Peasant Committee in Guatemala met with groups in Brisbane. The Global Learning Centre has submitted a project proposal to AIDAB for a literacy project for indigenous women and their children in Chimaltenango in partnership with Achin Ixin. Call GLC (07) 857 6666 for details.

This issue includes an extract from an article on Filipino Comfort Women. Call CPCA on (07) 891 5877 if you want a copy of the full article. There is also a petition from Task Force Filipino Comfort Women. Please circulate it as widely as possible and gather signatures on March 8th.

Acknowledgements of material used in this issue where not otherwise credited:

Pages 5 & 7 - Graphics from IBON Facts and Figures Vol XIII No.11

If undelivered please return to:

PASG Q'ld.  
P.O. Box 174  
St. Lucia 4067  
Queensland

# **A Worldwide Petition to the Japanese Government for Justice for the Filipino Comfort Women and Other Asian Victims of Military Sexual Slavery by Japan**

Since September 18, 1992 about 40 comfort women or "jugunianfu" all over the Philippines have come out to tell their stories of war and sexual slavery that the Japanese Imperial Army inflicted on them during World War II, from 1942 to 1945. Indeed Filipino women are among the 200,000 Asian women who were forcibly and systematically conscripted to provide sexual services for the Japanese soldiers.

Documents and testimonies collected by the Task Force on Filipino Comfort Women (TFFCW), a network of women's organizations in the Philippines led by the Asian Women Human Rights Council (AWHRC) revealed that Filipinas from various parts of the country were used to provide sexual services to Japanese soldiers - each woman experiencing sexual violence and loss of self-esteem and self-respect from being violated by 1 to 20 soldiers a day. The horror, disgust, anger, anguish and pain the women suffered is unimaginable. For 50 years, the Filipino and other Asian women hid this traumatic chapter of their life - afraid of the social rejection and stigma that they may face. But such war crime and injustice cannot be kept secret for long. As the comfort women may put it, "we do not wish to bring this secret to our graves".

We have the deepest admiration for the courage and strength of the Korean and other Asian women, including 40 Filipinas who have come out to tell their story and, more importantly, for their determination to seek justice. The victim-plaintiffs have now filed a class action lawsuit in Japan, as a venue to seek for justice and to right the wrongdoing of Japan's Imperial Army.

We, the Filipino and world community, extend out solidarity and support to our Filipina and Asian sisters in their demands for direct individual compensation and for formal apology to each victim and their families from the government of Japan, which was responsible for the policy of conscription of thousands of Filipinas, Koreans and other Asian women.

We affirm our commitment to support all actions that could realize justice for the comfort women and that which could help the women recover their self-respect and integrity of their personhood which was damaged by Japan's war crime of sexual slavery.

We urge and petition the Government of Japan, thru its Prime Minister to immediately resolve its war crime of sexual slavery according to the demands of the women, as the Asian comfort women are now in their late years and therefore wish to see justice realized now and not later.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>School/ Organization</i>	<i>Signature</i>
_____	_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____	_____

Date Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail back to: TFFCW, P.O. Box 190, 1099 Manila, Philippines.