



KASAMA

the newsletter of SPAN
Solidarity Philippines Australia Network
Nine years of regular publication

Vol. 9 No. 6

November–December 1995

\$2.00

Cordillera Women Denounce Beauty Pageant

Cordillera indigenous women oppose the holding of the Miss Asia-Pacific beauty contest here, saying, "It is a crime against the country and a marketing gimmick to parade female flesh in the guise of attracting foreign investors and promoting tourism." ALFRED DIZON of *Northern Dispatch* reports from Baguio City.

INNABUYOG, a federation of indigenous women's organisations in the Cordillera awarded last July by the United Nations for its programs on sustainable development and community affairs, lambasted the holding of the beauty contest, saying funds for it could have been put to better use like health programs and road constructions.

"Out of this beauty contest will emerge presumably the continent's most beautiful women. But we ask: by whose standards are these women decreed beauties?" they said in a statement.

"To us, the Filipina whose hands are scarred by hard work so that her family may survive is beautiful. The Filipina whose spine is curved and whose toes are splayed from having to walk barefoot through dust and mud by the burden of nurturing her family is beautiful."

The Innabuyog further declared that spending public money for a so-called beauty contest is, "a crime against the country and Cordillerans."

"Roads are unrepaired, potable water is not available, prices of rice, oil and other prime commodities continue their upward climb, people are unemployed and underpaid and the environment is among the worst in the world. How can the government pretend to celebrate beauty when it visits ugliness upon the people constantly?" the federation said.

"Let not the Ramos government presume to tell us what beauty is. We, the women in the Cordillera, live it day by day in its truest form: courage, optimism and commitment to equality, democracy and liberation," they added.

Miss Asia-Pacific will be chosen at the Convention Centre on Nov 11. Other titles to be won are Miss Talent, Miss Friendship, Best in Swimsuit, and Best in National Costume.

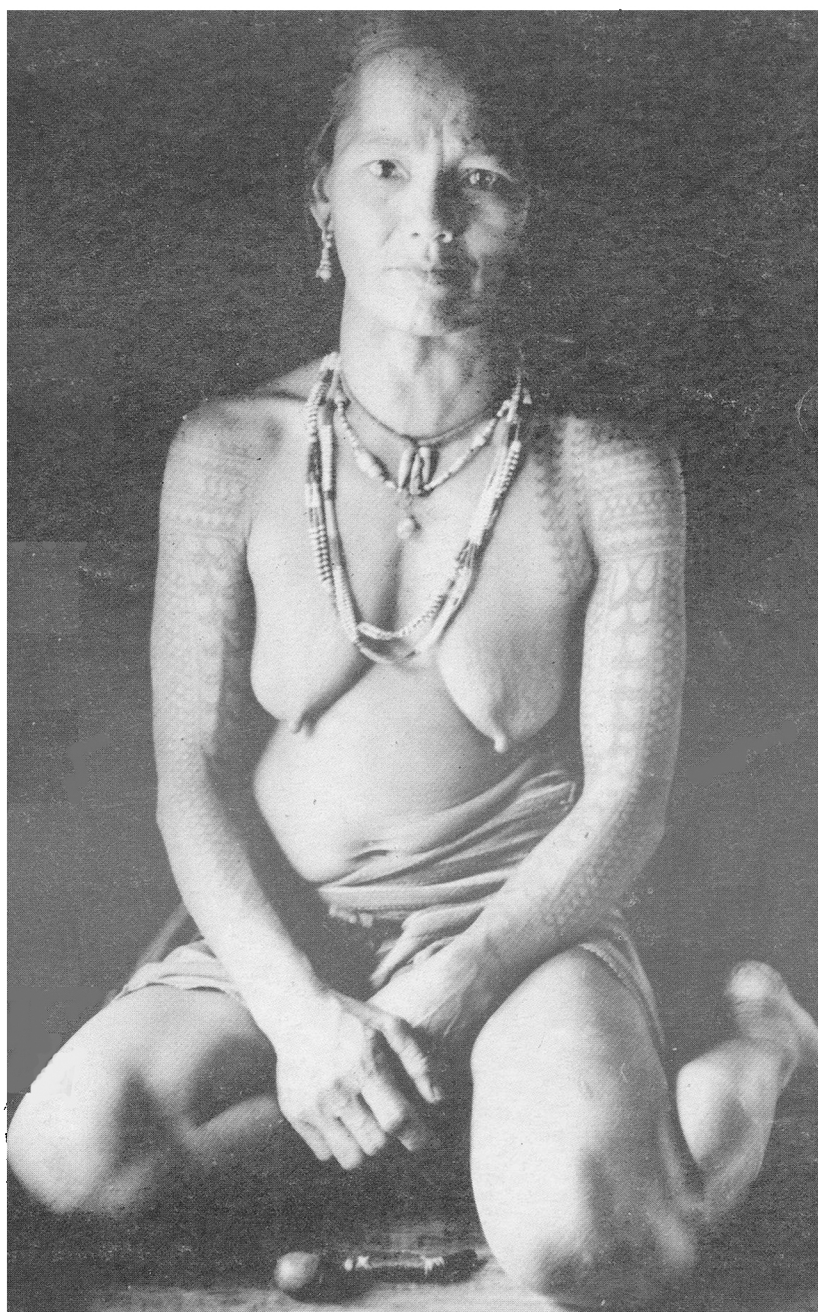


Photo: by Tommy Hafalla
From the cover of *Laya Feminist Quarterly* 2/92

Location: Swagman Hotel, Manila, Philippines

from: *Asian Workers Organising*, July 95
published by Australia Asia Worker Links,
PO Box 264, Fitzroy Vic 3065

HOTEL worker, Rhoda Batallador is 27 years old and single. Born in Dueñas, Iloilo province in Western Visayas. She is the eldest of eight children. Her parents are farmers. Rhoda migrated from Deunas to Manila to study nutrition at College. Rhoda is the breadwinner in her family, sending money home to help her two younger sisters with their tuition fees in school.

- She is assigned to the housekeeping department working from 11.00pm to 7.00am.
- She earns P164 (AUD\$9.11) per day, slightly more than the minimum wage but less than the daily cost of living. Rhoda also earns a service charge of about P\$2,000 (AUD\$111.11) per month.
- She rents a room in a boarding house nearby for P1,700 (AUD\$94.44) per month.

Rhoda is the treasurer of a local enterprise union under GLOWHRAIN (Genuine Labor Organization of Workers of Hotel, Restaurant and Allied Industries). GLOWHRAIN is affiliated with the trade union centre *Kilusang Mayo Uno* (KMU).

Along with most of the workers she went back on duty when the Department of Labor & Employment (DOLE) ordered a return to work, but they still held the picket in front of Swagman for 24 hours.



Rhoda and other workers from the Swagman picketline joined a lightning picket jointly sponsored by MIGRANTE and GABRIELA in front of the DOLE offices to protest Singapore's execution of Flor Contemplacion.

Photographer: Lito C. Ocampo — Date: April, 1995

Swagman Update

Recently the Philippine Supreme Court has ruled against the union officers' appeal and upheld the decision of the Swagman Hotel management to dismiss them.

Source: KMU letter to PAUL, September 29, 1995

REPORT FROM PASG-WA

from: Peter Stewart,
Christian Centre for Social Action

LOTS OF TIME has been spent on finalising our tour to the Philippines. Participants will have two briefing sessions to complete before flying out in December. Recently I was advised that we would be welcomed at the airport in Manila by the Aytas from Mt Pinatubo. We will spend nearly a week with the Aytas as part of our exposure. The tour promises to be a wonderful opportunity to build solidarity with those who are struggling to build justice and peace in this land of contrasts.

The Aytas are tribal Filipinos who used to live around Mt Pinatubo which is north of Manila. As you are probably aware Mt Pinatubo exploded with devastating force in 1991 and the Aytas were forced to flee their homes and land. Funds raised by people in Perth have helped the Aytas resettle on new land. For some years now the Philippines-Australia Solidarity Group have held a Christmas party to raise funds for the Aytas.

(*Action News*, No. 9, Nov 95, newsletter of the Christian Centre for Social Action, 44 Denis St, Subiaco WA. Phone/Fax: (09)381 2474)

Filipino Unionists Murdered

This final quarter of 1995 has witnessed violent retaliation against workers in the Philippines. Two union leaders were gunned down.

OCT 20 - RODOLFO BELLO shot in the stomach and twice in the throat as he was about to enter the premises of Foremost Farms Inc. Bello was the Executive Vice-President of Samahan ng Manggagawa sa Foremost (SMF). The union believes management had a hand in the killing.

NOV 12 - RUFO GIRAY was shot in the head outside the gates of Worldwide Paper Mills Inc. by a company security guard. Giray was president of the local labor union which has been on strike for over four months.

Contact Philippines Australia Union Link for information on how you can express your concern for trade union rights in the Philippines.

PAUL, PO Box A671, Sydney South NSW 2000

For a copy of the KMU 12th International Solidarity Affair conference paper – April 29/May 8, 1995, send \$2.50 to SPAN, c/- CPCA, 84 Park Rd, Woolloongabba Qld 4102 to cover the copying & postage of this 15-page report or contact PAUL in Sydney (address above).

Oil Price Hike Creates Chaos

Graphic: From *Ibong Malaya*, RCPC/KAPATID, 1981

PUBLIC TRANSPORT was paralysed in several cities and provinces on September 21 during nationwide rallies in the Philippines protesting high food prices and an impending oil price increase. Timed with the 23rd anniversary of the declaration of martial law, the protests were also directed at what rally leaders called "creeping" government repression. The protests were most intense in cities and provinces in Mindanao, Bicol and the Visayas.

MINDANAO: In Iligan City, thousands of drivers and other demonstrators blocked roads, burned tires and toppled an electric post along the national highway. An elderly protester was injured when Iligan police, using a bulldozer and an armoured personnel carrier, tried to lift a barricade. "We are starving. The government has failed us," demonstrators chanted.

Only 65 per cent of shops and restaurants in the city of 280,000 stayed open and government offices maintained skeletal work forces. Even private vehicles stayed off the streets. Only a few pedicabs plied their routes. Several cars and trucks were stalled after their tires were punctured by spikes planted in the streets.

Roads between Cagayan de Oro and Iligan were closed because of burning tires and barricades. About 350 people stoked a fire in the middle of the highway.

In Cagayan de Oro City, an hour's drive from Iligan, about 5,000 demonstrators marched for 10 kilometres from Lumbia airport to the city center. Hundreds formed human barricades to block traffic. At least 900 policemen were deployed to prevent violence. "No Rice, No Peace," the marchers chanted. Their ranks included workers, students, professionals and Roman Catholic priests and nuns.

Consumers have been angry since rice prices rose sharply in July. Agriculture officials blamed a drought, but critics blamed government mismanagement and supply manipulation by greedy traders.

Protesters also denounced the recommendation made by an advisory council of lawmakers and Cabinet members for a 64-centavo-per-liter increase in the price of oil products.

METRO MANILA: Education officials fearing chaos in the streets, suspended classes at all levels. Nathaniel Santiago, secretary general of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (BAYAN), accused education officials of suspending classes to prevent students from taking part in protest activities.



ANGELES CITY: Thousands joined the protest actions paralysing transport and various businesses. A three-hour brownout coincided with the demonstrations. Tricycle drivers barricaded the main road of the city's largest district.

BICOL: Students, office workers and other commuters, particularly in Albay, Sorsogon and Legazpi City were stranded. Legazpi City council, police and the navy sent out government vehicles to give free rides to travellers.

NEGROS OCC.: Protest actions in Bacolod were led by the Hugpong Nationalist Alliance and the Concerned Christians Against Price Increase. Organizers claimed support from the church. Demonstrators converged at the City Plaza. The main issues raised were the impending oil price increase, proposed changes in the Constitution and the plight of Sarah Balabagan and other Filipino overseas workers.

The National Federation of Sugar Workers-Food and General Trades declared support for the protest actions and took the occasion to assail the "exploitative and oppressive hacienda system" in Negros.

PANAY: An alliance of non-governmental and people's organisations calling itself the United Sectors Against Price Increases and Nukes spearheaded a multi-sectoral rally in Kalibo, Aklan. George Calaro, ad-hoc spokesman for the alliance, said the Ramos administration appeared bent on granting the oil companies' petition for a price increase despite strong opposition from consumers.

FROM REPORTS IN THE *PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER*

MISS ASIA-PACIFIC

A 21 YEAR OLD South Korean cellist won the Miss Asia-Pacific beauty crown, beating contestants from 26 other countries. Miss Jung Yoon, a student of classical music at Kyung Buk University in Seoul said through an interpreter during the selection interview that the role of women in modern times is *"to give the best to her husband as this is the role of women always"*.

The Philippines has been the host of the Miss Asia-Pacific pageant for two consecutive years.

SEE FRONT COVER STORY THIS ISSUE

RAMOS LASHES BACK AT IMELDA

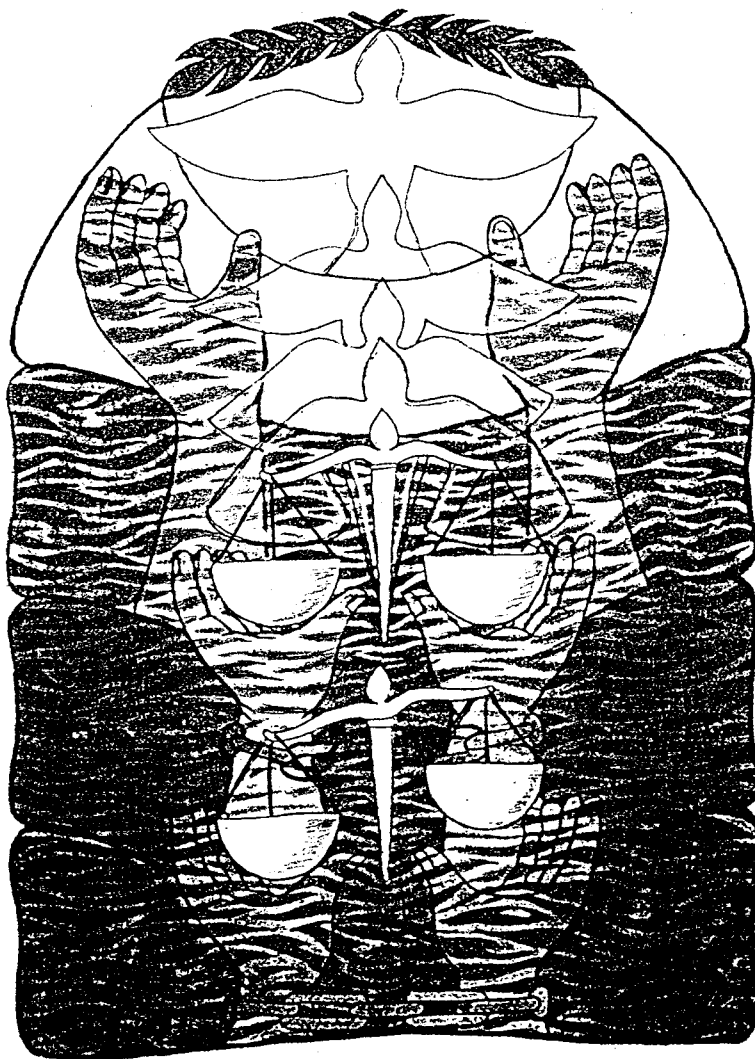
PHILIPPINE PRESIDENT Fidel Ramos attacked Leyte congresswoman, Imelda Marcos, for accusing him and Senator Juan Ponce Enrile of human rights violations during her late husband's reign. President Ramos argued that Mrs Marcos' accusation was meant to divert attention from her family's refusal to negotiate with the government regarding her family's 365 million pesos worth Swiss account and *their* human rights violations.

It will be recalled that a court in Hawaii ruled in favour of the victims in a class action suit they filed against the Marcoses for human rights violations. Under that judgement, the victims were entitled to more than 1 billion US dollars in indemnity.

During the Marcos era, Ramos was head of the now defunct Philippine Constabulary/Integrated National Police (PC/INP) while Senator Enrile was Minister for National Defense.

At a press conference President Ramos confirmed a statement made by Senator Enrile recently that the Letter of Instruction No. 776 issued by then president Ferdinand Marcos prevented them from taking a hands-on management of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the PC/INP. Mr Ramos also pointed out that Marcos even turned the Presidential Security Command (PSC) into a powerful and all-encompassing fifth major service to the AFP. The PSC then received direct orders from former AFP chief Gen. Fabian Ver, a relative and known loyalist of the former president. Enrile in his statement said that he could not even relieve a sergeant or a lieutenant without presidential clearance.

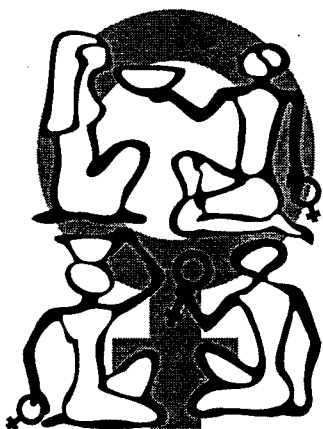
The Struggle for Justice is the Struggle for Peace



The Struggle for Justice is the Struggle for Peace artwork in this poster was chosen from entries of Filipino school-age youth who joined the poster making contest sponsored by the Ecumenical Movement for Justice and Peace (EMJP) in 1990. This mini-poster reflects the worldwide struggle for a lasting and enduring peace based on justice.

The poster is sold by Amnesty International–Philippines. Amnesty International is an independent worldwide movement working for the international protection of human rights. It seeks the release of men and women detained anywhere because of their beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic origin, language or religious creed, provided they have not used or advocated violence. These are termed *prisoners of conscience*. Amnesty works for fair and prompt trials for *all political prisoners* and on behalf of such people detained without charge or trial. It opposes the death penalty and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of all prisoners.

**Amnesty International–Philippines, 114 Scout
Limbaga, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.**



REPORT FROM AOTEAROA

Australasian Women's Delegation Confronts Flesh Merchants

BY CALLY SOMMERVILLE

Cally Sommerville of Auckland was the sole New Zealander of the 15-strong Australasian women's delegation that travelled to the Philippines in June-July 1995, to investigate the thriving sex tourism industry, specifically that run by and aimed at Australian men. The Campaign Against Sex Tourism and Trafficking in Filipino Women (CAST) study tour achieved considerable media coverage in both Australia and the Philippines and led to official promises of "crackdowns", plus President Ramos ordered a probe. This is a condensed version of Cally's report originally printed in *KAPATIRAN* No.6, Sept 1995.

ANGELES CITY & 'THE BONANZA INCIDENT'

Angeles City is about 80km north of Metro Manila, and was the site of the US Clark Air Base. With military conflict in Asia escalating during the Cold War period, and particularly the Vietnam war, the Philippines became an important strategic location for US military interests as well as economic. The R&R industry grew rapidly and prostitution became rife. Clark Air Base was the major revenue earner for Angeles City, providing direct employment of local Filipinos within the base, and indirect employment such as jeepney drivers, bars, hotels, food stalls and, of course, 'entertainment' services.

When the US military withdrew in 1991, not without assistance to anti-base activists by the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo that year, the talk of the town was for the base to be converted into alternative forms of livelihood for locals of Angeles City. Unfortunately the local government has done little to provide alternative livelihood schemes for women working in the entertainment industry, apart from suggestions of creating a technical institute where women can learn sewing and food processing skills.

We visited the Mayor's office and asked officials about the situation of women working in the industry; what they were doing for the women since the US military had withdrawn; what their plans for the city were, including the Base Conversion Plan; their policies on foreign investment and tourism, amongst other potentially embarrassing questions. One of the councillors, the only woman elected to local government in Angeles at present (I believe), and thankfully a feminist, has been delegated the task of dealing with prostitution. The ignorance of most of the male officials on women's issues was appallingly obvious, and Ms. Pineda has a large and difficult task ahead of her.

Angeles City's development plans are a good example of the constraints and contradictions inherent in a Third World country, which is disadvantaged and dependent in the world economy. Angeles City is desperate for any form of income that might help boost its stagnant economy. Angeles is obviously impoverished, with few resources available for social spending.

For instance, we visited a resettlement site for victims of the Mt Pinatubo eruption. Two thousand families live on a block of land without sanitation, running water or electricity, in shacks built out of salvaged scraps of wood and plastic. One midwife serves the whole community, and a doctor visits once a year. The local government has to date (since 1991), devoted no resources to these people. Ironically, a bridge is continuously being built and rebuilt using Japanese development aid. The bridge lies across a river bed, dried up due to continuous flows of lahar [volcanic debris] brought down by rains from the slopes of Mt Pinatubo. Every time it rains the bridge is swept away, but they keep on rebuilding it. I saw brand new flashy Japanese trucks transporting materials for the building of this bridge which was about 500 metres from the resettlement site.

It seems these resources could be better used in improving the immediate conditions of the resettlement victims. In addition many of the women from the resettlement site, and also from Manila's Ermita district (an infamous red-light district from which prostitutes were forced out), have subsequently relocated to Angeles City in search of work in the bars.

Planners are touting Angeles City as a destination for tourists and also for expatriate retirees. Overseas businesses are setting up 'retirement villages' for foreign men. Some of these 'retirees' are as 'old' as 35 years! I doubt very much that expatriate women are being targeted by these companies as retirees, but local women are served as attractive sexual fodder for economic development.

I spoke with an Australian expatriate living in Angeles City about his choice of destination. He is married to an ex-bar girl, has two children to her, supports her sister and children, lives in a palatial residence by local standards, and employs servants – all on an Australian pension. He likes the caring, sweet nature of Filipinas, unlike the "demanding", "mean" nature of "white women". Bruce [not his real name] lives like a king in Angeles City, with a wife who is devoid of feminist consciousness or demands.

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Women's Delegation Confronts Flesh Merchants

◀ *Continued from Page 5*

As a tourist destination it is hard to see what Angeles City could possibly have to offer. A few hours in the city and it becomes obvious. Angeles City has been, and remains, set up for sex. I doubt that there are any 'family' hotels in the whole of the city. I was not prepared for the extent of the sex industry in Angeles City, envisioning the bars as sex shops, but not the hotels as well. By the end of our stay I felt that there was no place for women like myself in Angeles City. When I asked an expatriate if he thought I could find a place there in Angeles, he looked at me as if I was mad, but was unable to articulate to me that Angeles is run by men for men, and that women are there to sexually serve men as docile wives or as whores.

Another plan Angeles City has for its economic development is the conversion of Clark Air Base into an international airport. A Japanese company has won the contract for a bullet rail system which will transport arrivals to Manila. Obviously foreign arrivals might be tempted by Angeles City's main tourist attraction – sex tourism.

Whilst local officials point out that prostitution is illegal in the city, they appeared to have done little real analysis of, and planning for, the problem of the prostitution of women and children. Indeed, I drew the conclusion that despite official disparagement of prostitution, in reality it is tolerated and even covertly encouraged, as it provides foreign exchange (mostly for the bar and hotel operators – little for the women), and can be considered as the city's main development strategy. While the city planners acknowledged our assertion that foreign operators were exploiting local women and children, their plans for the rehabilitation of prostitutes were to insert them

THE CAST DELEGATION LEAVING THE BONANZA (PHOTO: D. WALL)



into other foreign-owned businesses, or to train them to work in the new Clark Special Economic Zone. Like other workers in export processing zones these women will be subject to super-exploitation by capital.

We inadvertently discovered how organised the industry is internationally, and specifically that there is syndicated Australian activity in the 'entertainment industry' in the Philippines, when we were wrongfully ejected from the hotel we had checked into in Angeles City.

The Bonanza Hotel is run by a particularly good example of the stereotype of an Australasian male who practices his sexist entrepreneurial skills in Third World countries, at the expense of impoverished and hospitable Filipino women and children. Gary Griffin is married to a Filipina and has at some time been resident in Australia. Pictures of familiar Australian scenes such as the Sydney Opera House adorn his hotel. Thus, initially we mistook him for an Australian, but we subsequently found out from the Australian Federal Police (AFP) that Griffin is a New Zealand national. It was also reported to me by one of the AFP that New Zealanders run bars in the Philippines. I am currently trying to find out more from the NZ Embassy in Manila.

I was confronted by Mr Griffin as we left the hotel. During our conversation he implied that he could get away with sexual harassment as "that is what we call friendliness here in the Philippines", and showed to me how

threatened he is by feminism in the West. He said, "I don't want white women in my hotel because white women don't like white men, so now we're even."

All the other Australian men I spoke with had similar attitudes. They implied that they could operate with impunity in the Philippines. One hotel resort owner said that one reason he enjoyed owning an island resort in the Philippines was that he was free from police interference. Many complained about divorces from Australian wives, especially of matrimonial settlements, and praised the loving, caring and humble nature of the Filipina. In short, these men are escaping feminist challenges in the West and fell free to exploit the position of women in the Philippines where they can live like little kings.

We filed charges of harassment against Gary Griffin with the help of Ms Pineda. And after we held a press conference, Mr Griffin's name received bad publicity in the national press. He is reported to have vanished from Angeles City. This suggests to me that he has something to hide and is not running just a 'hotel'. At the police headquarters, which was an eye-opener (and I've got some hilarious slides including a 'rogues gallery', and a nice one of a para-military CAFGU complete with machine gun and a cap with Australian flag on it – wonder what he got that in payment for?), I was struck by the lack of resources – one telephone and two old typewriters.

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APUAO GRANDE ISLAND RESORT

We travelled to this 80 hectare island in the Bicol region where the local people have been retained, pushed to one end, as they supply fish and very cheap labour. They work as gardeners, maids, cleaners, cooks, waitresses and bar girls, and domestics for the little kings resident in their large and palatial residences. By contrast the local villagers live in tiny little huts, buy bottled water from Mercedes - a 40 minute ride on an outrigger - and although proud and apparently well-nourished they live incredibly simply, and are being exploited by the Australasian neo-imperialists. All around the island you can see the beautifully swept paths and tended gardens, at the expense of local drudgery.

While we were there, there was only a handful of tourists. They were all Australian men accompanied by prostitutes they had hired for the week from Angeles City. The young women all dreamed of eventually being married and rescued by foreign men. They complained of Australian men's stinginess in comparison to American men. We noted the tourists' patronising, sexist and racist treatment of the staff, and of the women with the same contempt. For instance, they were repeatedly calling the women lazy, dishonest thieves. One ocker threatened to call the police over the price of a piece of toast; another patronisingly showed a woman "how to walk". The men were constantly saying, "you Filipinos are such and such" - it was all very patronising and generally abusive.

In the barrio we talked with a local woman. Her very young children were reading comics which to me were shocking indications of the socialisation of young girls into a double standard of sexuality, and a general acceptance of prostitution. In one comic, stories depicted lesbians being

beaten by men, a women finally marrying a man who beat her as she realised she loved him, and a woman trapped in a syndicate. In the "sexi-syndikat" story the pimp was arrested by police but in the end, the woman was blamed for tempting the men!! These really shocked me.

OUTCOMES

On the completion of our investigations, we held a dialogue with some local and national government officials, and also held a press conference. As a result of the ensuing publicity which embarrassed the government, President Ramos ordered an investigation into the extent of foreign involvement in prostitution in the Philippines. He and several local government officials charged with the task, have ordered "crackdowns" on establishments suspected of prostituting women and children. Unfortunately the Angeles City police strategy is not targeting the men who prostitute women and 41 women were arrested instead.

We noted a trend of very young girls in bars, with reports from prostitutes' groups that the average age of the girls is declining and expected to be about 10-12 years over the next decade. I myself spoke to one child in a bar who would have not been aged more than 12 years old.

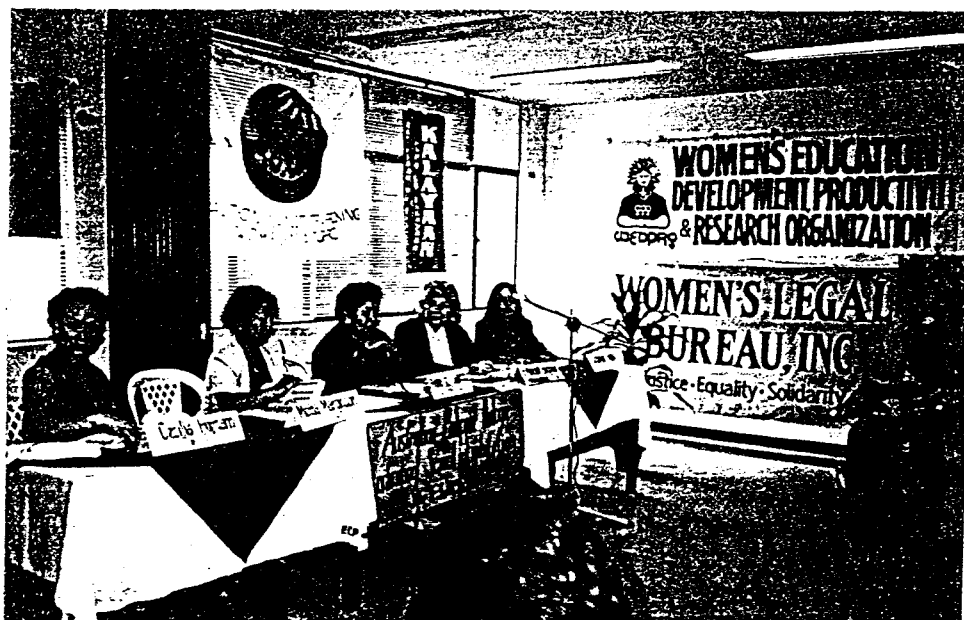
I think it is important to stress that in the Philippines, and one can safely assume globally, the majority of children who are prostituted are girls.

Since New Zealand has recently passed a law which allows paedophiles to be prosecuted for crimes they commit overseas, we should press the Government to launch its own investigation.

At present I believe there is only one NZ police officer stationed in the whole of Asia (in Bangkok) so clearly more resources need to be committed to give the new legislation teeth. In the public consciousness there appears to be a general idea that paedophiles are adults who have 'sexual preferences' for minors. Unfortunately paedophiles, like rapists, are viewed as abnormal, pathological individuals. Many men who prostitute women and girls do not have preferences solely for minors. They could be 'opportunistic' paedophiles - those who, because of the prevalence of child prostitution in Third World countries, view it as somehow being okay. One Australian tourist said to me, "this is how it is here".

The sexual exploitation of women and girls is not just multiple and unrelated occurrences of sick individuals, nor is prostitution merely a contract between two individuals. We mustn't overlook that sexual exploitation is a political issue, although liberals, including some feminists, would have us believe not. Prostitution and sexual exploitation and abuse is crosscut by class, race and gender. Women and children in the Philippines are at the intersection of patriarchal, neo-colonial, racist and class oppression.

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Australian-Philippine Dialogue: Confronting Sexual Exploitation, Photo: D. WALL, July 3, 1995

"TO RESIST IS TO WIN"

—XANANA GUSMAO

Rallies, church services, marches, and vigils were attended by thousands of people across Australia on November 11 & 12 to remember the day four years ago when Indonesian soldiers were deployed to Santa Cruz Cemetery in Dili, East Timor on a mission of massacre. The following message of solidarity was read by Emere Distor at the Brisbane rally on behalf of CPCA.

NOT A LOT OF Filipinos knew what happened to East Timor in 1975. During the same period the Philippines was under Martial Law and all media in our country was monitored and controlled by the Marcoses cronies. There seemed to be a silent code being practised by Indonesia and Philippines as far as human rights violations were concerned. If Suharto would not tell, neither would Marcos.

When I arrived in Australia in 1991, the first rally I attended was a protest condemning the Dili massacre. I did not realise that the Philippines and East Timor shared similarities in our colonial histories. We are the only two peoples in the region that were colonised by the two competing Iberian powers— Spain and Portugal. We share similarities in our peoples' religion — 90% of the Timorese are Catholics, and 80% of Filipinos are, I think, Catholics.

Last year, the Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor (APCET) was held in Manila. The Indonesian Government, upon learning that the conference will invite Timorese personalities and international activists, pressured President Ramos to issue an order banning the entry of many participants. The intention of Indonesia was, of course, to stop the Conference. The Ramos government gave in to Indonesia's wishes. In addition to the ban-list, Ramos issued a circular to all airlines that they would be held liable if they allowed persons on the ban-list to board their planes.

The wobbly-knee approach of the Ramos government to Indonesia's bullying had yet to satisfy the people in Jakarta. According to Renato Constantino, Chairman of the Philippines Convenor Group of APCET, the Indonesian government sent an emissary to him to discuss Indonesia's side regarding the Conference.

In my interview with Renato Constantino in Manila, a month after the controversial conference, Constantino recalled how the meeting went:

"It was an extended lunch meeting that lasted for more than 3 hours. The meeting was cordial and friendly, but of course we

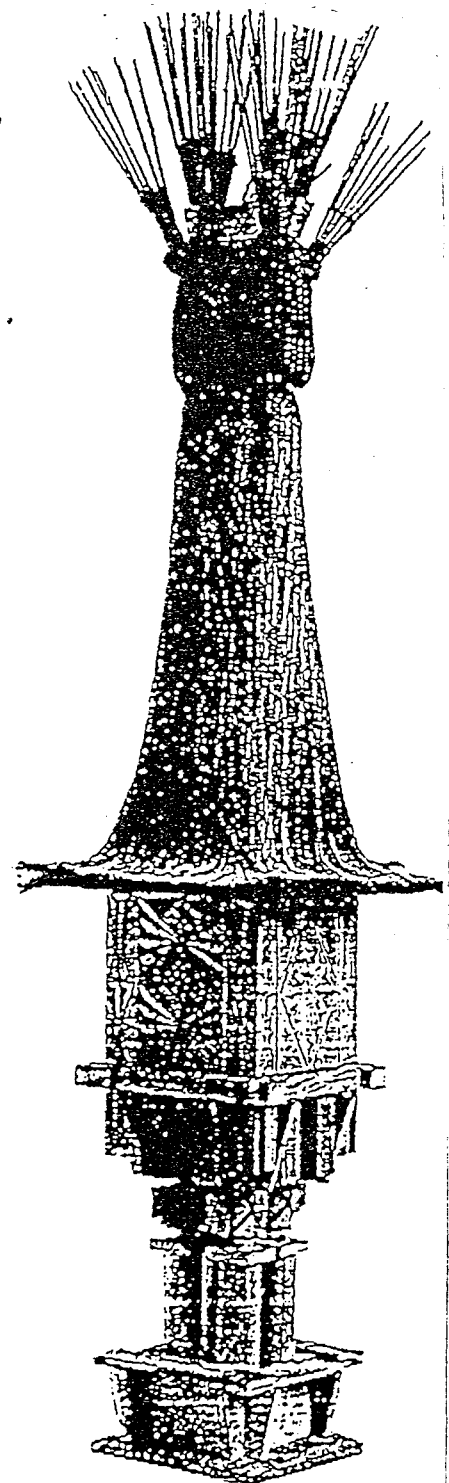
did not manage to convince each other of our respective positions... The Indonesian official was naturally saddened that they could not put a stop to the conference."

As a parting shot, Constantino indicated to the Indonesian official to relay to his boss, Minister Ali Alatas, that their friends in the Philippine government tried to accommodate Indonesia. But since he is not a member of the Philippine government nor a friend of any Indonesian official, the APCET conference would push through as planned.

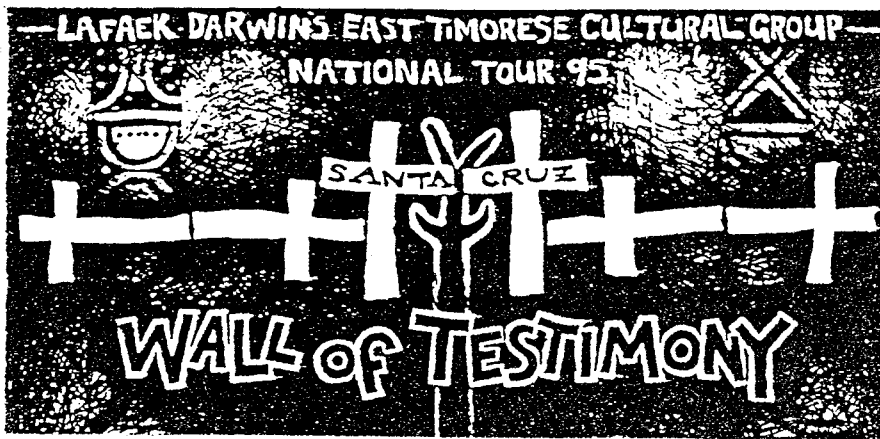
The kowtowing of the Ramos government to Indonesia's wishes did not come as a surprise to Filipinos. Mr Ramos was one of the engineers of Martial Law. It was Martial Law that pushed a lot of young people to go to the countryside and join the liberation movement. It was Martial Law and its soldiers that killed thousands of lives and cultivated the culture of fear, of anger, of resistance among Filipino people.

For twenty years the Filipino peoples have lived a miserable and oppressive existence under the Marcos-US dictatorship. Although I am wondering why Imelda Marcos was elected in the Senate, may I assure you that the majority of the Filipinos would rather see her off to Hawaii once again.

On behalf of the Centre for Philippine Concerns-Australia, I am extending our solidarity with the East Timorese. We believe that 20 years is too long. We are not only supporting your struggle but we are also supporting your dreams.



Graphic: *The Church & East Timor*, Catholic Commission for Justice Development & Peace, 1993



PRESENTED BY LAFAEK TIMORESE ASSOCIATION ON NATIONAL TOUR FROM DARWIN TO BRISBANE, CANBERRA, WOLLONGONG, SYDNEY, MELBOURNE, HOBART, LAUNCESTON, PENGUIN, ADELAIDE, ALICE SPRINGS, PERTH AND FREMANTLE, NOV 2 - DEC 10, 1995.

WALL OF TESTIMONY began as an idea which was discussed between Lafaek Timorese Association and the Uniting Church in Australia. It was well over a year ago that Joy Balazo, Bong Ramilo (CPCA/SPAN members) and Lafaek people sat together to discuss this project.

Lafaek was founded in 1984 and *Wall of Testimony* is the Association's fifth play. Others were: *Simply Mother* ('86), *Death at Balibo* ('88), *Encontro Cultural* ('88), and *Spirits Pray Freedom* ('91). *Spirits Pray Freedom* won a national award – Best Drama Program, at the Community Broadcasters Conference and received a merit for Best Ethnic Program from the BASF/Public Broadcasting Association.

"As an Association we seek to maintain, promote and develop East Timorese Cultural identity. We find theatre to be exciting because it can accommodate different art forms, bring together a wide range of people and deal with a whole range of issues.

"As a people who have suffered cultural and physical genocide at the hands of the Indonesian military regime, issues of culture, democracy, human rights, justice and peace have taken on a special significance. In exile we are largely concerned with raising awareness of the broader community about these issues.

"*Wall of Testimony* provides us with an opportunity to reach a wider audience in various parts of Australia. We look forward to this challenge and we hope that the national tour will vent the urgent concerns of the East Timorese people through the direct expression of these concerns using our artistic skills." - *Lafaek Association*.

Since Indonesia invaded East Timor on 7 December 1975, more than 250,000 people have been killed (over a third of the entire population). Twenty years later the genocide continues.

On Tuesday, 12 November 1991, the mass of the 15th day for the soul of Sebastiao Gomes, killed on October 8 by the Indonesian soldiers, was celebrated at the Moteal Church. After the mass a procession formed and moved towards the Santa Cruz Cemetery.

The procession rapidly turned into a mixture of a religious and political demonstration. When they crossed the centre of the town the procession grew bigger and bigger. It was joined by people who came out of offices, schools and houses along the way. The intensity and the excitement increased as more and more demonstrators defied the restrictions and raised their voices in

protests shouting 'Viva Sebastiao', 'Viva Timor Leste', 'Viva Independencia'.

This show of defiance was remarkable given that the right to free assembly and freedom of expression are denied by the occupying force and carry the death penalty. The fact that these people were demonstrating in the streets and shouting criticisms of Indonesia, constituted a serious challenge to the State's rule of terror.

When the crowd arrived at the cemetery, there were no soldiers to be seen. In all there were between 3,000 to 5,000 people near the entrance and the area between the walls was full to bursting point.

Shortly after, as the procession was entering the cemetery, a green lorry appeared and began unloading the armed soldiers. The soldiers marched, determined, in well-ordered ranks at a slow disciplined pace. Then they formed a line and started jogging towards the demonstrators. In the crowd, many people seemed paralysed with shock while others tried to get away slowly. The soldiers placed themselves facing the crowd, raised their rifles and began systematically to kill the Timorese. They opened fire for three minutes, reloaded, and continued to shoot. About a thousand rounds were fired.

The massacre did not stop at the entrance to the cemetery. It was extended to the rest of the town because the information services had a long list of suspects. Days after executions and disappearances were reported in Lospalos, Baicau, Fatumaca, Osu, Viqueque, Suai, Zumalai, Ainaro, Maubisse and Maliana.

Three days after Santa Cruz, another massacre took place in Be-Mussi, on the outskirts of Dili. More than 80 people were executed and buried in mass graves.

The East Timor saga is one of the worst crimes perpetrated against an entire people and race this century. It will continue if it is allowed to be backed by international complicity, indifference and cynicism of many democratic governments such as the United States, Britain and Australia.

This page: Text and graphic reproduced from the *Wall of Testimony* National Tour '95 programme.

Women's Delegation Confronts Flesh Merchants

◀ Continued from Page 7

NZ sex tourists need to be targeted, educated and warned that they are probably committing a crime if they prostitute young women in Asia, who are more often than not, underage. They can also be reminded that Pakeha NZ has undergone huge political and spiritual upheavals as we examine our own legacies of imperialism and colonial exploits. It is not okay for anyone to therefore take their imperialistic exploits offshore.

The Campaign Against Sex Tourism's analysis of prostitution is very clear. It is sexual exploitation of women by men, and ranks alongside other crimes of violence against women including rape, domestic violence and sexual harassment. Poverty (or the lack of poverty) is not a justification for sexual violence against women. CAST also believes that age is irrelevant, and all prostitution, including that of children, is a violation of human rights. Clearly the actions of the Angeles City police and local government, are ignorant, and are targeting the victims rather than the perpetrators. The perpetrators are the men (and a minority of women) who procure, pimp and protect for prostitution rackets, and the 'clients' (better seen as the prostitutes) who should be the targets of police and government activities.

Recently two men were arrested and charged with keeping Asian women by force for the purpose of prostitution here in Auckland. Sexual slavery charges involving the use of Asian women have been brought before in this country, and thus the issue of trafficking in Asian women is not limited

to Australia. Nor does it remain in the Philippines or Thailand, or in Cambodia where it has been noted to have increased since UN peacekeeping forces arrived in 1991. New Zealand is involved in the international trafficking of women. In Auckland there is a brothel called the Subai Bar which provides exclusively "exotic Asian girls". Asian women's impoverished economic position is exploited here in our country, and will be tolerated for as long as prostitution is regarded as something that pathological women do; for as long as prostitution is okay for adults but not for children; for as long as prostitution is seen as "work"; and especially for as long as the issue of prostitution is focused on women and not on men.

KAPATIRAN is the newsletter of Philippines Solidarity Network of Aotearoa (PSNA). Annual subscription: NZ\$15. Contact: PSNA, Box 2450, Christchurch, New Zealand.

PEDOfile

From ECPAT NEWS

- The Commonwealth Attorney General's Department is currently investigating ways to prevent the traffic of Asian women and children for the purposes of prostitution. Extensive consultations with the relevant Government departments, both State and Federal, are being conducted to identify strategies.

- The Federal Police have recommended to the Director of Public Prosecutions that an Australian diplomat be charged under the child sex tourism legislation for having sex with teenagers whilst serving overseas. It is believed that this evidence arose from a Federal Police investigation concerning Australian diplomatic staff in Asia and allegations of paedophile activity. The investigations were conducted in both Australia and overseas and it is believed that the police have seized material. The

DPP is currently evaluating the evidence and will decide whether to lay charges in the near future.

- The 11th assembly of the World Tourism Organisation in Cairo adopted for the first time a resolution to fight 'sex tourism'.

- A World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children will be held in Stockholm, Sweden on 27-31 August 1996. Organised by the Swedish Government, UNICEF, ECPAT, the NGO Group on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and several other consultants and

international organisations, the Congress will bring together some 1000 participants from governments, the UN, tourism industry representatives, and NGOs.

- in line with ECPAT-International, the Australian campaign is currently reviewing its future. As 1996 draws closer various perspectives emerge. One view is that ECPAT has achieved what it set out to do and should wind up by the end of '96; another is that it should continue in some form as there is still work to be done. There is also the proposal for it to broaden its mandate along with the International campaign. We are all invited to participate in this dialogue. Contact the Australian campaign.



Graphic: KAPATIRAN 6, Sept 1995

ECPAT News is published by End Child Prostituton in Asian Tourism Australia Inc. Contact: ECPAT-Australia, GPO Box 2593W, Melbourne Vic 3001. Tel: (03) 650 3295.

Child Prostitution Bred by Tourism

By Frank Cimat of *Northern Dispatch*

SAGADA, Mountain Province—In this resort town in the central Cordillera, they call him "Johnny Butterfly." This old man years ago was spotted in the villages of Bangaan and Dalikan asking boys to join him in catching butterflies.

In other places in the Philippines, they know him as "Stephen Mitchell," an oil company consultant and a paedophile who was arrested for sex abuse charges and deported. Mitchell, however, has been spotted in many resort towns in the Philippines.

Paedophilia and other forms of child prostitution are the most tragic but hidden effects of tourism, according to the End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT), an Asian-based non-government organisation.

According to Dolores S. Alforte of ECPAT Philippines, the Department of Social Welfare and Development reported only nine cases of sexual abuse by paedophiles last year. "They are much more than that," Alforte said. "Many victims are not willing to report to DSWD." She said that child prostitution is on the rise not only in the Philippines but in the whole of Asia. "Many resort to child prostitution as an escape from poverty but tourism has also much to do with it."

According to ECPAT, there are in Asia at least one million child prostitutes (or prostituted children). "In most societies, prostitution usually implies some degree of consensual action by the prostitute. With children, this does not occur. There is no consent and the child is always the victim, the one who is prostituted and the one who is held in bondage," ECPAT international co-ordinator Ron O'Grady said.

In the Philippines, there are 60,000 child prostitutes; in India, around 400,000 to 500,000; China from 200,000 to 500,000 and Thailand, 200,000. Pakistan has about 40,000; Taiwan, 70,000; Sri Lanka, 15,000; Vietnam, 6000; and Cambodia, 2000.

Alforte cited the cases of Pagsanjan and Puerto Galera which were once the hubs of child prostitution particularly paedophilia. "In Pagsanjan, there were 500-600 foreign visitors in this small town and 2000 on

weekends. Half of these were paedophiles," she said. "In Puerto Galera, a foreign foundation giving scholarship funds to children in Puerto Galera was stopped when the scholars including indigenous Mangayans were found to have contracted sexually-transmitted diseases," Alforte added.

Bing Damaso of the Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute said that based on their research, 83 per cent of all foreign tourists were unaccompanied males below 40 years old which indicates that sexual tourism is still strong. "DOT for a while was trying to promote packages for foreign lady executives but that is not the point," Damaso said. "Sex tourism will exist until the structures for sex tourism are dismantled."

Although Pagsanjan has been delisted from the Department of Tourism's preferred spots and the "scholarship foundation" in Puerto Galera stopped, child prostitution in the Philippines has not waned.

In fact, Alforte said, with the Tourism Master Plan finalised in 1991, child prostitution may be encouraged. The TMP envisions five tourism clusters in Palawan, La Union, Metro Manila, Bohol and Davao. Alforte said that tourism facilities in these areas will not be owned by local people but by foreign investors and their Filipino partners.

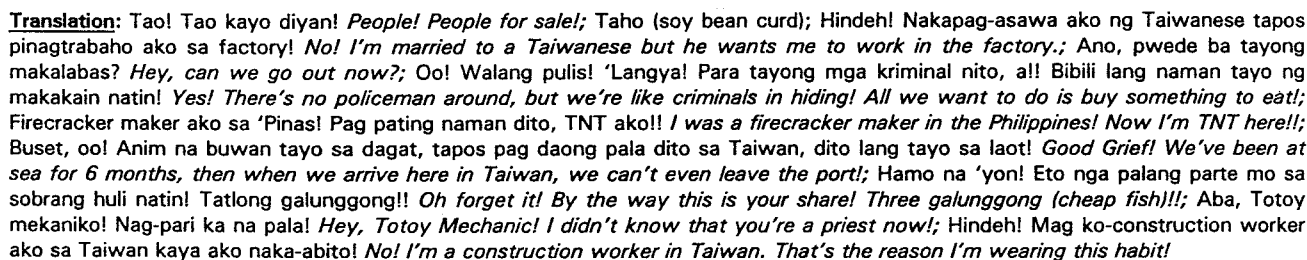
"Second, while the TMP places strong emphasis on preserving the physical environment and on cultural tourism, nothing was said on how to prepare the people of the different tourist destinations for the changes that tourism and the arrival of peoples with different cultural values will bring," Alforte said.

"Moreover, there is no guarantee that to reach the expected revenues from tourism, the Ramos administration will not encourage sex tourism. The notoriety of Pagsanjan, Subic and Angeles City and the Ermita district, to name a few places in the country, only attest to the fact that sex tourism was tolerated. Why should Tourism Secretary Vicente Carlos say that Manila has finally shed its reputation of being the sex capital of Asia if it never was before?"



Graphic: ECPAT-Philippines

ECPAT-Philippines
PO Box 44-94,
UP Shopping Center,
1101 Diliman, Quezon City,
Philippines.
Tele/Fax: (632) 991676



CHOICE

It is not without pain
that I sweat
for the courage to make a choice:
I feel you within me,
mass of blood that could be life,
that could be the lifeblood of my existence.

It is not without loneliness
that I cry
as I hope that my choice does not waver:
I shall let them suck you from my womb,
and leave my arms empty,
and my nipples dry.

It is not without guilt,
that I bleed,
even as I stand up for my choice:
I may still ache for you,
days, months, years after today,
as I find myself with neither husband nor child,
a woman alone.

Yet, as men, and yes, as fellow women,
who have become my judge and jury,
compare and contrast me,
with sinful Eve banished from paradise,
and Mary the Virgin, conceiving without sin,
even with this pain, this loneliness, this guilt,
I choose to make this choice for me.

By JOI BARRIOS

Graphic: *Gabriela Women's Update*, 1990



About the Author: Joi Barrios teaches Philippine Literature and Creative Writing at the University of the Philippines. She is also a theatre artist.

Filipino OCWs in Japan

by Emere Distor — Part one

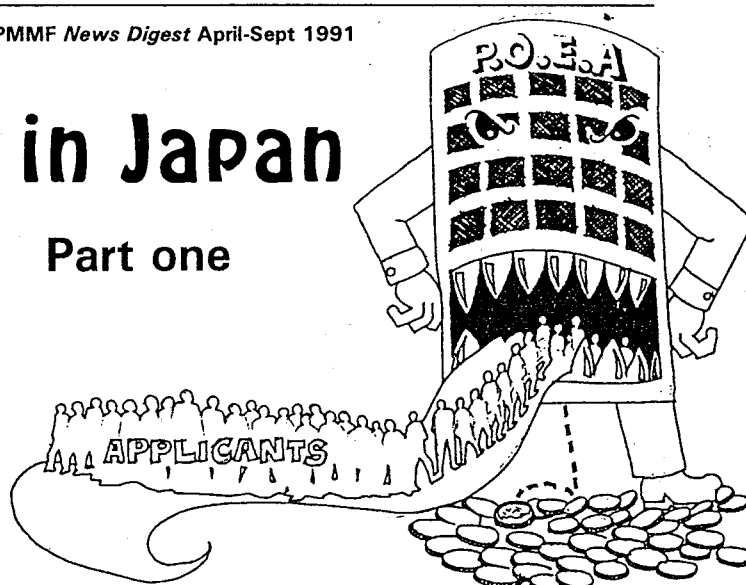
AS A RESULT of the Reparation Commission agreement between Japan and the Philippines, Filipino domestic helpers joined the Philippine diplomats' households in the 50s. They became steady household fixtures until the 70s when a new migrant labor trend began to surface.¹ From 1975 to 1990, Japan has become the major country of destination for a growing number of Filipino workers.

In 1992, the Japanese government estimated Filipino OCWs (overseas contract workers) at 99,000 including approximately 29,000 undocumented Filipino workers. From the period of 1982 to 1989, Filipino residence status in Japan fell under four major categories in this order: 1) temporary visitors; 2) paid entertainers; 3) spouses or children of Japanese nationals; and 4) trainees. In a 1991 data presented by the Labour Attache of the Philippine Embassy in Japan, 84 per cent of the total number of Filipino OCWs are working in the entertainment industry either as dancers, singers, band players, magicians, gay impersonators and other "entertainment-related" jobs.²

The significant number of Filipinos going to Japan to work as entertainers, whatever the job connotes, became the subject of attention in 1991 when two Filipino women mysteriously died three months apart in Fukushima. The deaths of Maricris Sioson, 22, and Cecilia San Miguel, 26, hit media headlines in Manila when relatives of the deceased suspected foul play.

Two months before Maricris Sioson died, her family received a letter from her about her ordeal at the hands of her employer, a certain Mr Keizo Sato, owner of the Faces Supper Club in Fukushima. Maricris Sioson had been to Japan twice but according to her relatives, she had never before experienced being locked up in a room and forced into prostitution. In a phone conversation with her mother three weeks before she died, Maricris urged her relatives to seek help and find a way to bring her home.

On September 24, Maricris Sioson's remains arrived in Manila. Her death certificate issued by the Fukushima Welfare Hospital showed the cause of death as "multiple organ failure and fulminant hepatitis".



Triggered by suspicion and circumstances surrounding Maricris' death, her family brought her body to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI). The NBI found three knife wounds including a five-inch slice inside her left thigh near her crotch and a two-inch deep stab wound just above her sex organ. Both her eyes were blackened while severe bruises and lacerations were found all over her body.³

There was no evidence of a connection between these two deaths but Cecilia San Miguel suffered the same situation as Sioson. Although legally married, Cecilia San Miguel used her maiden name in her passport to acquire employment in Japan, as her recruiter in Manila advised married women were automatically disqualified by Japanese employers. Because of poverty and her daughter's need to have an organ operation, she took the risk and even planned to go back to Japan twice to save up for her child's education. Through the money loaned from friends and relatives, Cecilia left her husband, Philip, and her ailing daughter, Michelle, to work as a cultural dancer in Fukushima.

Her first letter was typical of a newly arrived worker in Japan – full of enthusiasm and optimism. But it was not long before her husband received a call from her promoter in Manila informing him that Cecilia had been ill and was confined at the Watari Hospital in Fukushima, where she died five days later. According to her husband, Cecilia's health had never been a problem and when the agent requested Philip travel to Manila to sign an authorisation for Japanese officials to cremate her body, he sought the help of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) to ship his wife's body home for the traditional funeral. On his request, the NBI conducted an autopsy and found a crack on the back of the skull, and just like Sioson, her body was covered with bruises.⁴

¹ "Japan and the Trends in Migrant Labor", *Asia-Pacific Mission for Migrant Filipinos-Migrants Journal*, Vol. 1 No. 1, October-December 1992, p. 8.

² Piquero-Ballescás, M R, "The Various Contexts of Filipino Labor Migration to Japan", *KASARINLAN*, Vol. 8 No. 4, Second Quarter, 1993, pp. 125-145.

³ "The Sad Journey of Maricris Sioson", *Asia-Pacific Mission for Migrant Filipinos-Migrant Journal*, Vol. 5 Nos. 2-3, April-September 1991, pp. 1&7.

⁴ "Another victim of foul play", *BATIS Centre for Women*, Vol. 2 No. 4, October-December 1991, pp. 2-3.

Since 1989, seven Filipino women have died in Japan and, incidentally each of them, in one way or the other, had worked in the entertainment industry.⁵ But despite all the risks involved, it is still business as usual for the Filipino and Japanese promoters. Recruitment of women to work overseas is never a problem in a poverty-stricken country like the Philippines. Most of these women still believe that going to Japan can make their lives better off by earning more than the average professionals in their own country.

The enthusiasm and need of these women to work in Japan may be so great that they can easily fall prey to promoters who usually negotiate the price of their contracts on the basis of their age and physical appearance. As one Japanese promoter boastfully blurted in an interview, "the younger the better, women over 25 are only good as prostitutes."⁶ Such attitude towards the commodification of women is also shared by a bar manager who does not want girls who refuse to be prostitutes, because a girl who prostitutes herself ensures him up to 70,000 yen a month in commission.⁷

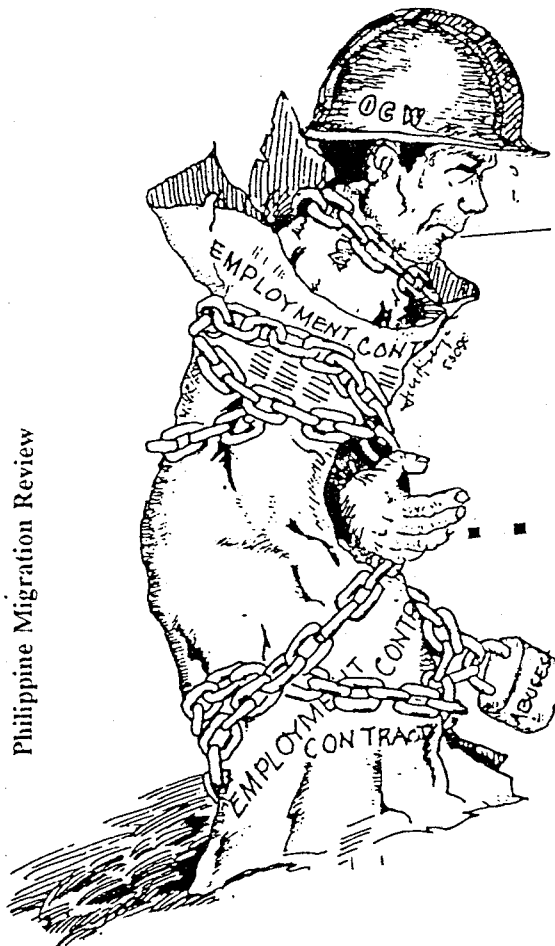
Why Third World women became easy targets for the Japanese sex industry is not because Japan is running out of prostitutes. In fact, even after the anti-prostitution law took effect in 1958, the ever enterprising industry continued to thrive in the guise of bath houses, snack bars, hotels, pink cabarets and restaurants. One could only imagine that if in 1958 there were already 500,000 women working in Japan as prostitutes, it must have greatly multiplied with the influx of other Asian women at the start of the 70s.⁸

In the old days Japanese women ventured into this industry out of poverty, but because of the country's rapid economic growth and female workers being paid

less than their male counterparts, the industry has become accessible for women who want to augment their incomes or even buy some luxuries.⁹ Although street prostitutes can still be found in Japan, the more sophisticated "corporate sex" has become vogue. In one classic case, a college girl established a "lovers bank" for rich middle-aged men to avail of services catered by young and educated Japanese women.¹⁰

For Japanese men to indulge in paid sexual activities would cost them a fortune especially if they prefer the more creative sexual repertoire of the prolific industry. But not all men can afford to pay the high price the Japanese prostitutes command and out of this situation arose the employment of women from overseas. In a research in 1985, employers of Asian women were only paying an average of 250,000 to 300,000 yen per month for each employee which was then roughly equivalent to three days wages for their Japanese counterparts. Like commodities bought on a special, these women can be turned over to customers at a lower price and their employers can still gain respectable commissions.

Many of these women may be aware of the wage discrepancy but would rather keep it to themselves because of fear of deportation since they either used fake passports or are staying in Japan beyond the legal period of time. Trapped in the dilemma, these women can easily give in to their employers' requests to work long hours and without a day off for months. In addition to a stable and constant work force, the employer as a bonus could likewise ask these women to perform other household chores.¹¹



Philippine Migration Review

Part Two will be printed in the next issue of KASAMA.

⁵ Violent Deaths of Filipinas Overseas, Cases Compiled by the Documentation Team of Task Force: Justice for Suller, Justice for all Filipina Migrant Workers Who Have Met Violent Deaths, as at March 1994.

⁶ Tono Haruhi, "The Japanese Sex Industry, a Heightening Appetite for Asian Women", AMPO Japan-Asia Quarterly Review, Vol. 18 Nos. 2-3 (1986), pp. 70-76.

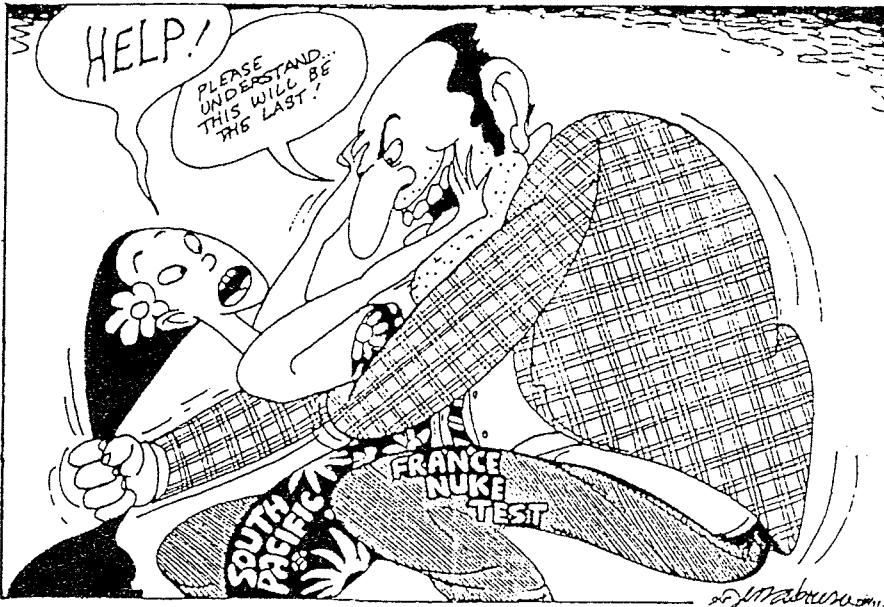
⁷ Ibid., p. 72.

⁸ Iyori Naoko, "The Traffic in Japayuki-san" Japan Quarterly, Vol. 34 No. 1, January-March 1987, pp. 84-88.

⁹ One Japanese wrote that today, many Japanese women from different social background see nothing wrong with supplementing their income by working part-time in bottomless coffee shops or other areas of the prostitution industry. The same writer remarked that such flexible perception is the effect of Japanese vague standards of morality. As cited from Kobayashi Kazuyoshi, "Japan's Sex Industry as Number One", Japan Quarterly, Vol. 31 No. 1, January-March 1984, pp. 278-279.

¹⁰ Tono Haruhi, "The Japanese Sex Industry..", p. 73.

¹¹ Piquero-Ballescás, M R, "The Various Contexts..", pp127-128.



Cartoon: *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 7/6/95

The UN General Assembly on December 13th voted to call for an immediate end to nuclear tests and deplored those already conducted. The resolution did not name France and China but was still seen as strong condemnation of the two countries. The Philippines and Australia were two of the 85 countries voting in favour of the resolution. Of the five nuclear powers: France, China, and the UK were among the 18 votes against the resolution. Russia and the USA joined the 43 abstentions.

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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.

KASAMA... means friend, companion, comrade

Enclosed with this issue is a petition calling for the release of all political prisoners in the Philippines and a covering letter from Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP). Please circulate copies.

MALIGAYANG PASKO AT MAKABULUHANG BAGONG TAON SA LAHAT!!

If undelivered please return to:

SPAN
c/- CPCA, Justice Place
84 Park Road
Woolloongabba 4102
Queensland, Australia

November 22, 1995

His Excellency Fidel V. Ramos
President, Republic of the Philippines
Malacanang Palace, Manila

Fax: +632 731 1325 or +632 832 7793

Dear President Ramos,

We were informed that more than 200 prisoners of conscience are still languishing in jails all over the Philippines. Not a few of them have been condemned to spend the rest of their lives in prison, including those who have been in detention since the era of martial law. Worse, a number of them may suffer the ultimate penalty of death. We understand that the political prisoners have been charged with criminal offenses, a legal trick to obscure the suppression of political dissenters.

We note that like the deposed Marcos regime and that of the past Aquino government, your administration has denied the existence of political prisoners. But the hunger strike they waged last January had displayed the faces of the prisoners of conscience, unmasking the phenomenon of political detention in your country. Hasn't your administration acceded to this when it ordered the release of some political prisoners coinciding with the visit of Pope John Paul II?

President Ramos, you once said before the United Nations Center on Human Rights that your administration is guided by the tenets of justice, reconciliation and peace. *Releasing all political prisoners now will demonstrate the reality of those pronouncements. Your government can take the initial step by letting go of everyone who has already been recommended for release by the Presidential Committee on Bail, Release and Pardon. The speedy release of political prisoners who have chosen to apply for the amnesty program is also welcome.*

Now that the sordid face of political detention is revealed, we hope that your government will not turn away. This season is a most propitious time as Christmas is approaching. For the political prisoners, to welcome the dawning of a new year in freedom is a fervent dream. Soon, Christmas bells will ring. Let the bells of justice toll.

NAME

ORGANIZATION

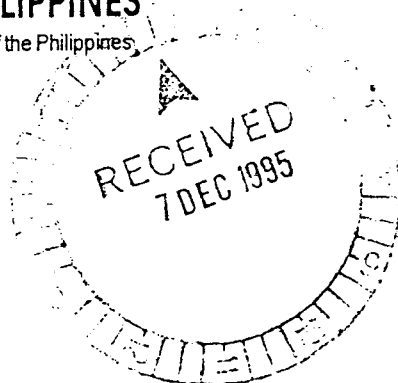
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STFDP

TASK FORCE DETAINEES OF THE PHILIPPINES

Established in 1974 by the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines



27 November 1995

Dear Friends,

Greetings of Peace based on Justice!

The Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) is currently executing its campaign in line with the 47th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Like the previous information we sent you, there are still more than 200 political prisoners languishing in the different jails in the Philippines.

In this connection, we are soliciting signatures from our friends and supporters abroad to pressure the Pres. Ramos to release immediately and unconditionally all political prisoners in our country.

As our partners, we both believe that human rights, in order to be genuine must be respected. All of us regardless of creed, ethnicity and political affiliation must not be deprived of our freedom. We are all bound to have these rights.

You have known our situation in the past and the Ramos government still has to do something worthy to its people. We appreciate your concern to our people especially when their rights are being violated. Again, let us be united, in helping all the political prisoners in the Philippines to regain their freedom and let them feel the totality of being human.

Please course all your petition to Pres. Fidel V. Ramos and thank you very much for your support. You may reproduce this petition letter to accommodate more signatures. Also, we would appreciate if you can inform us of how many signatures you have collected.

Very truly yours,

Anelyn Z. de Luna
Ms. Anelyn Z. de Luna
GANP National Program Coordinator