



# KASAMA

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## The Tragic Stories of Two Sarahs

Sarah Balabagan and Sarah Tabar worked as maids in United Arab Emirates to help their families back home. Unfortunately, the oil-rich country is no haven of safety for these women whose lives were destroyed by abusive employers and incompetent embassy officials, EMERE DISTOR reports.

ON the night of July 10, 1994, Mohammad Abdullah Al-Baloushi instructed Sarah to get his cellular phone from his room. Unknown to the 16-year old maid, she was followed by her employer who turned off the light and hugged Sarah at knife point. Al-Baloushi, 85, removed Sarah's skirt and underwear. Courageous to defend her body and dignity, she grabbed the knife and stabbed her employer to death.

In a letter to her parents from her prison cell in Abu Dhabi, Sarah Balabagan has no feeling of regrets over what she did although she says that life in prison is lonely. Born of a Muslim family whose tribe was legendary warriors against Spanish conquerors, she was praised by many Muslims for her bravery. In the same letter she said, "even if I will be executed, I feel I did what is right and I have exacted vengeance."

In June this year, Sarah was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to seven years imprisonment. In addition to her jail term, she was required by the UAE Islamic Court to pay the relatives of the deceased US\$40,000 as blood money. Ironically, the same Court awarded Sarah US\$27,000 damages from Al-Baloushi's family as it decided she had been raped.

The sentence was protested by Filipinos in the Philippines and abroad. Abner Afuang, a former



Graphic:  
*Philippine Migration Review Vol.II No.2*

policeman, burned a UAE flag in a demonstration, promising to burn more until Sarah is freed. Afuang was castigated and Foreign Affairs was obliged to formally apologise to the UAE.

In response to the June verdict, Muslim lawyers who volunteered to defend Sarah

requested a retrial. They were optimistic that she had a chance of being acquitted in the Shariah court because she acted in self-defence. The court in Abu Dhabi however, required Sarah's lawyers to prove her real age to determine whether her case comes under the classification of child exploitation.

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## The Tragic Stories of Two Sarahs

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The passport Sarah used says that she was already 28 years old. Since Sarah was not even 18, illegal recruiters produced falsified documents to get her a passport and a visa to work overseas. Although many people who know Sarah can prove her real age, her parents did not register her birth as it was not customary among Filipino Muslims. The inexistence of an authenticated birth certificate became a problem since all Sarah's parents could produce was an affidavit attesting to her date of birth.

On September 16, the result of the retrial found Sarah guilty of murder and she was given an even graver sentence – death by musketry. Fearing another wave of protest similar to the Contemplacion hanging, President Ramos sent a special mission to the UAE to discuss Sarah's case and to deliver his personal letter to the UAE president, Sheikh Zayed, who has the absolute power to pardon. Ramos also sent retired Supreme Court Justice Abdulwahid Bidin, a Filipino-Muslim expert in the Shariah law, to assist Sarah's lawyers.

While supporters were waiting for the result of the appeal, hundreds of demonstrators protested in front of the UAE Embassy in Manila carrying "Free Sarah" placards. A recent U.S. legal battle inspired one supporter who carried Sarah's portrait under which a sign said: "Sarah deserves more than OJ."

In the second week of October political pressure bore fruit when the UAE Court, upon consultation with the family of Al-Baloushi, relieved Sarah by ordering her to just pay the deceased family US\$40,000 as blood money. In addition, Sarah's parents are obliged by the Al-Baloushis to make a public apology. A rich but unknown Filipino businessman sent a US\$40,000 cheque to Senator Leticia Shahani to pay Sarah's blood debt.

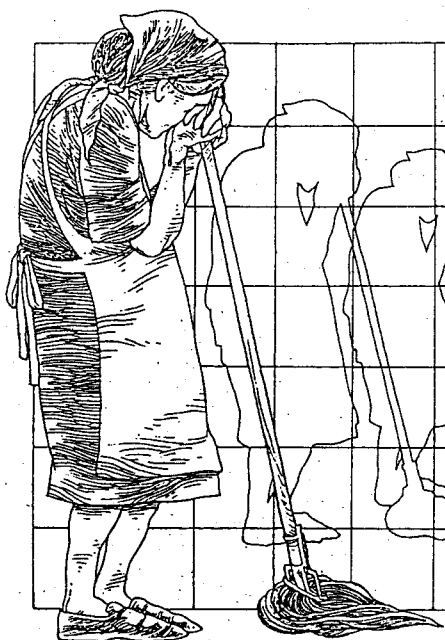
### Another Sarah in the UAE

A month before Flor Contemplacion was hanged inside Changgi Prison, the body of a Filipina maid working in the UAE arrived in Manila. According to her death certificate issued in Sharjah, Sarah Tabar died of severe bleeding on January 20, "*due to the rupture of the uterine artery as a result of introducing (sic) a foreign body in the cervix.*" Fearing foul-play, a phenomenon typically experienced by overseas workers arriving home in boxes, Sarah's relative asked the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to examine the body.

During the autopsy, NBI doctors found an eight-month foetus in a garbage bag sewn inside Sarah's stomach. Tammy Uy described in his report the content

of the black plastic bag as, "*a male foetus with cut and tied umbilical cord, measuring 34 centimetres long, with pinkish complexion, aquiline nose, and with slight post-mortem laceration of the soft tissue of the knees and the heels.*"

Sarah's foster mother, Ponciana Sombrino suspected that Sarah may have been killed by her employers upon learning that she was pregnant. Under UAE law, it is a crime to be unwed and pregnant. Women found violating this law are imprisoned and lashed. Mrs Sombrino, however, fears that Sarah's employers are responsible for her death. The Ali family for whom Sarah worked for two years, are believed to be of royal lineage. Rosalinda Santos-Garbo, Mrs Sombrino's lawyer, believes that the influence of the Alis may be blocking some information about Sarah's death. Ms Santos-Garbo also accused the Ministry of Health which issued Sarah's death certificate, of not supplying relevant information such as the foetus inside the deceased's body.



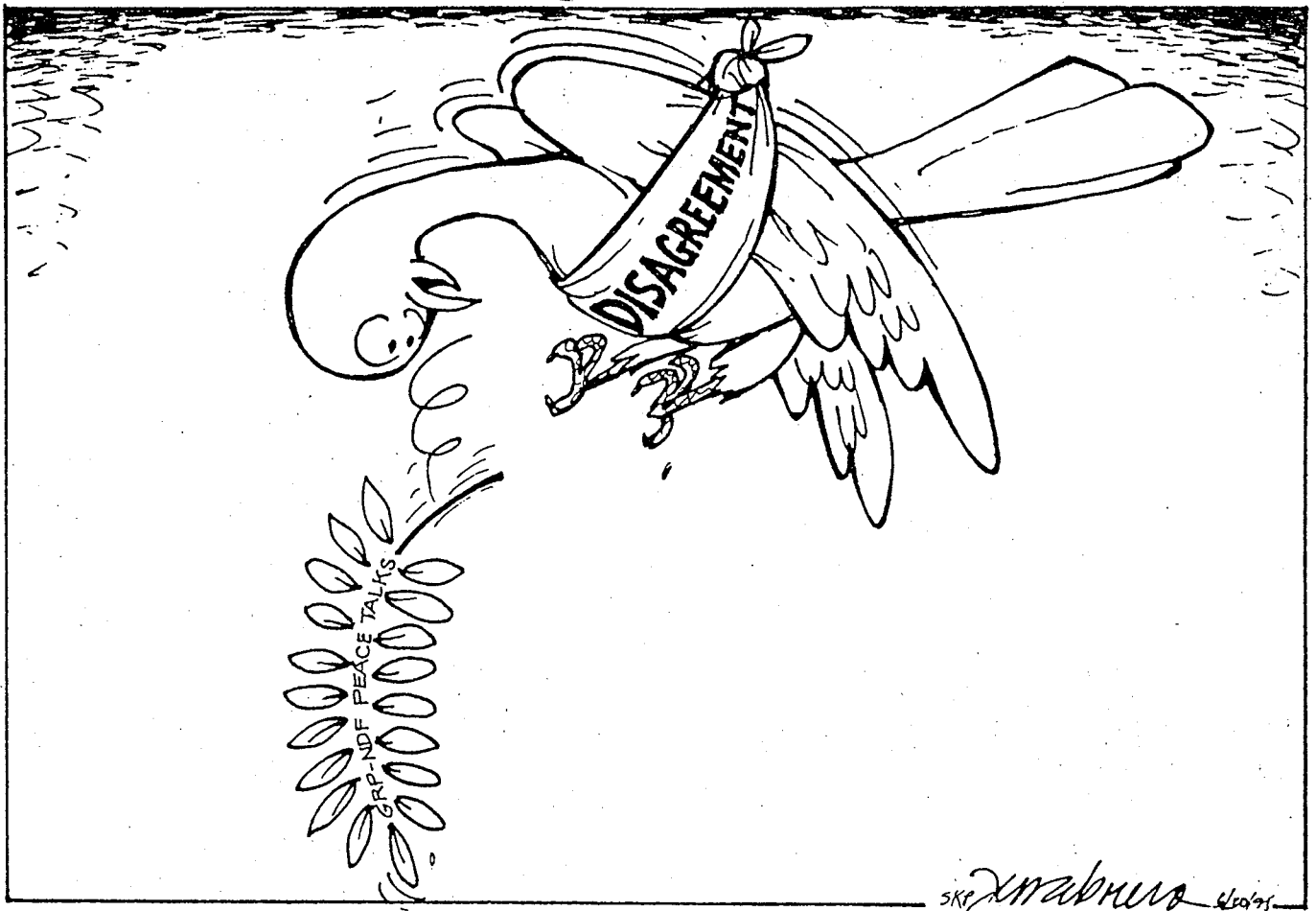
Graphic: Philippine Migration Review

Josephine Ventura, another Filipina maid who works for the Ali's neighbour, issued an affidavit saying that she did not know the man in Sarah's life. Ms Ventura, a close friend of Sarah, was surprised when the attending doctor told them that Sarah had committed abortion. According to Ventura, she never noticed Sarah being pregnant although she claimed that she was seeing Sarah almost daily. Lawyers of Mrs Sombrino cast some doubt on the statement of Ventura saying that it would be impossible not to notice Sarah's bulging stomach.

Mrs Sombrino describes Sarah as shy and conservative. Several months after Sarah's death, Sombrino was worried why her daughter suddenly stopped communicating with her. Other friends and relatives also complained of not receiving letters which was not typical of Sarah. Leonor Alvarez, Sarah's cousin, believes that her employer may have prevented Sarah from communicating with her family and mentioning to them her problems. "Sarah was very close to me and usually confided to me about her problems," said Alvarez.

Despite some irregularities surrounding Sarah's death, the Philippine Embassy in the UAE issued an official statement ruling out "foul-play". Ambassador to Abu Dhabi, Roy Seneres, merely echoed the UAE post-mortem that Sarah suffered severe blood loss caused by inserting an object inside her uterus in an attempt to abort the foetus. The NBI and the Philippine Commission on Human Rights (CHR), however, disputed the finding of Seneres' report. According to Dr Renante Basad, chief forensic expert of the CHR, to abort the foetus all by herself would be physically impossible for Sarah since she would not have been able to bear the pain.

# PEACE TALKS CEASE TALKS



Cartoon: *Philippine Daily Inquirer* June 30, 1995

## Why gov't suspended talks with NDF

BY SATUR OCAMPO

THE inevitable happened – but it came much too soon: the Ramos administration suspended the formal peace talks with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) in Brussels the day after the opening ceremonies last June 26.

Why?

From President Ramos' press statement on June 27, we get the following explanations:

1. Three days before the opening of the talks, the NDFP panel raised "a new and difficult issue": the "sudden and inflexible demand" for the release of captured NPA (New People's Army) commander Sotero Llamas and for him to join the NDFP panel in Brussels.

2. Because Llamas "is charged with not less than nine criminal cases in different salas," the President

"cannot interfere in the judicial process in view of the constitutional principle of separation of powers." Thus, Llamas' release should be resolved "not in the peace talks but in the courts."

3. Because the NDFP panel was "implacable in its demand" and it would not attend further talks until the matter was resolved, the government panel "decided to suspend the negotiations and return to Manila."

But in the light of facts so far published, these explanations are not enough. Moreover, they in turn raise more questions:

1. If the NDFP's "inflexible demand" was raised on June 23, why did not the government bluntly reject it then on the basis of the constitutional principle invoked by Mr Ramos?

2. Why did the GRP (Government of the Republic of the Philippines) panel decide to delay the departure for Brussels of one of its members, former Justice Secretary Silvestre Bello III, so he could ensure the release of Llamas and accompany him to Brussels?

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## PEACE TALKS CEASE TALKS

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It turned out that on June 6 the government panel had committed to the NDFP that the government would not oppose Llamas' petition for release. But the justice department instructed its prosecutors to inform the courts concerned of this stand only last June 20, a day after a Legaspi City trial court denied Llamas' petition.

One news account says Bello asked the President to expedite Llamas' release, but the latter rebuffed him upon the strong objection of Defense Secretary Renato de Villa. The defence chief called the NDFP demand for Llamas' freedom a "blackmail".

Lawyers say that the President could very well facilitate Llamas' release, as he did in the case of previous suspected leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People's Army, arrested and charged in various courts. Why, they ask, the different treatment in Llamas' case?

3. Why did the government facilitate the issuance of a passport to Llamas by the Department of Foreign Affairs and of a visa by the Belgian embassy if it did not want him to go to Brussels?

4. Why, without prior notification to the NDFP panel as normal courtesy and protocol required, did the government panel call a press conference on June 27 to announce its suspension of the talks? Did it make a by-your-leave to the Belgian foreign ministry, official host to the talks, beforehand?

5. Did the government panel seek the approval of the President – its principal or source of authority – before it took that precipitate step?

6. And why did not Mr Ramos direct the panel to stay on and try to resolve the issue with the NDFP panel, as he had done when deadlocks arose during the explanatory talks?

In a statement, the NDFP condemned the Ramos administration's "unilateral and indefinite suspension" of the formal talks. It charged the government with being "solely responsible for a series of deliberate acts done in bad faith and calculated to scuttle" two agreements approved by the government and the NDFP: The Hague Joint Declaration of 1992, and the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guar-



Former Justice Secretary  
Silvestre Bello III

antees (Jasig), signed last February.

NPA commander Sotero Llamas



An analysis of the events, the President's statement and that of the NDFP can provide a more credible reason for the government's unilateral suspension of the talks.

This analysis suggests that Mr Ramos and his military advisers had realized that the NDFP was scoring political points and could probably put the government at a big political disadvantage if the peace talks proceeded along the points of agreement sealed so far.

Thus, they took steps to cut short the talks, recall the government panel for "proper" instructions, and tried to put the blame on the NDFP.

From the very start, with the signing of The Hague Joint Declaration, the NDFP has been able to assert its framework over that of the government, specifically in terms of putting last rather than first on the agenda the cessation of hostilities and concomitant issues, such as ceasefire, amnesty, and disposition of forces.

No matter what Mr Ramos persisted in issuing two amnesty decrees and urging NPA members to surrender, he has achieved little to weaken the NDFP's hand at the negotiating table.

The military is riled by the realization that under the Jasig it has lost control of the issuance of safe conduct passes to the NDFP negotiators, consultants, staff and security force. The NDFP has asserted its inherent right to issue its personnel safe conduct passes which the government has committed to respect.

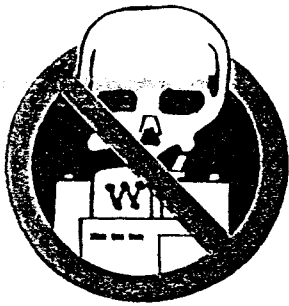
This may explain why, even as the government panel implicitly acknowledged Llamas' role as NDFP panel consultant by committing to have him freed and issued a passport and visa, De Villa questioned Llamas' inclusion in the talks and prevailed on Mr Ramos to deny the government's plea to free him.

By siding with De Villa, Mr Ramos virtually undercut the government's authority and credibility. Which is why the NDFP directly accuses the President of "willfully violating" the Jasig.

Compliance with the Jasig in Llamas' case, the NDFP declared, "is a test of how much further the government can go in peace negotiations." If it cannot deliver on its commitment on Llamas, how much more on future substantive agreements? the NDFP asked.

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# NUKE MEANS DEBT, NUKE MEANS DEATH!

## NFPC NUCLEAR FREE PHILIPPINES COALITION

**T**HE RAMOS ADMINISTRATION ON SEPTEMBER 12 revealed its preferred nuclear energy option when the Philippines' president launched his government's power plan that relies upon using nuclear energy to achieve NICHood. The nuclear solution for the country's power problems at the heart of the P6.6 trillion Philippine Energy Plan for 1996-2025 is an indefensible risk to take in a land beset by tidal waves, earthquake, volcanic eruption, and typhoons.

The Nuclear Free Philippines Coalition (NFPC) has critically analysed the energy plan since the release of its draft in May this year. At the time, Prof. Roland Simbulan, NFPC chairperson said, "the plan is an affront and insult to the Filipino people who have not yet recovered from the trauma of the anamalous Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP)".<sup>1</sup> NFPC fears for the plan's failure because the country is ill prepared to handle nuclear power.

In the light of this nuclear energy plan the NFPC says the Philippine Government's earlier condemnations of nuclear testing by France and China were acts of hypocrisy.

The Philippine government had registered a formal diplomatic protest about France's nuclear testing, saying it was "an utter disregard of the grave concern expressed by many countries". The President had even urged the people to oppose nuclear testing. He said: "Let your voice be heard. If you speak with one voice and join the rest of us, then, maybe, they will listen."

Nevertheless, a few days later, he decided he would not, however, listen to the grave concern over the use of nuclear energy for domestic purpose being expressed by many hundreds of thousands of Filipinos. He belittled critics of his nuclear energy

plan for linking it with the country's condemnation of nuclear weapons.

President Ramos wishes all of us to believe that using nuclear energy for "peaceful" purpose poses no danger, unlike anti-nuke activists who he will perceive to be a danger to government's plans for economic and political stability. He also rejected calls to boycott French products.

He told a news conference: "... (to connect) this plan for the peaceful application of nuclear energy to our policy to ban nuclear weapons, to condemn nuclear testing all over the world, (means its critics are) either not well-informed or they are trying to create a wrong slant for the purpose of creating instability in our government and in our society".

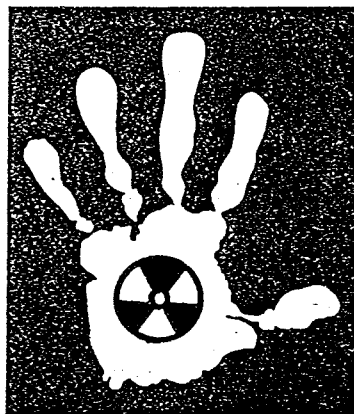
The Philippines' energy plan was launched amid international denunciation of French nuclear tests in the South Pacific. Filipinos registered their protest in a nation-wide noise barrage on September 11 when they used everything to hand – pots, pans, whistles, car horns, sirens, church bells, fireworks – to send their message of opposition to the tests *and* the use of nuclear energy to power the government's dreams of Philippines 2000.

The Earth Savers' Movement concluded on September 15 its 45-day daily rallies in front of the French embassy since August 1 with a "Light a Candle for Peace" ceremony. National media, local radio and tv

networks asked households to light candles in solidarity, promoted debate of the issues and encouraged this very popular mass protest.

More than 1.2 million Filipinos nationwide had signed anti-nuclear petitions during the 45-day rallies.

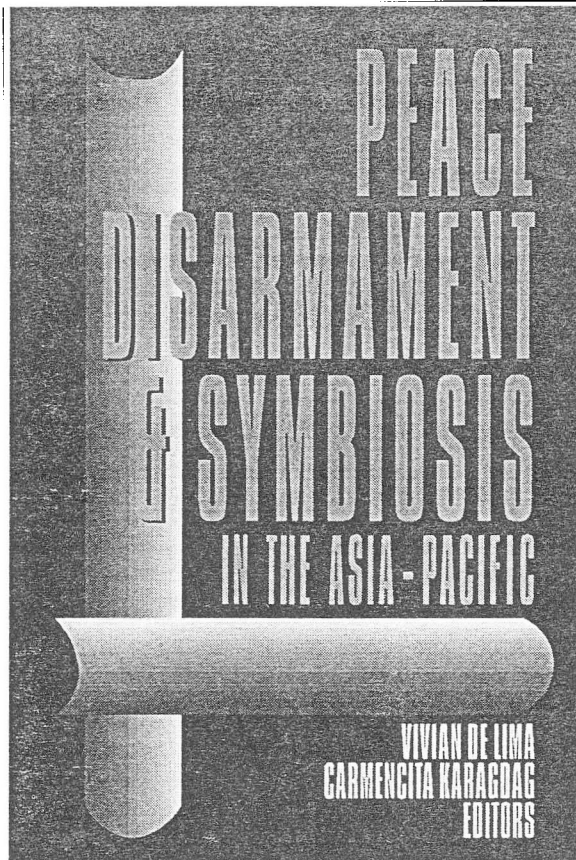
In Makati, the financial hub of Manila, the city council supported NFPC's presentation of a 'Notice of Eviction' to the French Embassy and ordered French officials to leave the city. Business people and office workers threw confetti from tower blocks – the district's favourite gesture of protest since the anti-dictatorship demonstrations of the 80s.



## N. O. NUKES

<sup>1</sup> The Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, built during the Marcos regime by U.S. multi-national Westinghouse Electric Corporation, plunged the Philippines into a 2.4 billion US dollar debt for a nuclear power plant sited near an earthquake fault on the slopes of Mount Natib in Morong, a volcano classified as semi-active. Mothballed by then president Corazon Aquino, the BNPP has never delivered a single kilo-watt-hour of electricity to the grid.

# FROM THE COLD WAR TO THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: Towards a New Era in the Asia-Pacific



THE COLD WAR IS OVER. THE ONSET OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> century brings the world on the threshold of a new era. The coming century is heralded to be "the Asia-Pacific Century" as the region is forecast to be the up-and-coming economic powerhouse. Despite these effusive projections, however, questions of whether this new era will substantially differ from the old still beg to be answered.

The second Conference on Peace, Disarmament and Symbiosis in the Asia-Pacific convened in the Philippines on April 29 to May 1, 1994 under the theme *From the Cold War to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Towards a New Era in the Asia-Pacific*.

This book is not about the proceedings of the Conference although the recommendations and resolutions are included in the volume. What is presented here are some of the more thought-provoking commentaries on the current regional and global situation, and possible post-Cold War alternatives that can help usher in a really new world order.

These contributions were requested from the writers – an interesting mix of politicians, scholars and activists – by the Conference organisers, for use as major resource and input materials. All papers in this anthology, except one or two, were actually delivered at the Conference. (*Extract from the book's Preface*)

**CONTENTS:** Mushakoji Kinhide, *The Hegemonic Project in Asia and the Pacific: Calculations and Miscalculations*; Daniel B. Schirmer, *The United States: A Bankrupt Hegemon?*; Victor Sumsy, *Russia: The Demise of a Hegemon?*; Johan Galtung, *Geopolitics after the Cold War: An Essay in Agenda Theory*; Kay Möller, *Multilateral Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific: A European View*; Wu Kesheng, *Some Thoughts on the International Order*; Roland Simbulan, *A New Security Framework for the Asia-Pacific*; Romulo Peralta, *Overview of the Geopolitical Situation in the Asia-Pacific*; Le Thi Quy, *Women in the Market Economy of Vietnam*; Wu Xing Tang, *China's Role in Building a Brighter Future for Asia*; Sonn Se-Il, *South Korea in Transition*; Ito Narihiko, *Japan at the Crossroads*; Syed Hussein Ali, *Building a Progressive Consensus in Malaysia*; Temario Rivera, *The Challenge of Development in the Philippines*; Antonio Tujan Jr., *The Philippines: Cycle of Underdevelopment*; Konstantin Sarkisov, *Russian Perspectives in the Asia-Pacific*; Kathryn Johnson, *U.S. Economic Policies Revisited*; Daniel B. Schirmer, *U.S. Foreign Policy: The Rhetoric and the Reality*; Wigberto Tañada, *Towards a New Era in the Asia-Pacific*; Kim Dae-jung, *Prospects for Peace and Democracy in Asia*; Bonifacio Gillego, *Transnational Democratization from Below*; Yatabe Osamu, *Reaffirming Asian Commitment to Peace*; Aurora Javate-de Dios, *Turning Crisis Into Breakthrough*; Carol Pagaduan-Araullo, *Challenge to Policymakers*.

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The 16<sup>th</sup> bi-annual conference of the International Peace Research Association will be hosted next year in Brisbane at the University of Queensland during 8-12<sup>th</sup> July 1996. For more information contact: John Synott, IPRA Program Director, QUT, Locked Bag No.2, Red Hill Post Office, Brisbane 4059. Phone: 07 3864 5993, Fax: 07 3864 3982, Email: j.synott@qut.edu.au.

# THE ABORIGINAL WELFARE FUND & ABORIGINAL SAVINGS ACCOUNT

UNDER QUEENSLAND LEGISLATION FROM 1897 TO 1971, successive Queensland administrations compulsorily acquired the bulk of the wages of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers who were "under the Act"<sup>1</sup>. Workers received a small amount of 'pocket money'.

A percentage of the wages was levied for the Aboriginal Provident Fund, to be used for the benefits of Reserves and Communities, a form of 'double taxation'. This money, along with money from rents, Social Security levies, deceased estates, interest from investments made with funds from Aboriginal Savings Account, and so on, became the Aboriginal Welfare Fund.

Money from the Welfare Fund was used for, among other things, building the houses rented by Aboriginal People on Reserves, funding Government programs for Aboriginal people, and mixed with other Departmental money and spent on various projects for the wider community.

What was left of the wages of Aboriginal workers went into personal savings accounts within the Queensland Aboriginal Account. Withdrawals by Aboriginal people from their accounts were strictly controlled, however fraud by employers and Protectors was common. A part of the interest from these accounts was paid into the Welfare Fund. Because of incompetent record keeping by the Department it is impossible in most cases for individuals to find out what money they are owed.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: 'under the Act' - The Aboriginals Protection and Prevention of Sale of Opium Act - Qld - 1897.

The 'Act' distinguished between 'full-blood' and 'half-cast' Aboriginal people. Exemptions were at the discretion of the Queensland Government. While it was progressively amended over the years until 1965 when it was eventually replaced, it gave totalitarian power to the Queensland Government and its representatives over the lives of Aboriginal people. The legislation enabled the establishing of reserves and allowed for the forced removal of Aboriginal people to, and confinement on, these reserves. The Government, and its agents, decided who, when, and if Aboriginal people could marry; where and when they could work, and then took most of their meagre wages.

The 'Act' created a system of ruthless control and inhumane treatment of Aboriginal people for nearly 100 years. Queensland's rural industries were built on the exploitation of underpaid, and unpaid, Aboriginal labour. The South African apartheid regime was said to have been modelled on the Queensland system.

The Government admits to a remaining fund of \$154,000 in the Savings Account and \$5.5m in the Welfare Fund. It does not wish to make this available to those Aboriginal people and their families whose wages were misappropriated.

## ABORIGINAL PEOPLE WANT

- ♦ A high level public inquiry to investigate the administration of the Welfare Fund and the Aboriginal Savings Account,
- ♦ Aboriginal Community control of the consultation and decision processes regarding the future of the money,
- ♦ The costs of the inquiry and the consultation process to be borne by the Queensland Government, not the Welfare Fund.

## AND WE CAN ALL

- ♦ Write letters
- ♦ Send faxes
- ♦ Sign petitions
- ♦ Give financial support.

## PLEASE SEND LETTERS/FAXES OF SUPPORT FOR A PUBLIC INQUIRY TO:

The Premier, Wayne Goss, MLA, PO Box 185, Albert St, Brisbane Qld 4002 or fax 07 3221 1206

You could also send a copy to:

The Minister for Justice and Attorney General, Matt Foley, MLA, GPO Box 149, Brisbane Qld 4001 or fax 07 3220 0289

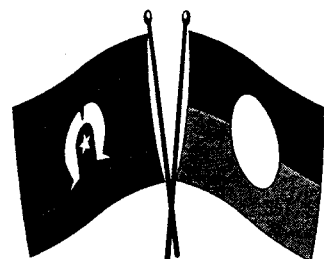
The Minister for Family Services, Margaret Woodgate, MLA, GPO Box 806, Brisbane Qld 4001 or fax 07 3221 5373

**Please send a copy of your letter to: MRS LESLEY WILLIAMS, 8 GRANT STREET, SOUTH SIDE, GYMPIE QLD 4570.**

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The administration of the Welfare Fund and the Aboriginal Savings Account was a massive financial scam and the current administration must not evade responsibility for ensuring that justice is done.

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## Extracts and illustrations from:



# ECONOMIC GROWTH in 1 9 9 4

## At Whose Expense

Facts and Figures for Filipino  
Women on the 1994 Philippine  
Economy and Politics

An increased level of economic growth and a surplus in the budget and balance of payments have caused the Ramos government to boast that its efforts towards its vision of NICHood and Philippines 2000 are succeeding. Some international quarters have taken notice as well, pronouncing a decisive turn-around for the Philippine economy, proclaiming that the country is now an emerging tiger in the region.

Is the growth a real turn-around, and is it sustainable? What does it mean for the majority of Filipinos especially the women?

This situation unravels the myth of economic turn-around peddled by the Ramos government to polish its image. The first part is a critical look at government's economic indicators while the second part examines whether the supposed growth has changed the lives of ordinary Filipino men and women. Particular attention is given to the incidence of violence against women in the past year. Finally we end with a glimpse into the effects of economic growth on women's lives in the case of CALABARZON, a prominent showcase of the government's economic growth model.

### IV. Violence Against Women

The past year saw the rise in public consciousness of the violent crimes committed against women, due in part to the upsurge in the number of cases reported, the extreme inhumanity of the acts, and the prominence of some of the persons involved.

1) The US Department of State reported the continued human rights violations in the Philippines. The report

cites that rape continues to be a major problem, with incidence estimated to be as high as one every six minutes. The Philippine National police reported a lower incident at 20 percent, but reported cases for the first quarter of 1994 was 17% higher than that of 1993. *Source: PDI, February 7, 1995.*

2) Rape victims included an 81-year old grandmother from Camalig, Albay who was found murdered and sexually violated. Her killer had inserted a hard object into her vagina that caused serious laceration. *Source: PDI, July 25, 1994.*

Another rape victim was a 10-month old baby girl who landed in critical condition at a hospital after she was sexually molested by an old widower inside her house at Makati. *Source: Tempo, March 3, 1994.*

3) The "Safe Motherhood Survey", commissioned by the Department of Health's Office of Special Concerns, shows that 33.8 percent of the 8,000 women interviewed have reported physical abuse by their husbands or someone close to them.

The survey which interviewed women aged 15 to 49, also found that 3% were raped or were forced to have sex with someone, but only 10% of these had sought assistance from the police.

Twelve percent of those interviewed also reported being abused even during pregnancy. The survey also found that abuse was highest among women 20 years old and below – 15 percent, and lowest among the well-educated at 6 percent. *Source: PDI, February 2, 1995.*





4) Accused perpetrators of gender violence included a number of government officials and their relatives:

⇒ Comelec Commissioner Manolo Gorospe was accused by fellow Commissioner Remedios Fernando of sexual harassment;

⇒ Police Chief Rico Tome of Aluran, Misamis Occidental was accused of molesting a 15-year old girl who was illegally arrested and detained in the municipal jail; *Source: Star, September 29, 1994*

⇒ Peter Nierras, the acting manager of the Metro Casiguran Water District in Casiguran, Leyte, was accused of sexual harassment by an employee of the Local Water Utilities Administration; *Source: Manila Bulletin, August 13, 1994*

⇒ Thaddeus Durano, Sogo, Cebu mayor, was charged with rape on the basis of a complaint of a US-based nurse on behalf of her 13-year old daughter. This is the fourth complaint against Durano filed before the Ombudsman; the three previous cases did not prosper after the complainants lost interest in their case; *Source: PDI, August 1, 1994*

⇒ The son and son-in-law of Isabela Governor Benjamin Dy were convicted of rape and molestation of an American exchange student.

5) Prostitution continues to rise. Data from Cebu City's Health Office gathered by the Women's Resource Center based in the city states that there are a total of 2,832 "commercial sex workers" there. Not included in this figure are those who are unmonitored such as street walkers, call girls, women kept in casas or prostitution dens.

6) ECPAT, a church-based non-governmental organization working with prostituted children estimates that about 60,000 Filipino girls and boys (aged below 18 years old) are involved in child prostitution in the country. *Source: PDI, March 31, 1994*



7) A new type of prostitution, engaged by the "akyat-barko" women, has been reported in Pangasinan. The women climb stranded foreign vessels seeking refuge in Alaminos and other coastal towns in western Pangasinan during storms. Each girl is paid \$50 for an overnight stay and \$20 for a short stay aboard the ship. *Source: PDI, July 29, 1994*

8) According to Health Assistant Manuel Dayrit, the AIDS virus had increased from 1 per 1,000 male and female sex workers to 1 per 20 in a span of seven years (1987-1994). *Source: Star, July 24, 1994*

9) A 16-year old girl from Maramag, Bukidnon was rescued from her abductors. She was forced to work as a slave for a prominent Maranao family for three years, and said that there are others like her. They have been kidnapped from different places in Mindanao and brought to Lanao del Sur where they were sold to Maranao families. *Source: PDI, Feb. 10, 1995.*

## V. What economic growth? Women displaced by CALABARZON

The CALABARZON (for Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon provinces), is a 20-year project of the government under its Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan. Total investments of \$766 M to \$3.126 B are expected to be poured in for the first five years, primarily under an Official Development Assistance (ODA) package from Japan. The plan expects to set up fourteen industrial estates, the construction of port facilities, infrastructure, power plants and water sources, as well as the development of tourist areas.



*Continued on Page 10 ➤*

## Economic Growth in 1994: At Whose Expense

◀ *Continued from Page 9*

1) Prime agricultural lands have been subjected to large-scale conversion — into industrial estates, residential subdivisions, commercial centers and recreation facilities. In the province of Laguna, for instance, it is estimated that 1,500 hectares are lost yearly to conversion; by the year 2000, only 14.5% or 12,500 hectares will remain as farmlands.



This has resulted to the massive dislocation not only of families, but of entire communities. A southern Tagalog non-government organization estimates that 100,000 families will be displaced in the project's first five years.

2) According to the Center for Worker's Education, Leadership and Development (CWELD), there are now 441 factories in CALABARZON; 195 of them have predominantly women as workers. They are found in the garments and textile factories, electronics, food and beverages, and ceramics. It is estimated that around 77,000 women workers are to be found in these factories in the five provinces.

The low cost of labor is the major attraction of setting up factories in CALABARZON. Since most of them are labor-intensive, costs can only be kept down at the expense of the workers:

a) For instance, the majority of the workers in the Cavite Export Processing Zone are paid from P60 to P96 a day, way below the legislated minimum wage of P128. [\$1 Australian = approx. P18]. In the Laguna International Industrial Park, workers are paid P80. There are firms which delay the payment of workers' salaries, and many do not remit SSS and Medicare contributions.

b) Employing workers on 5-month contracts is a common practice; and there are companies, such as Bratex and Asian Biscuits, which have 50% of their workers on such contractual basis.

c) The lowest paid are those who work for sub-contractors, also called "house-to-house". These involve meticulous handiwork such as embroidery, weaving, sewing tiny objects, which are purposely located outside the factory because of the long hours of work needed.

Such work is paid per piece, usually in centavos. For instance, a piece of hand-woven glove is paid 35

centavos each; a ceramic petal, five centavos each. [100 centavos = P1].

d) Some companies have a policy of hiring only young, single women. Applicants are required to undergo pregnancy tests, even if they are single. There is no consideration for the conditions of pregnant workers nor for mothers with young children — pregnant workers also work the night shift, and those whose children are sick are forced to resign.

e) Sexual harassment of workers is also common, with women being forced to become mistresses of their supervisors for a few pesos additional pay, or for regularization.

3) Majority of those displaced by CALABARZON were farmers and fisherfolk. Men who have been farming or fishing all their lives are abruptly forced to look for alternative sources of livelihood, but the factories are open only to the young, the skilled and the educated. As a consequence, it is women who single-handedly ensure the survival of families through laundrywork, vending, accepting sub-contracting jobs, and other odd work daily.

### Case Study: Dwindling Incomes in Coconut Production

A family of four works as tenants on a coconut plantation in the Bondoc Peninsula. For each season of 45 days, here is what they get from the four-hectare coconut farm:

Harvest every 45 days = 700 nuts  
23 kilos of copra for ever 100 nuts,  
at a price of P6.00 per kilo

#### Gross Income from Harvest

23 kilos / 100 X 7 = 161 kilos of copra  
161 X P6.00/kilo = P966.00 for 4 has.

#### Sharing: "Tersyohan"

1 part tenant / 2 parts landowner

#### Family share from Harvest:

P966/3 or P322.00 every 45 days

#### Less expenses:

Picking, P10/100 nuts	P70
Shelling	P50
Transport by carabao	P30
	<b>P150</b>

#### Net Income for 45 days:

P322.00 - P150.00 = P272.00

*Source: Amihan*

*Economic Growth in 1994: At Whose Expense*  
published by Center for Women's Resources  
Quezon City, Philippines, February 1995.



## THEY CALL US EVERYTHING ELSE EXCEPT VICTIMS

by richie valencia-buenaventura  
2 july 1995, manila, philippines

they call us everything else  
except what we really are:  
they call us women of pleasure;  
entertainers; cultural dancers;  
hospitality girls; models;  
guest relations officers.  
commercial sex workers.  
everything else  
except victims.

for we have never been victims.  
we have chosen this of our own free will.  
and we have never been forced.  
from childhood we decided  
prostitution is the place to be.  
while the boys dreamt of building palaces  
and exploring the universe,  
we dreamt of the splendor of sticky bedsheets  
and clawing, groping fingers on our loins.  
we chose this.  
it was all we ever wanted to be.

they call us everything else  
except what we really are.  
we dirty the streets we walk on at night  
so they send us away;  
we dirty the hands of these poor pimps  
who have no other choice but to work for us;  
we dirty the hands of honorable men,  
so sadly enslaved by their needs;  
it is they, not us, who are the victims.  
it is us, not them, who should be blamed.

they call it everything else  
except what it really is.  
a necessary evil.  
the oldest profession.  
the inevitable result of poverty.  
the convenient choice  
for the indolent and the impatient.  
after all, we are in it for the sheer enjoyment  
and of course, the fast money.

every now and then,  
they would demand respectability.  
licenses, health examinations.  
pieces of paper to assure our poor victims  
that they will not die tomorrow  
after battering us tonight.  
every now and then,  
the police would come,  
so harassed by the burden of their work,  
so helplessly enslaved by their needs,  
and we would use them, seduce them,  
bribe them, harass them, seduce them.

reduce them to begging little boys.  
they call us everything else  
except what we really are.  
now they talk of dividing us  
between those who were forced  
and those who were supposed to have a choice.  
between those who pretend to be old  
and those who pretend to be young.

and they never ever ask  
why the light has gone from our eyes  
why the smiles on our painted faces  
are barren and dry.

they make victims of us once  
and they make victims of us  
over and over and over again,  
but they never ever say so  
they never ever say so.



Graphic: ONNA/WOMEN from MANUSHI

*About the Author:* Richie Valencia-Buenaventura heads SBS Radio's Filipino program group. She wrote this poem during the Campaign Against Sex Tourism and Trafficking of Filipino Women Study Tour to the Philippines.



# PEACE TALKS CEASE TALKS

◀ *Continued from Page 4*

Possibly further getting the military's dander up is the agreement signed by the two panels last June 26, on the sequence of discussion of the agenda by reciprocal working committees (RWC).

The first item is mutual respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. At the RWC meeting, the NDFP panel is



Founding chairman of the CPP  
Jose Maria Sison

expected to raise the issues of human rights violations by the military, the prosecution of the violators and the compensation of their victims. These are issues on which the NDFP can expect wide support in the Philippines and abroad.

In this regard it is significant to note that Mr Ramos said he had specifically instructed the government panel to "formally present to the NDFP a proposal for a general ceasefire for the duration of the peace talks" which would involve popular participation and the creation of ceasefire committees.

Such a proposal would entail contentious negotiations, in view of the negative experience in the implementation of the 1986-87 ceasefire agreement that led to the failure of peace talks.

More importantly, the proposal would upset – reverse – the sequence agreed on last June 26. It would most certainly be opposed by the NDFP and give rise to a deadlock, if not breakdown of the talks.

Fully aware that the NDFP has consistently opposed ceasefire before substantive talks, why did

Mr Ramos instruct the government panel to formally propose it?

Could this move be not only a deliberate step to scuttle the Hague and Jasig accords, as the NDFP charges, but to scuttle the peace talks just when they begin the much-awaited substantive phase?

*PHILIPPINE NEWS AND FEATURES*

*The Author:* Satur Ocampo was spokesman and chief negotiator for the National Democratic Front in the aborted peace talks with the Aquino administration in 1986-87. (Reprinted from the *PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER*, 2 JULY 1995.)



Satur Ocampo

## FILIPINO WORKERS PROTEST

**MANILA:** Thousands of workers went on strike yesterday in what was seen as a prelude to massive protests against high food prices and an impending increase in oil prices.

At least 11 groups of workers and drivers calling themselves the Task Force National Protest were participating in the mass action, and similar strikes were planned in other cities.

Angry protesters asked whether the current situation was "the best", referring to President Fidel Ramos' often-repeated promise to Filipinos that "the best is yet to come".

Agriculture officials have attributed the high prices to "market forces" triggered by a drought that hit the country early this year.

Critics blame the government for mismanaging its food production programs and for its failure to crack down on unscrupulous traders and millers who they say are manipulating the food supply.

*COURIER MAIL, SEPTEMBER 19, 1995*

## PLIGHT OF FILIPINO WOMEN

IT HAS BEEN REPORTED that in Beijing Sen. Leticia Ramos-Shahani, head of the Philippine delegation to the Fourth UN Conference on Women, voiced the concerns of Filipinos about the plight of women living in the countryside, women overseas contract workers, and women and children who are victims of trafficking.

She reiterated the Philippine government's commitment to stringent penalties for those who engage in trafficking and called on the Non-Aligned Movement to back a campaign for international action on the issues of trafficking and migrant women workers.

"Just as our women migrant workers keep our economy afloat, so do they contribute directly and indirectly to the economy of the receiving countries. Our migrant workers, the majority of whom are women, are among the best of our country's globally shared resources," she said.

Recent cases of trafficked women and abused migrant women workers have inflamed the Filipino public to demand immediate action from government.

# INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN THE BEIJING CONFERENCE



Cordillera women's movement: facing the challenge (Photo: *NORDIS Third Anniversary Issue*, Sept. 26 1992)

BEIJING, China (NORDIS) – In the coverage of the Fourth World Conference on Women; the international press, including the Philippine press, has mainly focused on the human rights violations of China and the alleged mishandling of the organization of the UN conference. With a great disregard of the efforts and hospitality of the Chinese organizing committee, the press incessantly blew up the most trivial inconveniences during the conference to the extent of blaming the rainshowers on the Chinese government. In doing so the press not only creates sino-phobia among the readers, but also diverts the attention away from the issues that were really at stake in the conference. Some women from all over the world came to China to attend the NGO Forum. Each and every one of them had their own story to tell about their lives, their struggle and the violence they encounter. The magnitude of workshops, fora, demonstrations and statements through appearance

and performance was sheer impressive. Amidst the colorful presentations and social sharing, for most women the NGO Forum was a matter of hard work for most of the time.

One of the multitude of initiatives during the NGO Forum was the daily caucus for indigenous women that was sponsored by the Asian Indigenous Women's Network. The caucus met every afternoon in the tent that was designated to be used by indigenous women. In the caucus women came together to tell their story and exchanged information about workshops and other activities during the NGO Forum. All in all some 130 indigenous women attended, and for the majority, this was their first international conference. During the caucus they found out that amidst the diversity in their cultures, they have many common grounds and issues.

*Continued on Page 14 >*

## Indigenous Women in the Beijing Conference

◀ *Continued from Page 13*

There were women from Burma who testified about the military atrocities committed against their people. "Even if I speak the whole day, it is not enough to relate the violence they have done to us," one of them said. Women from Flores, Indonesia, related about their efforts to retain the intellectual property rights over their traditional weaving. Cordilleran women shared their anxiety on the foreign mining companies that threaten their control of their ancestral lands under the new Philippine mining law.

There were the North American natives who cried for the loss of their language. In Canada the practice has been for some generations to place the native Indians in reserves where they have no means for subsistence except for government welfare. Children are taken away from the tribe and placed in boarding schools in order to incorporate them into 'civilization'. Actually, what happens is the loss of their language and culture, and there are many cases of youth feeling such loss and alienation that they even commit suicide.

There were women from Latin America who told about their struggle to organize women around their indigenous identity. In doing so, they found a lot of opposition from the established NGOs. A woman from Peru said, "The NGOs want to do something for the indigenous women, but they want to be in charge. When we want to control our own organizing, they oppose us". Some mainstream NGOs from Latin America even refused to take up the issues put forward by the indigenous women, because they said this may divert the attention away from the gender issues. Sami women from the North of Europe performed their *yolks* with great dedication. These are chants that have become ever more precious since they have been forbidden for fifty years in an effort to annihilate the Sami culture, but have now been restored. Meanwhile the whole group was blessed through some secret rituals performed around the tent by Brazilian Indian women.

The caucus also had the very specific purpose to formulate the "Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women". Although the women felt little hope to be able to influence the official documents of the UN conference at this stage, the Declaration will be important in the activities in the years to come. The United Nations has declared 1995-2005 the "Decade of Indigenous Peoples".

The Declaration opens to say: "The Earth is our Mother. From her we get our life, and our ability to live. It is our responsibility to care for our mother and

in caring for our mother, we care for ourselves. Women, all females, are manifestation of Mother Earth in human form. We, the daughters of Mother Earth, the indigenous women present at the NGO Forum of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, have come together to collectively decide what we can do to bring about a world which we would like our children, and our children's children, to live in."

The first part of the Declaration analyzes the situation of indigenous women. While indigenous women have survived the colonial era, the incursion on their territories and cultures continues. "The 'New World Order' which is engineered by those who have abused and raped Mother Earth, colonized, marginalized and discriminated against us, is being imposed on us viciously. This is recolonization coming under the name of globalization and trade liberalization. The forces behind this are the rich industrialized nation-states, their transnational corporations, and financial institutions which they control like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. They will cooperate and compete among themselves for the last frontiers of the world's natural resources located on our lands and waters."

The Declaration also criticizes the Draft Platform for Action of the UN Conference for not being critical about this New World Order and for condoning the institutions responsible for the increasing poverty and marginalization of women. Thirty-five proposals and demands are being brought forward on their right to self-determination; right to their territories and right to development, education and health; stopping human rights violations and violence against indigenous women; right to their intellectual and cultural heritage; right to control the biological diversity in their territories; and ensuring political participation of indigenous women and enhancing their capabilities and access to resources.

The Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women has been and will be used in the years to come as an instrument to lobby with the governments, NGOs and international institutions of the world. More importantly, the women who attended the caucus have created a tool for organizing and educating indigenous women in their respective homelands. Focussing on the indigenous women's initiatives gives one example of how women were able to maximize their gathering in Beijing to show that the international women's movement around the world, in all its diversity, is more than alive.

**Thea Hilhorst/Northern Dispatch**





*During the Campaign Against Sex Tourism Study Tour to the Philippines this year, Debbie Wall gave a talk on Australian Sex Tourism to students of the Philippine Science High School*

*This is one of the many pieces of poetry and prose written by the students in response to Debbie's presentation.*



## Batang Paslit

**By Robert John Tejero**

Batang paslit..  
h'wag kang palabuy-laboy  
mam'ya'y ika'y dukutin  
at gawing negosyo

Batang paslit..  
higpitan ang hawak  
sa hita ng inay mo  
baka pagmulat mo  
iba na ang mundo

Batang paslit..  
bilisan ang lakad!  
Huwag hayaang mawasak  
ang kaisa-isa mong bukas,

huwag hayaang iba  
ang makinabang ng iyong  
kaangkinan,  
huwag hayaang salapi  
maging dahilan  
ng iyong pagkawasak.

Batang paslit..  
wala silang pakundangan.  
Kasamaa'y sila'y nilason na  
kaya pag-iingat tanging kasaliw  
ng kaligtasan.

Kahit hangal, basta tao  
Wala silang sinasanto.  
Hindi ito pananakot.  
Isang payong pangkaibigan  
O, saan ka pa tutungo?

## Innocent Child

Innocent child..  
don't go astray  
you may be snatched  
and used for business

Innocent child..  
hold tight  
your mother's leg  
you may wake up  
in a different world

Innocent child..  
walk quickly!  
don't let anyone  
ruin your future,  
don't let anyone

take advantage  
of what you have  
don't let money  
transform you  
into history

Innocent child..  
they are reckless.  
evil has poisoned them  
so be cautious somehow  
it will save you

But nobody is safe  
from their wicked claws.  
No intention to scare you  
Just a friendly advice.  
Hey, where are you going?

*Translation: Emere Distor*

## STOP PRESS

THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN to be charged under the Federal Government's new Child Sex Tourism Amendment Act which makes it illegal for Australians to engage in acts of paedophilia overseas, appeared before a New South Wales court in September.

Anthony Richard Carr, 43, from Sydney, was refused bail and he was remanded to appear again in Manly District Court on November 17.

Video evidence of paedophilia was found in Anthony Carr's Seaforth home by police when they interviewed him following allegations that he was seen sexually fondling a 3-year-old girl in a Sydney shopping mall.

Police allege that one of the videos, depicting a Filipino female child about 5 years of age, was filmed by Carr while he was in the Philippines in November 1994.

Anthony Carr faces one charge relating to the child in the Philippines plus a further eight charges: five counts of aggravated indecent assault, one count of procuring a child for a film depicting child abuse, one count of inciting an act of indecency, and one count of assault. The identities of the victims and the age of the videos are yet to be established.

## KASAMA... means friend, companion, comrade

We particularly draw your attention to the plight of our *kasamas* who have suffered not only invasion and land theft but have even had their meagre wages and savings misappropriated by the Queensland Government. Please turn to page 7 for an outline of the Aboriginal Welfare Fund & Savings Account scam and send a letter expressing your concern.

## Join Solidarity Philippines Australia Network or Subscribe to KASAMA

- ☒ **JOIN S.P.A.N.** - the annual \$20 membership fee for individuals (Concession \$15, Organisations \$50) includes 6 issues of KASAMA by post in Australia. We hold regular monthly meetings in Brisbane.
- ☒ **SUBSCRIBE to KASAMA.** \$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.)
- ☒ Cash donations for solidarity work are always greatly appreciated. Please let us know if you wish to contribute to a specific project.
- ☒ Contact us if you would like to know about organised exposures with non-government peoples' organisations in the Philippines.
- ☒ Would you just like to know more about S.P.A.N.? Please let us send you a copy of our Aims and Constitution.

### WRITE TO:

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or PHONE: (07) 891 5877 or FAX 24 hrs: (07) 891 6944  
or EMAIL: span@diamond.apana.org.au

## Solidarity Philippines Australia Network

welcomes membership of individuals and organisations who support the struggle of the Filipino peoples for independence, freedom and democracy. Members are of diverse background including Filipinos and non-Filipinos. SPAN 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.

If undelivered please return to:

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