

# **THE WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION MOVEMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES**

**A COMPILATION**



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## EDITOR'S NOTE:

In compiling the following texts, Foreign Languages Press has drawn primarily upon two pre-existing sources: *The Women's Emancipation in the Philippines—An Anthology* by the LORENAS collective (League of Filipino Women Organizing for Revolutionary Emancipation, New Democracy, Anti-imperialism with a Socialist Perspective) and *Selected Readings about the Women's Movement in the Philippines* by the Quezon City-based Center for Women's Resources. We are grateful to the authors and publishers of the works cited and are glad to be able to make these important texts more widely available to a broader readership.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS



**The Women's Emancipation  
Movement in the Philippines**

*A Compilation*



# **A Historical Approach to Women's Emancipation in the Philippines**

BY JULIET DE LIMA

It has been fairly well established by anthropological evidence that women have had a very decisive role in bringing about civilization. In primitive society, the women who seemed to have been dragged down by their natural function of pregnancy, childbirth and child-bearing have been responsible for the development of settled life and with it the rudiments of agriculture and animal husbandry for which they also had to develop a whole collateral series of techniques, including the storage and preservation of food. Thus, they developed handicraft, pottery, and the uses of fire. Even medicine and the rudiments of other sciences came to be developed by women.

As primitive women labored collectively, they were also decisive in the development of language and speech. The priestesses who became the repository of the collective knowledge and skills of the primitive community are said to have preceded their male counterparts.

It was precisely the productive labor of women that initially relieved the men from the rigors of food gathering and enabled them to attend to other areas of human endeavor. From hunting, they began to develop warfare, secure territories, build larger communities, and move on to civilization. Mere division of labor between the sexes laid the basis and gave way to class divisions.

With the development of civilization and the rise of exploitative societies, the women came to be relegated to a subordinate status even as they continued to be engaged in productive labor.

Their contribution to productive labor as well as other endeavors came to be increasingly undervalued or even denigrated from the time of slave society through feudal and on to capitalist society.

## **Historical Roots of Women's Oppression in the Philippines**

As it has been the world over, the subordination and oppression of women in the Philippines came with the advent of class societies. Wom-

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en's oppression is principally a historical product of Spanish colonial and feudal domination as well as of US imperialist and semi-feudal or comprador-landlord domination. This is not to say, however, that women would have had equal status with men had the Spanish colonialists and the US imperialists not come to the Philippines. Precolonial societies on the archipelago had been in the process of rigidifying class stratification at the time of the coming of the Spanish colonizers in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Precolonial societies in the archipelago ranged from primitive communal or tribal to semi-slave and semi-feudal. The majority of these communities were semi-slave with socioeconomically integrated populations ranging from a few thousand up to thirty thousand along rivers and coastlines. There was wet and dry rice agriculture and private ownership of wet rice lands. Handicrafts such as cloth and basket weaving, pottery, blacksmithing and boat building were well developed in various parts of the archipelago.

Co-existing with these more advanced societies were the hill tribes whose mode of production was still primitive. They were still largely food gatherers. These tribes traded and interacted with the more advanced settled communities.

In the majority of the precolonial river line and coastal communities, classes had already emerged but had not yet rigidified. There were the *datu* families who owned slaves, wet rice lands, metal tools, animals and boats. There was an intermediate class of freemen who owned their own tools, wet rice lands or kept their share of the produce from communally cultivated dry rice lands. Then there were the semi-slaves or serfs who served or paid tribute to the *datu* families or the freemen. At the bottom of the economic ladder were the slaves who did not have a share of their produce but were sustained by their masters.

Men and women labored collectively. There was no strict sex differentiation in such economic activities as agriculture and fishing. Neither was there in the handicrafts. In cloth weaving, for example, some processes were done by men and boys. Even in blacksmithing, a few processes were done by women. Men and women had more or less equal status in the community. Women could become chieftains and held prestigious roles as priestesses. They had equal access to property and inheritance as the men. Marriage was contracted upon the mutual consent of the partners and was

soluble upon the instance of either of them. There were no rigid concepts or practices that subordinated the women to the men.

In areas where Islamic feudal practices had however taken roots and class stratification had developed or started to harden, the women had become dependent on the men. Slave trading was extensive. Polygamy and private property had been introduced. There existed a well-developed hierarchy of male political and religious leaders. Feudal-patriarchal values had started to become entrenched.

The coming of the Spanish colonizers instituted feudalism all over the archipelago and hastened the spread of feudal-patriarchal culture similar to that which had started to be spread earlier by Muslim traders and settlers in some parts of the archipelago. Through more than three hundred years of colonial rule, the Spaniards undertook a process of feudalizing the archipelago. This brought about the gradual and systematic lowering of the status of women relative to that of the men. The women were the first to be converted to the new religion, Roman Catholicism, that sought to bind them to domestic and parochial concerns.

Religion played the key role in the propagation of the feudal-patriarchal ideology. Ironically, it was the indio-women whom the Spanish friars used to help them in propagating religion. Catechism and prayers became the main preoccupation of the converted women. *Beaterios* (nunneries) and *colegios* were set up to indoctrinate the daughters of the elite in the new religion. They became the main native purveyors of feudal-patriarchal values. They were brainwashed into becoming tools of the friars and into accepting their lot as weak and inferiors and naturally subjects of men within the fold of the feudal-patriarchal family.

Among the elite, women became alienated from any important independent economic role. Formal education was available but aside from religious dogma, skills taught to them were limited to serving their men be they fathers, husbands or friars.

However, in agriculture, the peasant women could not be completely alienated from productive labor. With their men, they bore the yoke of feudal oppression. Women were, however, subjected to further servitude. More than sons, daughters were objects of debt patronage or forced menial service to the feudal lords and their families. Friar influence was not as

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pervasive among poor peasant women as it was among the women of the upper class. Male dominance was not as pronounced among the former.

Spanish laws explicitly subordinated women to the men. Laws on property were definitely biased against women. For example, married women were deprived of the rights to paraphernal property and prohibited from engaging in business without the husband's consent. Other laws prevented women from holding public office. It was only towards the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that women would be allowed to hold public office as teachers. Among the elite, the only other avenue open to the women was the home of the nunnery.

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after more than three hundred years of Spanish colonial and feudal oppression and exploitation, the Filipino people rose up in revolution and succeeded in overthrowing their Spanish colonial masters. All throughout those three hundred years, there was resistance through countless sporadic revolts against the Spanish colonialists until the final successful assault that was the Philippine revolution in 1896. Women took an increasingly active role in the resistance. In the Philippine revolution of 1896, some women took a leadership role in the Katipunan, the organization that led the revolution. It had a women's section and members of the women's section directly participated in battles or led operations to seize arms from the enemy. These women consciously fought colonial oppression, but they were not yet consciously fighting to put an end to their subordinate status.

US imperialism came to frustrate the Philippine revolution of 1896 by waging a war of aggression against the Filipino revolutionaries and the entire people. Although they had succeeded in overthrowing Spanish colonial power, the Filipino revolutionaries were not equipped ideologically, politically and organizationally to confront a modern imperialist power that did not only employ a vastly superior military force but also employed deceitful liberal rhetoric.

With the defeat of the Filipino revolutionaries, US monopoly capitalism superimposed itself on the feudal economy. A US-dominated free trade involving the exchange of agricultural and other primary products from the Philippines and manufactured products from the US was instituted, giving rise to a commodity economy on a feudal basis.

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A mercantile bourgeoisie rose to control the essentially commercial cities of the Philippines. It acted as the trading and financial agents of the foreign monopoly firms and the feudal lords who had a monopoly of the lands on which primary exports were produced.

The system allowed limited capitalist growth and US foreign investments flowed in to develop the mining industry, semi-processing or primary products (like sugar and coconut) and light manufacturing. A small local capitalist class arose. Industries put up by the US and local capitalists enlarged the number of the working class that had emerged towards the end of the Spanish colonial regime.

The further expansion of feudalism and the rise of semi-feudalism under the impetus of the expanded colonial pattern of trade between the US and its Philippine semi-colony subjected women to further oppression and exploitation. A decadent bourgeois culture was super-imposed on the feudal-patriarchal cultural legacy from more than three hundred years of Spanish colonial rule. Medieval and pro-imperialist values became the two main factors in the Filipino cultural complex.

The Filipino woman who was subordinate to the man under the feudal-patriarchal system suffered further degradation in the process of commodification under the sway of US monopoly capitalism. Women liberated from the parochial confines of the hacienda (the landlord's estate) became commodities in the capitalist labor market as well as in the sex trade and suffered economic discrimination. They were generally paid lower wages and had fewer opportunities for employment.

Despite the supposed time of bourgeois democracy and expansion of educational opportunities for women, laws and practices discriminatory to them continue to be in force. The feudal-patriarchal view of women as subordinate of men—domestic bound to care for home and family—and the bourgeois decadent view of women as commodities for display and with value dependent on their desirability as male objects have combined to subject women to further discrimination in the economic sphere. The same views tell women to keep their peace and bear their woes in silence.

## **The National-Democratic Revolution and the Women's Liberation Movement**

We have seen from our historical review that the institutionalization and intensification of women's oppression in Philippine semi-colonial and semi-feudal society was the product of Spanish colonialism and US imperialism. These forces brought about changes in the mode of production and in turn gave rise to the restructuring of society into ruling classes and ruled classes. From this, we have the ruling classes of compradors and landlords, the ruled classes of workers and peasants, and, between them, an intermediate class composed of professionals, small entrepreneurs, businessmen and the intelligentsia.

The ruled classes, the workers and peasants comprise more than 90 percent of the population; the intermediate and middle classes including the middle bourgeoisie about 9 percent and the ruling classes of compradors and landlords and their big bureaucrat agents would comprise the rest of the population.

Women cut across all the above classes so that the overwhelming majority of them—more than 90 percent—belong to families of the oppressed and exploited classes of workers and peasants. As half of the entire Filipino nation, women suffer foreign domination and exploitation by US imperialism. As half of the ruled classes, they suffer class oppression and exploitation by the comprador-landlord classes.

But apart from foreign and class exploitation and domination, women suffer male oppression and exploitation. This kind of domination the women from the exploited and oppressed classes share with women of the exploiting classes.

The overwhelming majority of Filipino women, therefore, suffer three layers of oppression: US imperialist domination or national oppression; comprador-landlord class oppression and exploitation; and male domination that is a shared fate with women of the exploiting classes.

The national-democratic revolution addresses the national question by fighting for national freedom and against foreign domination by the US in the political, economic, military and cultural spheres. At the same time, it addresses the class question by putting forward a program of genuine land reform and national industrialization to liberate the present masses

economically and politically. The economic and social liberation of the peasant masses is the main democratic content of the revolution.

The organized forces of the national-democratic revolution pay special attention to organizing women and enlarging their participation in the entire people's struggle for national freedom and democracy. As members of the Filipino nation and as members of the exploited classes, women involve themselves in that struggle. Because the subjection of women is an outgrowth of foreign and feudal domination, the struggle for women's rights is interconnected with the struggle for national freedom and democracy. Women liberate themselves from oppression and rise to a level of equality with men, by participating actively in the struggle to overthrow foreign and feudal domination. Through their participation they develop the distinct strength and ability to undo the most deeply rooted prejudices against women, not only among the men but also among their own ranks. It is in the struggle that the women acquire a sense of their own power and develop their potential.

Women's liberation is not the exclusive preserve of women and is not being pursued outside of the national-democratic revolution. It is an overriding concern of the entire revolutionary movement. While the women's movement is aimed at securing specific rights and welfare of women within the revolutionary movement and outside of it, the women's movement is primarily aimed at overthrowing the material bases of women's oppression, which in the particular circumstances of the Philippines are US imperialism and feudalism.

There is another dimension to the women's liberation movement borne by the fact that male domination cuts across all social classes. The issue of women's rights and equality has the potential of uniting women from all classes in a struggle to strike at the roots of the socio-economic system that has nurtured male dominance.

This potential, however, should not obscure the necessity of grasping the class line in the women's liberation movement. We must recognize that it is among women of the exploiting classes that the schizophrenic culture of Philippine semi-colonial and semi-feudal society is most entrenched.

As part of the national-democratic movement, the women's movement in the Philippines has a proletarian core. This core is built from among the most advanced elements of the working class and working-class

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women. Building the proletarian core of the women's movement is a task not only of women in the revolutionary movement but of the entirety of the movement.

This is in recognition of the fact that the proletariat is the leading class in the national-democratic revolution and subsequently in the future struggle to establish a truly egalitarian and democratic society that would ensure peace, prosperity and progress for all its members.

The proletarian core builds the basic alliance of the working-class women and women of the peasantry. Further on, it adds to this basic alliance the women of the middle classes to form part of the basic forces of the national-democratic revolution, representing the objective interests of the entire people, including those of 90 percent of the women.

Organizing and mobilizing the peasant women is a task of great significance not only to the women's movement but also to the entire national-democratic movement. The vast majority of women are peasants. They constitute about 75 percent of the women in the country. In turn, the majority of peasant women belong to the poor and middle strata of the peasantry. The focus of organization and mobilization is on these strata.

Organizers, including men, have persevered in organizing, educating and mobilizing peasant women from barrio to barrio. Organizations that have been formed have contributed immensely to the advance of the national-democratic cause.

Peasant women have developed themselves into a political force from the barrio level upwards. They undertake educational and organizational campaigns to build their organizations; they put forward their stand on issues and ensure that women are well represented in the people's organizations. They fight for the democratic rights of women and at the same time seek to do away with unreasonable customs, laws and other conditions prejudicial to them.

Peasant women's organizations work closely with the peasant organizations in demanding and carrying out genuine land reform as well as in raising agricultural production. They also set up health, welfare and cultural projects.

Their organizations stand up against military forces in the countryside and the atrocities and abuses of the military. Organized peasant women have been very effective in exposing and opposing the fascist cam-

paigns of terror both under the Marcos regime and the new regime that has not put a stop to these campaigns but instead continues to intensify these campaigns.

The second largest group of women come from the working class or are of working-class families; they constitute about 15 percent of women. They, too, are being organized and mobilized to address their problems in their communities; to address specific women's issues confronting them and to participate in the overall struggle of the people.

Women from the middle classes constitute some 9 percent of total women population but they are a very significant part of the national-democratic movement and the women's liberation movement. They are highly literate and articulate and they have played a very important role in setting up a nationwide network of women's organizations. They have linked themselves with the women who belong to the toiling masses to add their strength to them.

Women have become a powerful force for revolutionary change. As the national-democratic movement progresses, more and more women will be involved. By participating and contributing to the victory of the movement, they create the basic conditions for their full emancipation and greater contribution to social development.

But the end of foreign and feudal domination will not automatically result in women's full equality with men. Deep-seated prejudices against women will still tend to be nurtured by backward elements of society. However, the biggest obstacles to women's liberation and equality with men are removed and the women can vigorously fight for their rights in the continuing struggle for the total transformation of our society into one that is truly independent, democratic, just, progressive, prosperous and peaceful.



# A Brief History of the Women's Emancipation Movement in the Philippines

BY LARA MAE ALMEDA

The Philippine women's emancipation movement has sufficient documentation of women's participation in the anti-colonial struggles of the Filipino people during the Spanish time, the national-democratic revolution of the old type led by the KATIPUNAN and the new type now under the banner of the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front-New People's Army (CPP-NDF-NPA). They are very much aware of the contributions of women martyrs like Gabriela Silang, Melchora Aquino (Tandang Sora) and Ma. Lorena Barros, to the continuing revolution in the Philippines.

Filipino women came to be aware of their subordinate status in society in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The mother of Isabelo de los Reyes who first brought socialist literature to the country, had a number of poems seeing through the subjugation of women. The women of Malolos wrote a letter to Jose P. Rizal articulating their need for a higher education to be more of service to the people and the country. The Kataastaasan Kagalanggalang na Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan (KKK or KATIPUNAN), the revolutionary organization that led the 1896 Philippine Revolution against Spanish colonialism, had its women's section in 1898.

During the American colonial period, Filipino women of the upper and middle classes were influenced by bourgeois feminism then active in the US and Europe. In 1912, bourgeois suffragette Carrie Chapman Catt came over to the Philippines to lecture Filipino women on the suffrage movement and the building of women's clubs. But the suffrage movement only gained ground in the country on the 1920s, when the American colonial masters had deemed it timely to train Filipino *ilustrados*<sup>1</sup> supposed

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<sup>1</sup> The *ilustrados* were a layer of indigenous Filipino elites, educated in the culture of the Spanish colonizer. They played a major role in the bourgeois Philippine revolution of 1896. However, lacking the determination to carry the struggle through to the end, as well as strong links with the oppressed peasant masses, they ended up, at least in part, capitulating to the new invader, the United States. Subsequently, as members

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self-governance. The Filipino bourgeois feminists went on with what they have been doing before the turn of the century: charity work for poor nursing mothers and orphaned children among the deprived sectors of the Philippine society.

During the struggle against Japanese imperialism, countless women the likes of the late Lola Rosa Henson—the first sexual slave to the Japanese invading troopers—rendered invaluable services to the anti-Japanese guerrillas. A handful even joined the Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon (HUKBALAHAP, People's Army Against Japan) as guerrillas fighting side by side with the men.

Some bourgeois feminists like Josefa Llanes Escoda who were active in the struggle for women suffrage organizing women's clubs and the Girl Scout movement likewise actively supported the anti-Japanese fighters, some to the extent of putting their lives in jeopardy at the hands of the enemy forces. Some were summarily killed by the Japanese military.

After the Second World War, Filipino feminists again took to the back seats and contented themselves getting involved in charitable institutions and women's clubs. Others took courses in higher education. At this time, the country had its first woman doctor, the first woman lawyer, first women elected or appointed to government posts at the various levels and the like. On the other hand, women guerrilla fighters and commanders the likes of Commander Walingwaling of Panay of the Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (HMB) continued in actively pursuing the armed struggle for national liberation in the field.

The Lavaite old merger Communist/Socialist Party had a handful of women in the leading positions, a women's bureau and a women mass organization, the Katipunan ng Bagong Kababaihan or KABAPA. The remnants of this organization is now aligned with SARILAYA, a minuscule grouping of petty-bourgeois feminists espousing "socialist feminism" (socfem) in the context of redefined socialism in its declaration of principles.

In 1969, the national democrats who figured in the reestablishment of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party in December 1968, formed

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of a rising comprador bourgeoisie, some of them came to form the backbone of the US colonial and then semi-colonial system in the archipelago.

the Women's Bureau (WB) of Kabataang Makabayan (KM or Patriotic Youth). The said bureau in its statement of principles and program published in one of the issues of *Progressive Review* clearly stated its work among women as being part and parcel of the general people's movement for national democracy with its socialist perspective.

At the time of the First Quarter Storm (FQS), female national democrats with the help of Samahang Demokratiko ng Kabataan (SDK) organized the Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (MAKIBAKA, Independent Movement of New Women). It was launched after a well-publicized picket against the Miss Universe pageant held in Manila in April 1970.

Other people's organizations started to have their respective committees on women. The SDK had its Women Organizing Committee (WOC). Katipunan ng mga Samahan ng mga Manggagawa (KASAMA, Coalition of Workers' Organizations), the newly established national-democratic labor federation, had its women's desk. The reestablished Communist Party of the Philippines (MLMZT) formed its Women's Bureau in 1971.

The Party's WB led in giving directions to the efforts of various groups and committees active in the women's liberation movement and the national-democratic struggle, with MAKIBAKA as its main mass organization in the urban centers.

It lent a hand in organizing national-democratic all women organizations: the Makabayang Samahan, ng mga Nars (MASANA, Patriotic Nurses Organization) among nursing students whose leading activists later on became the core in organizing the medical sector; the middle class Katipunan ng Kababaihan para sa Kalayaan (KATIPUNAN, League of Women for Freedom) preceding the Women-in-Media; and Katipunan ng Makabayang Ina (KALINGA, League of Patriotic Mothers led by the late Paula Malay who was first organized under KATIPUNAN). The WB initiated discussion groups on the "women question" with women workers, peasants, of the urban poor, and youth and students. In the countryside, a WB cadre acted as the political officer of the First Red Detachment of Women unit of the New People's Army formed in Isabela in the latter half of 1971.

MAKIBAKA, being aligned with the national-democratic people's movement, actively participated in all major political campaigns launched

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during this period, integrated with workers and peasants, immersed in urban poor communities and organized mainly in schools in the national capital region. With the help of earlier established youth and student mass organizations outside of Metro-Manila, MAKIBAKA readily became a nationwide organization mainly among youth and students in the urban centers all over the country.

It was mainly because of this political alignment with the national-democratic movement that the undercurrent of anti-male petty-bourgeois feminism among MAKIBAKA members did not gain the upper hand in the conduct of its political work. But it somehow muddled the issue of women's liberation within the ranks of national democrats. This petty-bourgeois feminist undercurrent even among some of the leading MAKIBAKA members surfaced in the 1980s. A handful of these petty-bourgeois liberals and feminists later on aligned with SARILAYA as an aftermath of the Second Great Rectification Movement launched by the CPP in 1992.

Upon the initiative of the WB under the National Organizing Department (NOD) of the CPP, discussions on Frederick Engels' *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* started among its leading activists. By March 1972, MAKIBAKA laid down the national-democratic line on women's liberation movement in its First National Congress. Jose Maria Sison clearly expounded on this in his message to the said congress. MAKIBAKA adopted a change in name into Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (Patriotic Movement of New Women).

This was followed by the deployment of MAKIBAKA activists to the workers' front, urban poor communities and the countryside. This was a concretization of the basic principles in laying down the basic alliance of women workers, peasants and lower petty-bourgeois as the foundation for a strong national-democratic women's movement. In building this basic alliance, issues nearest to the hearts of the basic women masses were given due attention more than anything else.

The national-democratic movement activated the struggle for women's emancipation which by the end of the world war was effectively reduced to social work for women and children of the poor sectors of society. A listing made by the WB in 1971 of the existing women's groups in the country revealed that women's work had been monopolized by a few

active organizations and institutions of and ran by women of the bourgeoisie and the conservative church. These include the likes of Soroptimist Philippines and the National Federation of Women's Clubs, as well as the traditional Legion of Mary and Catholic Women's League, and their more liberal counterparts in the Protestant sects. Their efforts were more on giving dole outs and other charitable work, providing for free pre-schooling for poor children from the lower middle and working classes, socialization of adolescent girls as in Girl Scouting movement and training of future homemakers in the 4-Hs Clubs.

There were already nuns and other religious women workers actively participating in national-democratic mass campaigns and political education activities but they involved in the organizing efforts within the religious sector. Groups of professional women like nurses, writers and journalists were more active in organizing and politicalizing among their peers.

Petty-bourgeois feminism which has just taken shape in Europe and the USA at the turn of the 70s did not crystallize among the petty-bourgeois women in the Philippines until towards the end of the decade. This coincided with the weakening of the national-democratic women's front that had been espousing revolutionary women's emancipation politics from the very start.

At this historical juncture, there was still no petty-bourgeois women's organization flying the purple flag and fighting for the bourgeois-democratic rights of women. National-democratic women emancipationists could align with such organizations on certain issues and under conditions that should have been beneficial to both and the women majority. A number of women's organizations and institutions espousing different variants of petty-bourgeois feminism, in fact, were started by petty-bourgeois free spirits most of whom were still aligning with the national-democratic movement around the turn of the decade. Some of them did in fact help in the underground activities against Marcos dictatorship in more ways than one.

The crystallization of petty-bourgeois feminism in the Philippines was amply aided both politically and financially by international institutions with the United Nations in the lead. A liberal political atmosphere for bourgeois feminism was provided for by UN covenants on the women and its initiated Convention on the Elimination of Discriminations Against

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Women signed by ruling reactionaries of the majority of the UN member-countries in mid-70s. Even bourgeois traditional politicians picked the issues on women's rights every now and then, including one of the presidential candidates in the forthcoming 1998 election and a woman solon whose husband is a cult leader sexually using his adherents with her knowledge.

The major task of the national-democratic women's movement in its initial period was to organize the women of the basic masses to build the solid foundation of a broad women's united front for the genuine emancipation of Filipino women. For this to be realized, down-to-earth issues had to be taken up by the national-democratic women's front.

The issue of prostitution was and should up to now be considered a secondary issue to the national-democratic women's movement. One, even if Filipino women prostitutes had increased to 400,000 as of the latest empirical survey, the issue still affects a small minority among the masses of Filipino women. Two, prostitution is largely brought about by poverty resulting from the imperialist-landlord comprador stranglehold on the Philippine economy. Imperialist and feudal institutions including the reactionary church are creating the stirrings on this issue and related ones like the specter of AIDS precisely to contain the women's movements all over the world. The eradication of prostitution will only be brought about by socialism. Socialism will harness human labor power to the full for national industrialization to meet the basic needs of the people.

Population control through birth control is an issue harped by believers of the reactionary Malthusian theory, blaming population explosion as the root cause of poverty. Reproductive health and rights came about as a women's issue with new developments in birth control in the last twenty years.

The petty-bourgeois feminist demand for sexual freedom connotes free love and promiscuity. It did not at all mean free choice in marriage as against forced parental/clan arrangement that still prevailed to date among indigenous and Moro peoples in the Philippines. Nor did it mean the absence of social, economic and political considerations in choosing one's partner. It is only lately that sexual freedom has been referred to as the right of women to reproductive health and sexuality.

The right to divorce is a democratic right that should be given freely to women. But the reactionary church insisting on the sanctity of

the marriage rituals continues to oppose it. Since a sizable number of working women go into and out of marriage even without the benefit of legalities and rights, the reactionary government and church require this is still a secondary issue for them. First and foremost, demands among the working women are tillable land distribution and job creation through national industrialization.

But concerted efforts by national democrats, both men and women, in building a legal women's liberation movement with a socialist perspective, was nipped in the bud with the declaration of martial law in 1972. But it did not deter women activists from continuing organizing work among women workers, peasants and petty bourgeois. MAKIBAKA activists deployed in the workers front continued to concentrate in factories majority of the workers are women like GELMART and ARTEX, garment and textile manufacturing companies, respectively. More went to the countryside, including the leading members of the WB, which did not only tackle issues pertaining to the women's liberation movement but also that of the overall people's war.

In relation to the general people's movement, the WB stood pat on its stand for the need to deploy cadres in the national organs of the Party. They were rendered ineffective in the national capital region by intensified military intelligence operations in the urban centers. There was a need to deploy them to other regions, preferably to work in the countryside.

The WB at this time initiated the drafting of an article "On the Relations Between the Sexes" that had been serving as the framework for equality between the sexes inside the proletarian party. (See Appendix for the paper later adopted by the CPP.) It was a trailblazer at that time that it was translated and even used by some fraternal parties and groups abroad. Despite of some weaknesses, it nonetheless provided general guidelines in the conduct of gender relations inside the party and among the masses it is leading and has influence on. Weaknesses in this aspect that contributed to the weakening of the leadership of the old party among the masses were somehow minimized within the reestablished party.

Fruits of the organizing efforts of the party among women workers, peasants and urban poor became visible when the legal open mass movements muzzled off at the onset of martial rule again began to take shape in the latter years of the '70s. The women's front should take pride that it was

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the women workers of Davao Chewing Tobacco Inc., in Davao City, who fired the opening salvo of the resurging workers movement in Mindanao at that point in time.

In the countryside, the raging armed struggle and the launching of agrarian revolution, even on a limited scale, tempered a substantial number of women cadres and activists among peasant and petty-bourgeois women. Women cadres of the party began to occupy positions from the local party branch level up to the regional and the national. Most of those with peasant origin were concentrated at the section and district levels of organization of the guerrilla fronts.

Towards the fall of the US-Marcos dictatorship, with enough organizational strength of the organized basic women masses, a political center for the national-democratic women's front was formed. Its firm solid foundation rests on the basic mass organizations of women workers, peasants and petty bourgeois.

But the more fundamental lack of ideological building in the revolutionary movement had taken its toll not only in conduct of the overall political struggles in general but in the particulars as well, including the building of the revolutionary women's front. Confusion and eclecticism prevailed in the women's front. On the one hand, it continued to align itself with the national-democratic people's movement. On the other hand, it gave principal attention to espousing bourgeois-feminist issues and demands.

The correct strategic political line laid down by the CPP in 1971 provided the basis for the ongoing rectification movement in the revolutionary women's emancipation movement that the WB initiated within the context of the Second Great Rectification Movement that started in 1992. The January 1997 special issue of *Rebolusyon*, the theoretical journal of the CPP, contains an article contributed by the CPP delegation to the International Meeting of Women held in 1996 in Nepal. It essayed the lessons from the revolutionary women's movement in the Philippines. It is one of the major works contained in this anthology.

## Current Situation in the Philippines

**A PAPER PRESENTED BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES' FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF M-L WOMEN**

*Nepal, November 1–4, 1996*

The Philippines is a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country of seven thousand one hundred islands with a population of 68 million, a little more than half of whom are women. These women are mostly peasants, next workers and some 10 percent petty bourgeois.

Four centuries of colonialism (first by Spain, then by the US starting in 1898) has reduced the status of Filipino women from one of relative freedom and equality to one of continuing servitude and commodification. Even as the country's independence was nominally granted by the US in 1946, the situation had gone from bad to worse. As in previous regimes, Marcos, Aquino, and now Ramos only outdid each other in favoring foreign investments, principally the US imperialist, and in securing their own economic preserves. This was done at the expense of the masses. For women in particular, this has meant exploitation, abuse and degradation unheard of in recent times.

Currently wreaking havoc on women's lives is the US-Ramos regime's pro-imperialist plan to make the Philippines a "newly industrialized country" by the year 2000. Called Philippines 2000, the Ramos' strategy is no more than a mere echo of the GATT/WTO and APEC schemes that opens the country wide to foreign plunder and exploitation at the expense of the broad masses of the people.

Not content with the export-oriented and import-dependent economy in place, the regime via trade liberalization and investment facilitation aims to finally bring down all barriers to imperialist plunder of the economy. Marcos would pale in comparison to Ramos, his martial law hatchet man. Ramos will take only six years to give what Marcos gave foreign big business in a span of twenty years. And Ramos has given much, much more.

Already the people are up in arms. Women have more reason now not only to take to the streets but to the mountains as well where a people's

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guerrilla warfare has been raging for more than two decades. Consider the following problems women are facing:

The country's unemployment rate is pegged at 28 percent of the labor force, but counting the 4.2 million overseas workers abroad, this could even reach 36 percent. The largest number of unemployed are women.

Fifty-five percent of overseas contract workers (OCWs) are women, who are mostly employed as domestic helpers or entertainers (the last one often a euphemism for prostitutes). Entertainers are mostly bound for Japan, while domestic helpers to Hong Kong, Singapore, the Middle East and other East Asian countries. They are required to remit between 30-70 percent of their earnings through state and commercial banks, on top of mandatory fees and contributions to government. They also suffer from grave physical and sexual abuse, contract substitution and violations. The export of manpower is now the country's number one foreign exchange earner. Without remittances by Filipinos from abroad, Ramos would not be able to hide a country deep in crisis.

The advent of export manufacturing (mainly sweatshop and international subcontracting operations) has seen a rise in female employment (women comprised 37 percent of the total labor force in 1990). But these are mostly young single women who are paid only a fifth of what imperialist firms pay their workers daily in their home countries, with lesser benefits, without protection from sexual harassment, and restricted from organizing themselves into unions. Subcontract labor has also become the norm, especially in garments and electronics, as women perform labor-intensive tasks on a piece-rate basis in their homes. Making labor cheap, docile and flexible is the regime's idea of a globally competitive workforce.

Poverty and misery has also pushed more women into sex-tourism. Along with the rise in hotels, resorts, golf courses and shopping malls is the increase in the number of so-called commercial sex workers such as club dancers, call girls, massage attendants, streetwalkers, GRO (guest relations officers usually in karaoke bars). Many young prostitutes, ages from 14 to 18, come from among the country's 600,000 street children and cater to foreign tourists. Some 1.76 million tourists, mostly men, came to the Philippines in 1995. The country is projected to be the next shopping capital in Asia, and with undeniably young, beautiful women as come-ons, the

regime is aiming to get anywhere near Hong Kong's record of nine million tourists a year.

Peasant women and their families find themselves increasingly dislocated by the entry of real estate brokers and developers into the countryside, further restricting whatever agricultural land is left. Worse, land planted to food crops is to be replaced with export winners such as asparagus, broccoli, cut flowers and pineapples, further reducing rice hectareage from 5 million to 1.9 million hectares. Land conversion is not the only problem though. Ramos has allowed foreigners to lease land from 50 to 75 years, has granted more incentive tax holidays and infrastructure support for agribusiness in exports, has pushed the importation of rice, onions, garlic, coffee, cattle and other basic foods that are locally grown and produced, and has delisted fishpond prawn farms from the coverage of even his bogus land reform program.

Minority women and their families also stand no chance against destruction of ancestral lands as Ramos has granted foreign corporations 100 percent control and ownership of mining ventures from exploration to recovery of pre-operating expenses, tax-free holidays, full repatriation of profits and capital in dollars, government guarantee of unhampered operations, including entry to all private lands across the nation. The Mining Act of 1995 unabashedly ignores the rights of national minorities and grants from foreigners privileges previously unheard of.

It is to the credit of Filipino women that the active, mass, popular and nationwide revolutionary women's movement has risen from the womb of people's struggles against the ruling system since the time of Marcos. The nation's history is replete with accounts of women engaged in national liberation struggles and their struggle for equality with men. But nowhere is the involvement of women more seen than in the national-democratic movement led by the Communist Party of the Philippines since its reestablishment in 1968 under the guiding the ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. This national-democratic women's movement has also inspired the rise of progressive, albeit petty-bourgeois, women's groups in the cities and has ranged itself sharply against reformist and reactionary women's groups.

In the countryside, the revolutionary women's movement has set up peasant women's organizations that call for the liberation of women

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in the context of launching the agrarian revolution, armed struggle, and building the people's strength through education, organizing, and campaign of mobilization.

The most visible picture of a revolutionary woman is the NPA guerrilla who has broken ties with her traditional past by taking up arms to protect and defend not only her people but her rights as a woman as well. Night or day, this NPA woman along with her fighting unit tirelessly conquers rugged terrains, spreads the word of liberation among the people by holding mass meetings and discussion groups, forms various people's organizations, helps the masses wage mass campaigns and local struggles, does production work, treats the sick, teaches literacy and numeracy to adults as well as to children, and other activities.

Also, the NPA woman fighter is way ahead of other women in matters related to domestic affairs. In the NPA collective, private domestic labor is a thing of the past as men and women share all housework, violence against women is subject to disciplinary action, and sexism and discriminatory practices are heavily frowned upon. In her work among women, the NPA woman fighter stresses the need for women to cast away their feudal thinking and values, assert their dignity and equality with men, and push for democratization in the family.

Notwithstanding this, the woman guerrilla never fails to mention that the fight for women's liberation is directed principally at the ruling system even as revolutionaries and the masses in general are constantly reminded of recognizing the rights and role of women to fully participate in the activities of society, and specially in struggle, as equals of men.

Meanwhile the revolutionary mass organization of women called MAKIBAKA (Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan—Patriotic New Women's Movement), has been expanding its membership largely in the countryside, especially among poor and lower-middle peasants. The organizing of MAKIBAKA augurs well not only for the women's movement but also for the peasant movement in the countryside, as it has tremendously increased the participation of peasant women in the struggle. Having their own organization means that peasant women feel freer to share their problems not only in society at large but in the home as well, more open to accept tasks and responsibilities, and have more opportunities to be trained not only as members but as leaders as well.

MAKIBAKA organizing has also found its way not only in the countryside but also in the cities where it has set up cells and chapters from among working women in the communities, students in campuses, and women in various professions.

In the cities, the nature of women's work is largely legal and defensive but supportive of the armed struggle in the countryside. In this regard, the revolutionary women's movement has taken pains to organize legal organizations of women, lead them in struggle or influence them. At the core of these legal organizations are underground cells of revolutionaries that have influenced the course of these organizations along the militant path, have conducted concrete social investigation into the conditions of women and their families, have rallied members to respond not only to the specific issues of women but also the general issues affecting the entire people, have issued calls for revolution through propaganda, education, mass work, and integration among the basic masses of the people, specifically the workers and peasants.

A dynamic women's movement has developed in the Philippines, pushed largely by the revolutionary work of women and men in various spheres. Yes, for in the Philippine context, male revolutionaries do realize that women are their partners in struggle and that the liberation of women is key to the success of the national-democratic revolution with a socialist perspective.

And so in various organizations of the people, women are as much involved as the men in carrying out the myriad tasks of the revolution. Stress is further laid on the recruitment and training of more women, not only in separate organizations but in mixed organizations as well.



# **Displacement, Commodification and Modern-Day Slavery of Women: The Impact of Imperialist Globalization**

**BY LIZA MAZA, GABRIELA SECRETARY GENERAL**

*Women's Workshop of the People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalization, November 23, 1996*

Good morning sisters. Let me first thank you for coming to this important workshop. This workshop is happening at a time when leaders of 18 countries headed by the US will decide on the fate of the poor and oppressed peoples of the world through the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). It is my fervent hope that this gathering of women from various parts of Asia and the world will signal the start of a concerted effort against imperialist globalization now sweeping the world today.

Sisters, I am sure that you have read, seen and listened to a lot of advertisements extolling the wonders and magic that economic globalization will bring to the economies of various countries especially the Third World—an elixir that will bring prosperity to each and every poor household. Globalization has been touted by its proponents as the panacea to all our economic problems of underdevelopment and poverty.

Today, at the height of the crisis of imperialism, globalization is incomparably, intensely and aggressively, with the collusion of the local elites, being rammed down the throats of nations, especially those in the Third World. It is the current banner slogan being waved by imperialist powers to make palatable to the nations of the world the scheme of monopoly capitalists to penetrate new and vast markets and have access to the rich resources of the world to solve capitalism's crisis of overproduction. Globalization is the rapid restructuring and integration of economies, especially those of the Third World, into the new global economic order—a system where trade liberalization, privatization and deregulation is the order of the day.

## **The Impact of Globalization on Women**

Women, especially from the poor sectors of society, are the ones hardest hit by the imperialist globalization process intensely sweeping the world today. I would venture to say that imperialist globalization further intensifies the displacement, commodification and modern-day slavery of marginalized women of our countries. Globalization happening in many poor countries of the world today takes the form of the increasing liberalization, privatization and deregulation of economies as prescribed by the IMF/WB structural adjustment program and the GATT. And surely, our daily life is replete with experiences picturing the devastation that imperialist globalization has done on the lives of women.

The monopoly capitalists' insatiable need for profit continues to increase the already vast reserve of women's labor, which could be easily tapped and disposed of depending on where monopoly capitalists could maximize their gains. The unprecedented glut of goods in the market necessitates the liberal dumping of these goods to our countries through schemes such as the SAPs and GATT. As overproduced goods of monopoly capitalists flood our markets without restrictions and as they continue to nail our economies to the position of suppliers of cheap raw materials and labor, small and struggling industries are eaten out by big companies or edged out of the competition process resulting in closures of industries and subsequently in vast retrenchment of workers. Those that are greatly affected are industries where workers are predominantly women, such as the textile and clothing, electronics, food and other assembly-type industries.

Technological advances in computers and robotics have even more pushed women out of the production processes, contributing greatly to the swelling reserve of labor. This development depresses even further the already low wages of workers. Women workers in their desire to earn and contribute to the family's income have no choice but to accept very low wages and more often than not even below the minimum wages prescribed by law.

Monopoly capitalists, not being satisfied with the giant profit they are raking in out of women's labor, have to design schemes to squeeze even more profit from women. Through government policies following

the guidelines of SAPs, monopoly capitalists have imposed flexibilization of labor, which includes contractualization, sub-contractualization, long internship programs with very minimal allowance, shortening of working hours, long overtime work, over-quota production and others. Flexibilization of labor has cheapened women's work even more and has created a slave-like situation for them as they are forced to work until they drop at very low wages, poor working conditions and with no voice and right to unionize. Flexibilization of labor breaks and divides workers and prevents them from unionizing.

Imperialist globalization pushes women into the informal economy. In increasing number of poor communities, informalization of women's labor takes the form of irregular subcontracting jobs where women are paid very low wages for a certain quota. Sometimes even the entire family has to do sub-contracting jobs thrown to both rural and urban communities by big corporations. Still other women will resort individually to selling or vending to augment the income of the family. A growing number of women, on the other hand, become prostitutes.

In a semi-colonial and semi-feudal set up such as the Philippines, imperialist globalization uses and entrenches in society the feudal-patriarchal system to accumulate more profit. In the case of the Philippines, women workers in a number of barangays have to ask the recommendation of the barangay captains, who are usually men, who screen and approve the application of women workers for a certain factory. There are also cases when fathers are made to swear by the barangay head and factory owners not to let their daughters join unions as a requirement for employment in factories.

Peasant women have been increasingly and massively displaced from the productive processes and their livelihood. The massive conversion of lands into commercial and tourism areas under the SAPs and GATT has virtually killed all chances of peasants, especially women, to own the land they till. Moreover, crop conversion and tariffication of prime agricultural products such as in the production of rice, corn, vegetables and livestock, where most peasant women could be found, have displaced them, thereby adding more to the great reserve of labor and has also threatened the food security of the people.

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Modern-day slavery of women brought about by globalization is clearly seen in commodification of women's bodies through prostitution and trafficking in women. Big businessmen have taken advantage of the opportunity that the great number of women without jobs and livelihood has brought about to rake in profit out of women's bodies. The flesh trade continues to flourish and an increasing number of women are forced into prostitution. The development of tourism industries in many countries complemented this interest, as together with promoting the countries' tourism, is the selling of women to foreign visitors.

The worsening poverty in the country has led to the diaspora or thousands of women to other countries to find better opportunities. Migration policies, formal or informal, of sending governments have encouraged the trafficking in women as trading women's bodies is a very lucrative industry at very limited investment.

Host countries, on the other hand, have taken advantage of migrants' labor by putting them in slave-like jobs or in dirty, dangerous and low-paying jobs. While squeezing every ounce of energy left in women migrants, host countries refuse to recognize them as a one of the backbones of and great contributors to their economy. Thus, at the whims and wishes of host countries, they can constrict or relax immigration laws depending on whether they will profit or not.

Poverty spawned by imperialist globalization has often been blamed on population growth. Thus, part of the package of imperialist globalization is the population control program. Women's bodies have become the testing grounds for the population programs of governments as they are made guinea pigs or testing grounds for population control devices that monopoly capitalists in the drug industry want to introduce to the international markets.

To illustrate, the recent approval by the World Health Organization, and even by the government of Fidel V. Ramos, of the use of Depo-Provera and its subsequent propagation pose great danger to the lives of Filipinas as these population control methods are administered even in the absence of adequate primary health care support.

Clearly, population control methods are forced on women while governments and capitalists remain silent on the inadequacy and incompetence of the health support system for women. All this is justified by

population planners as population women. Statistics will show how many women and children are raped every day, how women and children are battered, sexually harassed or molested. But what is more grave is the commission of state violence as governments continue to militarize communities and use sexualized violence, such as rape and other forms of sexual abuses, to repress women's protests against their growing marginalization. To make the picture more concrete, I would like to share the experiences of our women.

In the Philippines, the face of globalization or the increasing integration of our economy to the new world economic order is General Ramos' Medium Term Philippine Development Plan being extravagantly publicized under the slogan management for development which in truth only sees women's bodies as another market for multinational drug companies.

Imperialist globalization has not only diminished women's work at home but has doubled their enslavement. As fathers and sons become unemployed and underemployed, women have to look for extra income by selling, washing other people's clothes or by prostitution so the family shall go on living. In addition, they have to work at home for long hours. With cuts in government subsidies for services, the increasing prices of commodities, fuel, electricity and water, women have to make tightening measures at home to minimize the cost of services.

The worsening poverty brought about by imperialist globalization has eroded the social fabric of society and has led to crimes and violence especially against of Philippines 2000. This program is nothing but the Structural Adjustment Program imposed by the IMF/WB. Under this scheme, the Philippine economy, with the collusion of the government and big business and landlords in the country, is forced to liberalize, privatize, and deregulate, causing enormous economic and social costs on the poor, laboring class especially women.

## **Displacements**

The devastation on the lives of poor people that the preparation for APEC Summit has done only underscores the poverty and deprivation that the Philippines 2000 will give the great masses of peasants and workers in our country.

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In agriculture, the policies passed under Philippines 2000 concerning this sector are causing displacement of whole communities as massive conversion of prime agricultural lands and crops is being implemented. For example, of the 5 million hectares planted to rice and corn, 3.1 million will be planted to high-value crops such as asparagus, broccoli and cut flowers or used for animal raising for export. In line with the setting-up of regional industrial centers (RICs), about 300,000 hectares of prime agricultural lands have already been converted into subdivisions, golf courses, resorts and industrial sites. Affected are 600,000 individuals.

Land-use and crop conversions have legalized land grabbing. Many applications for Certificate of Land Transfers and Emancipation Patents have been canceled and CLOAs confiscated.

The national federation of farmers or the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (Philippine Peasants' Movement) warned that agricultural liberalization under the Agricultural Tariffication Act will lead to the bankruptcy of many farmers. Even rice, one of the country's primary agricultural product and staple is to be increasingly imported. Initially, at 59,000 metric tons to reach 239,000 metric ton by year 2005.

The same bleak picture could be painted of the fisheries sector. According to NACFAR, a coalition of fisherfolk federations, liberalization will mean exportation of a big percentage of our marine products to Japan and other countries. Under the BIMP-EAGA (Brunei-Malaysia, Philippines East Asia Growth Area) program, Mindanao was pinpointed as the main supplier of seaweeds and tuna (yellowfin). The seaweeds will come from Tawi-Tawi while tuna will come from Sarangani Bay. This despite warning from the UP Los Banos Philippine Aquatic and Marine Research and Development that the fish supply in the Philippines is dwindling.

The conversion of prime agricultural and aquatic lands has impacted negatively on women. To cite, the conversion of 32,000 hectares of agricultural lands into industrial estates, subdivisions, commercial areas, golf courses and beach resorts under the CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) program of the Ramos government have turned farmers and fisherfolk into squatters overnight. Many became jobless. Women took on several jobs to help increase the family's income.

Many women went into subcontracting arrangements which are paid very low and are labor intensive.

The younger women absorbed in the 195 factories in garments and textiles, electronics, food and beverages, and ceramics, whose workforce is 95% women, complain of low salaries, lack of benefits, forced overtime and over-quota discrimination against women and sexual abuse. They have no venue for airing their grievances as managements and the government implement a no-union and no-strike policy in the area to maintain industrial harmony.

Due to the lack of safety and antipollution devices of newly set up factories in the CALABARZON, health problems in the communities are getting worse. Epidemics have been noted in some areas. Due to over-work and lack of industrial protection and bad working condition, many women workers have contracted lung and bladder infections and hernia. In the area of fisheries in Cebu for example, women involved in shallow fishing in the 11 fishing barangays to be affected by the Cordova Reclamation Development Project (CRDP) stand to lose their means of livelihood. To be ejected from their homes to give way to a P9.11B combined industrial, commercial and eco-tourism program are 27,000 men, women and children.

Demolition has become the order of the day in urban poor communities. It is estimated that about 10,000 families in Metro Manila and some parts of Bulacan and Cavite will be affected by demolition before the year ends. This demolition is in connection with the Manila Bay Master Development Plan.

Who benefits from the massive land conversion but big foreign investors such as the Malaysian Group of Companies, big investors from Japan and Taiwan. In the meantime, thousands of families are left homeless without livelihood.

## **Prostitution**

The poverty in the country, made even worse by land conversion and demolition of urban and rural communities, has pushed women and children into the “flesh trade.” As tourism is part of the development program, the country is being peddled as a tourism haven. The country cannot do without encouraging tourism because this is a big dollar-earner. Accord-

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ing to a research by the University of the Asia Pacific, money brought in by foreign tourists comprised 7.2% of the entire Philippine economy in 1995. The Department of Tourism reports that foreign investments for tourism amounted to PhP 3.9B in 1995. In fact, 65% of the PhP 640M budget of the DOT for 1995 came from money from tourism.

Part of the BIMP-EAGA plan is tourism. Although not yet fully operational, a number of travel agencies have already been established in the city of Davao, Mindanao. The number of registered entertainment industry has also increased from 68 in 1993 to 90 in 1996. This number does not include the hang-outs of prostituted women and the massage parlors, which in 1993 numbered only 12.

The number of registered "sex workers" has doubled from 1993 to 1996. There are now 1,525 registered "sex workers" in Davao City. The GROs (Guest Relations Officers) are the latest addition to the list of "sex workers." They are found in karaoke bars, the newest hit in the city.

A cause for alarm is the increasing the number of children getting involved in prostitution. For example, 60% of the 30 "hard-core street children" (children who do not go back to their parents) in Cubao, Quezon City suffer from gonorrhea. According to CHIPS, the NGO servicing children in Cubao, about 50% of the street children of Cubao are forced into prostitution by their relatives, in Zamboanga City in Mindanao, many street children are part-time "sex providers."

There are about 3,000 street children in Davao City. Some of them have already entered prostitution. Many start as "bunto" (children who have sex for free even before their menstruation) and graduate into paid sex.

There is also an increasing number of minors (below 18 years old) being hired as GROs. About 20% of GROs in Metro Manila are minors who enter the profession at age 14. These reports only show that "globalization" in the Philippines is feeding on women's and children's bodies.

### **Cheap, Repressed and Flexible Labor**

"Globalization," Philippine style, is very hostile to women workers. In their desire to gain huge profits, MNCs/TNCs, with the collusion of government, have gone into flexibilization scheme which not only depresses wages but also ensures a docile labor force. Included in these schemes are contractualization or casualization of labor, forced overtime,

lengthening labor hours per day to shorten work week, and subcontracting to home-based workers.

Labor flexibilization is widespread in factories within the export processing zones (EPZs) and in the retail and telecommunications industry, where more than 70% of the workers are women.

For example, the Cavite Eco-zone has 110 factories majority of which are involved in electronics, semiconductor, and clothes and garments industry. Most of their workers are women. In a 1996 survey conducted by the Workers Assistance Center among 142 workers from 17 factories within the Cavite Eco-zone, it was found that:

1. The percentage of workers receiving the minimum wage of P155/day has decreased;
2. Women suffer long hours of work (10-12 hours per day), forced overtime and in most cases, the overtime pay is lower than what is legislated;
3. Practice mass layoffs during the off-season is prevalent;
4. Long periods of apprenticeship and probation, contractualization of workers is practiced; and
5. Implementation of no-union policy in export processing zones.

Labor flexibilization is also practiced in the retail industry. In six Shoe Mart Department Stores in Makati, Cubao, North EDSA, Carriedo, Harrison and the head office, there are a total of 10,000 workers, 85% of whom are women. Only 1,571 or about 15% are regular workers. These department stores use the following scheme of flexibilization.

1. Contractualization of labor. Most of its contractuales are sales-clerks, cashiers and checkers, the majority of whom are women.
2. Promo girls of the consignor. They compose the majority of salesgirl in the selling area who are not regular. They sell the products of the consignors. They may be regular workers of the consignor but most are agency hired. They are required to follow rules and regulations of the SM Company but are not qualified to join a union. They are banned from talking to regular workers in the selling area.

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3. Spin-off. This entails the transfer of a number of regular SM department or section to a consignee. Regular workers from this separated department or section are then transferred to other sections. The newly spun-off department then hires contractual.
4. Hiring of Iglesia ni Kristo (INK—Church of Christ) members. INK members are banned from joining any organization so they are preferred by SM.

The open-door policy for trade and investments in the country, such as the establishment of export processing zones, has led to the closure of small businesses and resulted in retrenchment of workers. Coupled with flexibilization of labor, women are pushed out of the production processes to the more informal work in communities such as sub-contracting jobs such as garments, ceramics, Christmas lights where they are paid even lower wages.

### **Migration**

The development programs of the Ramos government have made life more miserable for women in and outside the country. With increasing poverty, massive migration of women to other countries occurs almost every day. POEA statistics show that in 1995, 654,022 labor contractuales left the Philippines. In fact, the government's export-of-labor policy finds greater encouragement in the MTPDP, as it is a top dollar-earner of the Philippine economy. During the first quarter of 1996, Filipino migrants' contribution to the economy reached US\$ 1.69B, an increase of 54% from the total remittance in 1995.

With APEC, greater labor mobility will be encouraged even more. This news is a relief to the government of Ramos since many of the traditional destinations of Filipino migrants like the US and Saudi Arabia are adopting stricter policies towards migrants.

However, while export of labor will be encouraged, borders for migrants are being closed down as immigration policies in many country destinations are becoming more and more restrictive. At the wishes of the host countries and depending on their need, they close and open borders for migrants without considering the enormous contribution of migrant

workers to their economy. Many of these workers have formed the backbone of host countries' economy such as the US.

According to estimates, about 55% of Filipino OCWs are women. In the host countries, many of them are found in jobs that are oftentimes low-paying, dirty and dangerous, in jobs that treat them as commodities and as slaves. The absence of government's policy to protect migrants increases the vulnerability of these Filipinas.

Countless Filipinas have become victims of trafficking either for prostitution or for labor. The export-of-labor policy of the government has opened the doors widely for legal and illegal recruiters preying on young, innocent and poor Filipinas ready to accept whatever jobs will ease the poverty of their families. Such poverty and helplessness make them even more vulnerable to the hawks in the trade. The magnitude of women trafficked remains an estimate as women remain silent about their plight for fear of reprisals or stigmatization.

Reports of violence against migrant Filipinas continue to grab spaces in our newspapers. Forty thousand cases of abuse of Filipina migrants were recorded by MIGRANTE International in 1995. The organization says that it is the women migrants who experience the worse kind of abuse.

According to Congressman Candazo, two dead OCWs arrive at NAIA every day. According to OWWA, in the first four months of 1996, 105 OCWs died outside the country, 49 became insane and 62 had various physical complaints. The social cost resulting from migration is a cause for alarm as social disintegration occurs. Families are separated, children are hooked on drugs, reports of early marriages and changing cultural values are some of the effects of migration in our society.

Social services such as health, education and housing facilities are now increasingly being privatized, thereby hijacking the prices of services for consumers. With cutbacks in government subsidies for services, the burden of ensuring the health of the family, of teaching the children and of making both ends meet to support the family is passed on to women.

Political repression continues to reign in our country. Our government uses its military institution to suppress people's resistance against its policies and programs. Illegal arrests and detention, salvaging and harassment continue to haunt militant groups and organizations. The

right to unionize and hold strikes are suppressed by various executive orders and laws.

### **Our Alternative**

Proponents of APEC have criticized us as having no concrete alternatives to the globalization process and that if we do not join them, then we will become an international pariah.

We say that a genuine agrarian reform and national industrialization are our concrete alternatives to the economic development program being implemented by the government. If 70 percent of the population who are peasants own the land that they till, then the problem of food supply and income will be solved. Coupled with national industrialization that will produce machines to encourage industrial production and open up jobs for the workers and ensure the absorption of women into the productive processes, we are sure a genuine development of our economy, benefiting the majority of the people will be realized. And women will enjoy the fruits of their labor.

In politics, we see a government put in place by the people through their concerted actions. In this government, people from the basic sectors of society will be represented. This government will also ensure that women shall have ample representation. Lastly, this government will be run and managed by the collective efforts of the people.

### **Women's Action**

I am sure that you also share our experiences, and our stories if woven together will show that imperialist globalization will massacre millions of people. Unless poor and oppressed women of the world unite to struggle against imperialist globalization, our fate will remain as that of being displaced, commodified and made slaves. The onus to liberate ourselves from this oppression and exploitation is by making our movements strong and we can only do this by educating, organizing and mobilizing women to take hold of their destiny. It is also imperative for us to forge international solidarity among the toiling women for a united struggle of women together with other oppressed and exploited peoples of the world is needed to liberate us from the binds of imperialism.

## Displacement, Commodification and Modern-Day Slavery of Women

So as I close this presentation, let me make a call. Let us build international solidarity among the toiling women of the world and launch a concerted campaign to end “globalization” and imperialist domination of our economic, political and cultural life. Let us share our experiences and lessons in struggles and be strengthened by them. Let’s develop our capability as a united force to pursue our vision of a just and humane society for our children and the next generation.



# Impact of Structural Adjustment Programs on Women Workers

PRESENTED BY NANETTE MIRANDA, SECRETARY-GENERAL KILUSAN NG MANGGAGAWANG KABABAIHAN PHILIPPINES

*WISAP-1994*

Colleagues, allow me to relay the solidarity greetings of the Kilusan ng Manggagawang Kababaihan (KMK) and the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) to the participants of this gathering.

I understand that I am going to share our experience on the impact of structural adjustments on us as women workers. So, my sharing will deal mostly with this aspect as well as our views on the SAP.

The Structural Adjustment Programs, so-called by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, have been with us since way back in the first quarter of 1970, allegedly to remedy or to spur our country's economy toward recovery.

This was designed by the IMF-WB allegedly to remedy the growing trade and budget deficits of the then Marcos administration, which was coupled with a ballooning foreign debt. It required the Marcos government and the succeeding governments to approach the crisis by instituting harsh economic measures. Among these measures are the big cut in budget allocations to health, education and basic services in favor of debt repayment allocation and military spending, privatization of government-owned and controlled corporations, increase in taxes, and promotion of human capital.

The major component of the IMF-WB adjustments is the structuring of our economic development thrust that is foreign investment-anchored, export-oriented and import-dependent, and labor-intensive; an economic development based on an industrialization scheme that puts more stress on light industries and making the country part of the global assembly units of transnational corporations.

But this set-up has made our country's economy captive to the fluctuations of the international market. Aside from our country, other Asian countries are also prescribed with the same pattern of adjustment pro-

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grams, thereby creating competition among nations to have foreign investments into their respective countries and be a part of the global assembly unit. Competing countries have to devise policies and schemes that would suit the whims of foreign big business which, of course, are being carried out at the expense of the workers. In our country, these efforts translate to policies and schemes to hold down our wages, institutionalize labor repression, and liberalize the investment climate. Part of these efforts is to make foreign investors very much comfortable in making profits in the free port zones where firms can operate tax-free for five years and where labor laws are restrictive.

Under the Marcos administration, this industrialization plan was supposed to be realized through the creation of export processing zones like the Bataan, Mactan and Baguio Export Processing Zones. This was enlarged by the Aquino administration with the creation of industrial estates or enclaves that can be privately owned or run by local government officials—a refinement of the export processing zone concept.

A test case on the feasibility of industrial estates is the CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) industrial development plan. This was supplemented with the implementation of the Countryside Agro-Industrial Development Strategy (CADIS) which envisions the formation of agri-business plantations and processing complexes in the countryside. It also provides the establishment of small and medium-scale industries (SMIs) through the Kalakalan 20 which in effect legalizes the employment of women workers and children in sweatshops and home-based industries without having to conform with provisions of the law regarding wages and benefits.

The present administration under Gen. Fidel V. Ramos has continued the programs of the past governments with slight variations. Based on the targets and policies set by the IMF-WB and adopted by the Ramos administration as their own, it laid down the grounds for their Philippines 2000 program. The campaign line is NIC-hood by the Year 2000 under its so-called Philippines 2000 Development Plan.

To achieve NIC-hood, the government intends to carry out a wide range of policies and structural reforms that involve “sweeping, perma-

ment changes or improvements in the basic sectors to achieve the objectives of the plan.”<sup>2</sup>

In line with the vision to make the country competitive internationally, trade liberalization and tariff reforms shall be pursued along with increased investments to infrastructure and human capital. This means that Philippine goods and services will be priced in a way that allows them to compete with foreign-made products and services; while the manpower and infrastructure needed to make investing here more conducive will be assured.<sup>3</sup>

The government has unveiled a five-year Medium Term Philippine Development Plan. Among its targets are (a) to increase foreign investment from 22 percent to 33 percent by 1998; (b) to create some 1.1 million jobs annually from 1993 to 1998; (c) to triple exports to US\$27 billion by 1998; and (d) to harness the country’s human resources to international competitiveness.

To achieve these targets, a further liberalized investment climate and policies are to be implemented to induce the entry of more solid investments. The come-ons also include the establishment of so-called regional industrialized centers (RICs) as growth corridors. These RICs are similar in nature and character to what we have at present in CALABARZON. Through these RICs, the government hopes to disperse the industries outside the national capital region allegedly to spur job creation in the countryside. It is noteworthy that, in the countryside, most of the local officials have private armies and the wages of workers are far lower than in Metro Manila.

To make these come-ons more palatable to the foreign investors, the Ramos administration has come up with the National Employment Plan. The employment plan is, of course, designed to obtain labor’s “cooperation” in the so-called quest for NIC-hood, giving away government posts to favored labor leaders and amendment of the existing labor laws to make it more restrictive in the exercise of basic trade union and human rights.

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<sup>2</sup> *Primer on Philippines*, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Side by side with this, the government moves to legalize the otherwise prohibited employers' practice of labor-only contracting and the removal of regulations on job subcontracting practices of business as well as that of apprenticeship and leadership programs.

Under the plan, one of the so-called measures to cushion the impact of structural adjustments in the economy is the promotion of overseas employment. Although this overseas employment program is presented as a mere stop-gap measure under the plan, the same has been declared as a "national economic strategy" incorporated in the National Employment Plan by the Secretary of the Department of Labor and Employment.

The above are to be undertaken to sell the country's industrial and trade potential to major suppliers of capital overseas like the USA, Japan, the European Community, Taiwan, South Korea, China, and the ASEAN countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia.

### **Impact of SAPs and Philippines 2000 on Women Workers**

The term structural adjustment is a misnomer if measured against its avowed objectives. In reality, we are still living in hard times and our situation is becoming more difficult.

A testament to the failure of Philippines 2000 is our continued impoverishment and underdevelopment. Data from an independent research agency, the Ibon Databank, indicated that, in the first quarter of this year, eight out of 10 Filipinos are under extremely poor poverty conditions earning below the poverty line. It is also estimated that 47 million Filipinos of the total population of 65 million are living below the poverty line.<sup>4</sup> Even the United Nations Development Plan ranked the Philippines the 80th among the 160 countries in the 1992 Human Development Index. The index combines life expectancy, literacy, and income indicators in measuring human development. The Philippines ranked below Sri Lanka and is on par with Mongolia.

Despite the growing poverty, unemployment, and the continuing crisis, the Ramos government still complies with the desires of the IMF-WB. Thirty-seven percent of our 1993 national budget is obligated as payment to our US\$33 billion foreign debt. Of the remaining, the military

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<sup>4</sup> Philippine Population as of 1994. The 1997 population is 72 million, more than half of whom are women.

gets the bigger chunk compared to the health and basic services. The poor are taxed heavily through indirect taxes like the Expanded Value-Added Tax, a tax on almost all basic consumer items, which was implemented last October and the direct taxes which are automatically deducted from the worker's salary every month.

Lately, the Ramos government called on the Senate to ratify the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Treaty, warning of the dire consequences if this is not done. The position of the people's organization on the ratification of GATT is that it will only further tighten foreign imperialist control and domination over the Philippine economy. It will only maintain our bankrupt economy in its backward and undeveloped state.

Through the years, GATT, far from promoting "free trade," has only succeeded in fixing the rules of global trade to favor the interest of First World countries and their transnational corporations (TNCs).

More so, GATT will further open up to foreign greed and exploitation the country's natural and foreign resources. To the workers, this means an intensification of the government's promotion of cheap and docile labor. Indeed, the results of the present agreement do not address this imbalance. GATT remains a "rich man's club" of the First World countries.

Added to the burden of the workers, the sacrificial lamb in every administration's economic development program is the emasculation of its basic human and trade union rights. For every project implemented in line with structural programs, workers find themselves continuously marginalized. As the cog vital to industrial development, we workers are being dehumanized. We are supposed to adjust, work and work, meet the quota, and be very productive. Low wages, unsafe working conditions, and inadequate health protections, forced overtime, high quota job insecurity, discrimination on wages and promotion and reproductive rights are supposed to be non-issues for us. Yet, the government and IMF-WB want to remedy the economic crisis, to alleviate poverty and generate employment for us.

In general, as part of the working class, women workers are subjected to the same exploitative situations brought about by the imposition of the IMF-WB, be it in the workplace or in the community as a whole.

But women workers are doubly affected as they comprise the bulk of the workforce in the light manufacturing industries which are very sus-

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ceptible to changes in the world market. Women workers are preferably employed by these industries due to their dexterity, proverbial patience, and docility. Majority of these light manufacturing firms are in the export processing zones and industrial estates where labor laws are seldom observed or rendered imperative by local officials.

Owing to the unstable nature of light industries anchored on industrialization schemes, women workers are displaced when the market contracts. A large number of women workers are also displaced when firms, mostly engaged in garments and apparels and electronics, relocate to other Asian countries for much cheaper labor and more lucrative investment opportunities.

Further measures like the Kalakalan 20 of the Aquino government, which is being continued by the Ramos government virtually offered the women workers and children at the mercy of unscrupulous employers. Home-based industries and sweatshops that employ less than 10 persons, which are mostly engaged in job subcontracting of garments and apparels are not covered by existing labor laws on standards and benefits. Majority of the women workers employed in these home-based industries and sweatshops receive as low as 50 pesos a day (US \$2) up to this day where the legislated minimum wage is 145 pesos a day (US\$5.80).<sup>5</sup> In most cases, they are paid on a per-piece rate basis.

Aside from these direct exploitative practices, practices, there are numerous cases of sexual harassment against women workers. We view these sexual advances and sexual abuse as a form of authority assertion in the workplace. It is intended to perpetuate the exploitation of women's labor as most of the perpetrators are either supervisors, managers, or security guards in factories to cow women workers, to make women feel so vulnerable and weak, to instill fear among them and force them not to go against or complain about violations of their rights. In several instances, this has prevented women from unionizing.

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<sup>5</sup> As of May 1997, the minimum wage in the Philippines was 185 pesos, or at US\$1=PhP29.03, was about US\$6.38 a day. A year later when the peso devalued to US\$1=PhP39.00, the minimum wage equivalent fell further to about US\$4.74 a day. As bad as it already is, however, this minimum wage does not cover workers under labor flexibilization schemes, and worse, the said wage is not enough to address a Filipino family's basic needs.

Moreover, the situation of women workers is further aggravated by the culturally and traditionally imposed roles on them in the family. Making both ends meet, child-rearing and household chores are responsibilities imposed upon women workers. Thus, as the economy contracts owing to faulty economic thrust, women as workers and mothers are made to bear a double burden. When survival mechanisms are no longer available from within the country, women workers are then forced to take on the job of overseas domestic helpers and, sometimes, entertainers. More so since the government itself promotes and engages in placement for jobs abroad. This can be gleaned from the Ramos government's plan to promote overseas employment as a "national economic strategy" incorporated in its National Employment Plan.

### **Call for Unity**

In this light, KMK and KMU propose to this conference that we unite in this struggle against the disastrous policy dictates of the IMF-WB to safeguard against the vital interests of workers and the marginalized sector as a whole. We would like to propose that a campaign directed towards a government that willingly obeys the dictates of the IMF-WB be undertaken. Again, our solidarity with all who take the time to be present in this conference.

Thank you.



# Impact of World Trade on Peasant Women in the Philippines

PAPER PRESENTED BY **Ms. NIEVES SARCOS**

**ASIAN PEASANT WOMEN NETWORK (APWN)**

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PEASANT WOMEN IN THE PHILIPPINES (AMIHAN)**

The Philippines is basically a feudal agrarian, pre-industrial economy. The vast and fertile lands in the countryside are owned by a few rich families, while the landless majority wallow in extreme levels of poverty and work in the most backward conditions. In the urban and town centers are pockets of small to medium manufacturing of products, most of which are geared for the international market.

## **Unequal Sharing in Agricultural Resources**

The feudal structure of the economy is the fundamental cause of poverty of the peasants in the rural areas. Of the 11.2M total labor force in agriculture, 8.5M are landless. This is based on the government data which counts men primarily as farmers and therefore part of the labor force. However, the number of landless peasant women and women farm workers approximates that of their male counterparts. This is based on the total rural female population within the age range of 15 years and above, with a total number of 8 million.

The tenancy system based on a 70/30 and 60/40 sharing scheme, in favor of the landlord, predominates. Here, millions of tenants toil in the most backward and oppressive conditions.

For instance, in the production of coconut meat (copra), work is done mostly with the bare hands, which necessarily extends the number of hours spent to be able to produce. During harvest season, which is done every three months, the dawn to dusk work period is common, and every member of the family is mobilized to work. For a hectare of land planted with 250 coconut trees, the tenant family gets a share of P130.00 or US\$5 per harvest, while the landlord gets P450.00 or US\$172 per harvest. The whole process of copra production involves the labor of the entire peasant

family, yet they end up getting only a meager share of the product of their labor at the end of the harvest season.

In sugar plantations, the quota system, an equally oppressive system, prevails. Here the landlord contracts the labor of the man for the set phase of the production of sugar cane (i.e., planting of the cane seedlings) but the entire family, the wife and the children need to be mobilized to be able to finish the work contracted by the landlord. Clearly, the labor of the women and the children is not accounted for; even worse, they are not paid.

In both situations, the lives of the peasant women are doubly hard. Since much of the prime arable land is planted to export/commercial crops that benefit landlords, bureaucrats and capitalists, women are forced to till far-flung rocky uplands for food production and supply needed by the family's survival. They also engage in nonagricultural related activities to augment scarce family income. Prevailing patrilocal land ownership, meanwhile, incapacitates women to access credit, training and other endeavors that can help them increase their productivity. Thus, they toil as arduously as their male counterparts in the fields and income-generating activities; but at the beginning and end of the day, they still have to do household work until the middle of the night, dictated by the feudal-patriarchal values and thinking that it is their role to do so.

### **Impact of the Imposed Economic Policies**

Recent history clearly shows that the imposition of the world trade system in this rural agrarian structure has intensified the exploitation of the peasants and their families. Our coconut and sugar products, which were primarily geared to the world market, are cases in point. In the 1960s to 1970s, vast agricultural lands were planted in these crops, based on a huge demand in the international market. The sugar and coconut landlords raked millions in profits, but never did these profits trickle down to the peasant families. Nor did this uplift the lives of the tenants and farm workers. On the contrary, as the demand in the international market rose, the exploitation of the peasant women, men and their children also intensified. When the demand for these crops in the world market plunged down in the early 80s, the peasants and their families were left in deep poverty and misery. Hundreds of children on Negros island, one of

the major producers of sugar in the country, died of famine, malnutrition, and diseases.

This time, the new world trade regimen is more demanding for more agricultural products geared to the changing tastes, preferences, and life-styles of people in the rich countries and the needs for raw materials of multinational corporations. Through the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) which is being touted by the Ramos government as the country's vehicle to industrialization in the year 2000, our government is speeding up the redirection of our agriculture to meet these demands. The government hopes to make use of the upcoming APEC Summit to showcase its so-called achievements in this area.

Already up for implementation under the Medium-Term Agricultural Development Plan (MTADP) is the reduction by 65% of the total hectares planted to rice and corn, the basic staple food of the Filipinos. The rice/corn lands are being converted to fields of what they call "high-value export crops" like asparagus, bananas, eucalyptus and cut flowers such as anthuriums and orchids. The rest of the lands will also be transformed into pasturelands for cattle breeding. 3.1M hectares currently devoted to producing rice and corn will be converted for the planting of high value crops. This will be implemented despite deep shortages in the supply of rice and corn in the country.

In many of the large coconut and sugar haciendas, various schemes are now being undertaken by the landlords, abetted by the government, to eject the peasants/tenants from the lands. There is massive cutting of coconut trees, which is becoming the basis for driving the peasants out of the lands and converting them into other crops/pro-duce for export. In Guihulngan, Negros Oriental, 1,000 hectares of land tilled by 300 peasant families are planned to be converted into pasturelands for foreign breed cattle.

This shifting of crops to meet the demands of the international market foretells no hope for the peasant women and their families. Apart from the intensification of landlessness among peasant women and the threat to food security, there are other costs. High-value crops make intensive use of chemicals for increased productivity. Many studies have already shown that it is usually peasant women and children who are more exposed to these destructive chemicals. In the banana and pineapple plantations owned by

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DOLEFIL-STANFILCO in Mindanao, women agricultural workers are constantly exposed to pesticides and other agro-chemicals which are extensively used in almost all major operations of the plantations. The women are hired as ground sprayers, harvesters, canners, and packers because "women do not smoke and are 'easier' to handle."

Moreover, as mothers socially molded to assume the role of family nurse, they assume a heavier responsibility when they take care of their families who get sick due to pesticide exposure. On top of this, they become automatic replacements for the unfinished work of their husbands and children in the fields.

The MTDP is also now transforming rural communities and its fertile lands into what it calls rural industrial centers (RICs) which are nothing but enclaves for attracting foreign investors to undertake industrial, residential and tourism projects. Of the 23 areas designated as RICs, 16 will cover about 120,000 agricultural lands. Complementing this plan is Republic Act 7652, the Investors Lease Act which allows foreigners to directly lease lands up to 50 to 75 years.

When this plan was proclaimed, landlords intensified their campaign to keep control of their lands and accumulate more lands. In this, the government, through the President's Office, the Department of Agrarian Reform and the Department of Natural Resources, actively takes part in defrauding and criminalizing peasants as a scheme to eject the peasants from their lands.

Both government and landlords are working hard on taking back lands from the farmers and offering them for lease to foreign multinational investors. In only two years after the implementation of the MTPDP, 118,000 hectares of agricultural lands have already been converted for other uses.

For instance, many cases of lands, which are already up for distribution and were already distributed through the Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) were not spared from confiscation. A case in point is the issue of Fil-Estate's Harbortown in Batangas.

This project includes the building of four golf courses, a luxury hotel and subdivisions is now a major issue. Many of the lands included in the project are being tilled by agrarian reform beneficiaries. The farmers dis-

covered that their certificates were nullified without their knowing it and that their productive lands were declared barren and eligible for conversion and subsequently sold by the government to Fil-Estate.

In Panglao, Bohol, a full-blown land conversion for a tourism project is being implemented. Unfortunately, farmers within this targeted land, 200 of who are women, only have tax declarations to show. Very few have land titles. They are now faced with displacement from their homes and their livelihoods. There are no relocation sites that have been provided. In a similar condition are the fisherfolk who cannot fish any more as they have been banned from their regular fishing grounds.

These problems are now luring many young rural women to look for other options to survive. Already, many cases of young peasant women being hired as prostitutes for the beach resorts in Panglao have been reported.

An initial investigation of the lives of peasant women and their families displaced in the grandiose CALABARZON project, (a development plan that aims to transform the five provinces of South Luzon namely Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon into industrial zones) shows that the peasant women and their children ended up in irregular jobs with very low pay, and in work conditions that place them in very vulnerable positions. Many women now double as caddies in the golf courses developed in the tourist areas, domestic helpers in the town centers, service workers in restaurants and entertainment establishments such as karaoke bars and beer houses. This kind of work has made the women more vulnerable to sexual violence/harassment. Others landed in the most menial jobs, such as cleaning bottles of soft drinks at PhP0.03 per bottle.

This pattern can also be seen among peasant women affected by the infrastructure and other development projects of government in Iloilo. In Leon, Tubungan and Ingore, road-widening projects have led to the ruination of farmlands, crops and destruction of homes. This situation has forced more peasant women, this time, even girls of elementary school age, to look for work in the town centers as laundrywomen, domestic helpers, and salesladies. However, the demand for such work has been limited because there are too many women already looking for that same kind of work.

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Moreover, many people from the middle class are also doing away with hiring people for such work as they have less income now. Thus, once again, these very young peasant women are forced to work in beer houses, videokes and other entertainment areas where the demand is increasing.

The commitments of the Philippine government to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in the area of agriculture is foreboding another grim scenario for the peasant women and their families. With its commitment to reduce tariffs, the country virtually is open to the free entry of all agricultural products. Even traditional products of the peasants such as onions, garlic, potatoes which were previously protected by laws were not spared in their commitments. Imported garlic and the like now flood local markets. The Philippine government is still dismantling other restriction laws on these products to be able to meet its commitment to the world trade body.

Of special concern not only to the peasants but to the general Filipino consumer as well is the commitment of the government to import rice at graduated levels and subject to change depending on the discretion of the Philippine president. Only six months after the accession of the Philippine government to the WTO in January 1995, the country rushed headlong into a severe rice crisis. Prices of rice doubled in so short a time and even tripled in the rural areas. The government claimed low productivity, which led to a rice shortage as the cause of the crisis. Consequently, it immediately imported millions of metric tons of rice from the international market. However, the efforts of militant peasant groups proved that the crisis was not real. It was a government scheme to justify its importation so it could meet its commitments to the world trade body.

Meanwhile, the crisis has forced millions of poor Filipino hungry, reducing to just once a day, and in extreme cases, totally foregoing their consumption of this grain. Millions continue to go hungry up to this day as prices have not gone back to pre-crisis days.

These commitments have led to the undermining of the prices of the products of local farmers. This would, in the long run, discourage farmers from producing as it would force them into bankruptcy. The backward conditions for farming and the dictates of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the government to withdraw all forms of farm subsidies have limited their capacity to increase productivity and, therefore, their capacity to compete with farmers from other countries working

under more stable, including their government's support, and advanced conditions/technology. A case in point is the experience of approximately 50,000 Benguet potato farmers. With the influx of machine-sliced, ready-to-fry potatoes from the United States, prices collapsed to almost half of what they were in 1990.

For peasant women, this also leads to limiting all the more the options to augment scarce family income. Rural women, when not involved in farming activities, are also responsible for vegetable production and poultry/livestock raising (a backyard endeavor), which are additional sources of food and income for the family. But even these "fallback" income and food sources will be wiped out with the free entry of potatoes, garlic as well as livestock such as pigs, goats, and chicken.

Completing the scenario, the Philippine president now has come out with a Presidential order, allowing bio-prospecting in the rural areas requiring bio-prospectors only a minimal fee for every plant and animal species they are able to find in the communities. Through our organizations of peasant women at the barangay or village level, we are now able to monitor groups asking the local people to gather for them certain plants, which they in turn buy at very low prices.

The running prices of these plants in dried and fresh forms are P3.00 to P5.00 or US\$0.11-0.19 per kilo. Samples of these plants are (in their local names): "banaba," "sambong," "bayabas," "damong maria," "tsaang gubat," and many more. These plants are commonly found in the rural communities and are used by the rural folks in treating common ailments such as cough and colds, boils, diarrhea, fever and many more.

If these intrusions into the rural communities continue, there are fears that these plant species will be captured, developed, and declared as the property of some groups. Then royalties will have to be paid once these plants are used as they are used today.

### **Militarization as a State Instrument**

If landlords/government/foreign investors are not able to do it through the laws, fraud and deception, the use of force by the military, Philippine National Police or hired mercenaries is employed. The lands in Negros Oriental being converted to pasture lands mentioned above is one

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example. Military forces are being used by the landlord Jerry Paras-Trinidad to drive the peasants out of their lands.

In Tartaria, Silang, Cavite, only a few kilometers south of Manila, the landlord Aguinaldo, the grandson of Emilio Aguinaldo, the first President of the Philippines, has for years used various means to eject the peasants out of the lands. Because of the sustained resistance of the farmers, he has used harassment and violence. The most recent incident is the massacre of a peasant leader Nestor de Guzman, 55 years old, his wife, Teofila and his eldest son in Lumil, Silang Cavite last October 19, 1996.

Another scheme is the criminalization of farmers occupying targeted lands for conversion. In San Isidro, Leyte, an ex-justice filed charges of qualified theft against farmers, most of whom were women whose children joined them in jail, for harvesting 500 coconuts which the peasants have planted in their own lands. Ironically, these peasants are legitimate holders of Certificates of Land Ownership Award (CLOA).

### **Peasant Women's Response: Action and Struggles**

However, peasants from various parts of the country continue to struggle for their rights. Many are resisting the confiscation of their lands. Peasant women in Tartaria, who are members of AMIHAN, are in the forefront of the struggle to resist the schemes of the Aguinaldo. They have stood in front of bulldozers, manned their barricades against the military and have been active in education work.

AMIHAN has since been actively opposing the designs of the GATT. In the Uruguay Round Negotiations in Brussels in 1990, we became part of the farmers' group from Asia that lobbied against the agricultural provisions. In 1992, we held a dialogue conference of peasant and rural women from various countries in Asia on the effects of GATT and Structural Adjustment Programs as imposed by the IMF/WB. In various international gatherings, such as the Fourth World Conference in China, and in our own local organizations, we have propagated our basic analysis and positions.

Today, with GATT negotiations completed and the commitments of our government now being implemented and with new impositions from the forthcoming

APEC summit, we reiterate once more the validity of the basic position we declared in our 1992 conference:

The General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) uses the siren call of trade liberalization as a guise for furthering the control and profit extraction by multinational corporations (MNCs).

Through the removal of trade barriers and the imposition of the so-called intellectual property rights, GATT would further accelerate our displacement and marginalization as farmers, as producers and the destruction of the biodiversity of our rural communities.

As producers, home managers and community organizers, we Asian women are the frontline casualties of the GATT and structural adjustment programs (SAPs).

SAPs and GATT are depleting our food sources, are making us slaves to MNCs for our seeds and agricultural inputs, are eroding what meager income we have, are forcing us to work longer and harder. SAP and GATT mean hunger and malnutrition, the deterioration of our health and that of our families. In many instances, SAPs and GATT have forcibly created single-parent households because of their departure from our villages or from our countries in search of jobs. SAP and GATT mean additional physical, emotional and psychological stress forms as we balance our economic, mothering and household roles. SAPs and GATT have increased the violence we suffer as battered wives within our households, as harassed community activists and as women who have to prostitute ourselves in our countries or overseas to earn for our families.<sup>6</sup>

Today, as we suffer the deleterious effects of the implementation of the policies of this world trade body, we reiterate our commitment to resist and fight. The key instrument for this goal are the organizations of peasant women and women farmers and their families.

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<sup>6</sup> Excerpts from the 1992 "Antipolo Declaration of Asian Peasant Women."

## The Women's Emancipation Movement in the Philippines

Based on our experience in AMIHAN, be it a case of asserting our rights to the land, resisting eviction and militarization or creating conditions for lightening of our workloads in the fields and at home through self-help systems and strengthening labor exchange practices, our organization is our weapon.

Bringing peasant women and farm workers into organizations where they are able to discuss their problems, unite on a common analysis, and plan common actions for addressing their problems is a time-tested strategy of AMIHAN. Without an organization, the peasant women will perpetually be left at the mercy of the authority of the landlords and the whole set of feudal patriarchal values that keep them voiceless, meek, and subservient. With their own organizations, the collective creative drive will be freed, making them able to control and set directions for their lives, their families, and their community. With an organization, the peasant women will be able to resist forces that wreak havoc in effecting genuine change not only in the rural communities and in our country but also contribute in the overall efforts of oppressed working women of the world to resist the impositions of global capital.

# Overview of Indigenous Women's Situation

BY VICTORIA TAULI-CORPUZ

*(Excerpts from keynote address delivered during the First Asian Indigenous Women's Conference, held in Baguio City, Philippines, Jan. 24-30 1993. This article appeared in Laya 1/93)*

## Land rights

Our history as indigenous peoples basically revolves around our attempts to protect our ancestral homelands from incursions and destruction.

Asian governments are in a mad scramble to become NICs or newly industrialized countries. The Asian tiger and dragon economies have become the envy and model of many southern or Third World countries. The Philippine government, for one, is dreaming of becoming an NIC by the year 2000. Yet, if we look at the impact of the high-speed, export-oriented industrialization on the land and environment, and on the women and indigenous peoples (Taiwan's case) we know this is not for the rest of us.

The world is faced with an ecological crisis which is already of a disastrous magnitude. This crisis has put to question the dominant economic development model and its concepts of economic growth, industrialization, and progress. For the indigenous peoples, however, this economic model has always been under question.

The appropriation of our lands and the destruction of our natural resources which started during the colonial period still continue. This time, however, it is not a done through direct colonization. The former colonial powers were able to set up multilateral institutions, particularly the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade.

World Bank loans are given to ensure the more systematic integration of the borrower countries into the global market. Thus, we are now subjected to structural adjustment policies which translate into more resource exploitation for export, reduction in state expenditures for services, import liberalization and more taxes.

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After UNCED there has been a lot of talk of the unsustainability of this mainstream economic model of production and consumption. There is a growing recognition that our indigenous agriculture and resource management systems may provide some answers to the environmental crisis. However, we still have to see how this beautiful rhetoric can be implemented by the economic superpowers, multilateral institutions and governments.

In so far as our present experiences can tell, our lands are still being appropriated and ravaged. Open-pit mining operations are expanding, destructive energy projects funded by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank are still being implemented even in the face of massive protests. Forest destruction continues through logging, conversion to agricultural plantation, mining and building energy projects like dams and geothermal plants.

With the mad rush of Asian countries to become NICs, we can already foresee what this means to us and our rights to our ancestral lands. Resistance in many of our communities continues but the magnitude of resistance is proportionally matched by military operations and massive deception.

### **Militarization, Ethnocide and Genocide**

The national security ideology remains strong among many of the Asian countries. Just recently, the Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew was invited to be a guest of the Philippine government. He said that if we want development, then we should have less democracy.

Indonesian counter-insurgency and national security experts are often brought to the Philippines to advise the military and government officials on how to put an end to the longest running revolutionary movement in Asia. The "Indonesian solution" to insurgency is the model which right-wing military rebels always refer to.

In Burma, the military junta which put itself into power in 1988 organized the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) which is an instrument of repression. Major military offensives are launched against the Karens who live near the Thai border and the Kachins near the China border.

The number of refugees going to Thailand and Bangladesh increase by the day, and villages along the frontiers are burned and destroyed. Indigenous women bear the burden of taking care not only of orphaned children but of the whole communities of refugees as well. They are even abducted and forced to carry loads of ammunition during military operations.

Here in the Philippines, indigenous peoples' areas in the Cordillera and Mindanao are targets of the "total war" policy of the government. This has reached ethnocidal proportions such that our distinct identities as indigenous peoples are being obliterated. In Marag Valley, where sustained bombing and evacuation operations are done, genocide is committed against the Aggays. Cases of indigenous women getting raped, sexually harassed, forcibly recruited into the paramilitary forces have been documented in almost all the Cordillera provinces.

Members of women's organizations are subjected to harassment in military detachments found between their barrios and the town centers.

Malaysia has an Internal Security Act (ISA) which is used against all forms of dissent. Victims range from opposition politicians, union activists, to indigenous peoples who are protesting the destruction of their forests.

Organizations which are not officially registered with government in Indonesia are illegalized. Massacres like what happened in East Timor in November 1991 are still committed, especially against indigenous peoples who are fighting for decolonization.

### **Violence Against Women**

Aside from being subjected to military and state violence, indigenous women are also victims of domestic violence and violence committed in the name of tradition. We hear about the experiences of Indian women who end up as prostitutes after being offered to a god. In a few places in India, women are still burned along with the funeral pyre of their husbands.

While some indigenous peoples' communities have very strict sanctions against rape or wife-battering, these are slowly being erased. Charges of rape have to be brought to modern courts which are dependent on laws and approaches that are not women-friendly.

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The development of tourism and the need of governments to produce foreign exchange for debt servicing have also affected the indigenous women directly.

Sexual trafficking is a new phenomenon which is happening in some indigenous communities. In Thailand, the number of young indigenous women being brought to the cities and forced to become prostitutes is increasing. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of persons infected with the HIV and AIDS virus.

Some overseas indigenous women pushed to work abroad as domestic helpers bring home stories of how they were sexually molested or raped by their employers.

### **Reproductive Health Situation**

Generally, we can say that health services for indigenous women are hardly available.

Most of our communities are in remote areas which cannot be reached by vehicles. The situation has worsened in countries which are heavily indebted to foreign and multilateral banks. In the Philippines around 40 percent of our national budget goes to the payment of foreign and domestic debts. The budget for social services, like health, is decreased.

The rare times that suddenly we find the government seemingly concerned about our health are when they try to talk about the need to control population growth. Depopulation programs have been forced upon women in order to control their fertility. Take the case of Bangladesh, where forced mass sterilizations are done, including the use of women as guinea pigs in population control experiments.

### **Transmigration Policies**

On the other hand, governments also have programs where they move people into indigenous communities in the name of national assimilation. These transmigration policies have been done in areas like the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, West Papua and East Timor in Indonesia, and Nagaland in India. The net effect is that the indigenous people become the minority population in their own ancestral lands.

## Angie and Flor: Two Filipinas in Singapore

ARTICLE FROM *WOMEN OF COURAGE*, PUBLISHED BY GABRIELA

*Editors' Note: Flor Salamunding Contemplacion was born in 1956 in Masbate, the ninth of ten children. Her parents were peasant-fisher folks. Her father died in a dynamite fishing accident when she was just four years old. She attended elementary school at Masbate and later in Manila through her elder sister. It was an on-and-off attendance because of the scarcity of money. She finished elementary school at the age of 15.*

*Flor worked as a domestic helper for a neighbor in Manila and later, in Santa Isabel, Laguna. It was there where she met her future husband, Efren, who was a truck driver's helper. They got married. Flor was then 17 and Efren, 14. They had four children.*

*In 1986, Flor left for Singapore to support her children after she and Efren separated. In 1991, she was arrested allegedly for the murder of a friend, Delia Maga and Delia's four-year-old ward, Nicholas Huang.*

At the age of 19, three years after graduating from high school in Nueva Ecija, "Angie" Virginia Parumong went to Singapore with promises of a job by a man who recruited her and five other women. She went along because she needed the money as the eldest of five siblings. She had to help her father who worked in the farms, and her mother who sold native desserts. She also went along because:

We were told we do not have to spend extra for anything as our employer in Singapore will shoulder our expenses. These will be deducted from our wages later on. Besides, we have talked with bejeweled women who had also been recruited by the same person who had just arrived from Singapore. They told us that working in Singapore is so great they want to come back as soon as possible. They never told us what the jobs were though.

With only tourist passports, Angie and five others, the youngest of whom was only 16 years old, arrived in Singapore on March 10, 1993. Angie immediately sensed that something was wrong when a certain

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“Rowena,” a Filipina married, took their tickets and passports from them to a Singaporean. Their 16-year-old companion was also taken away from their group. They later learned that she was brought to a hotel and forced to provide sexual service to a customer. She was brought back the following morning by Rowena and her husband.

Angie and the other four women were herded to Rowena's house where the couple told them they have to work as prostitutes to pay off their US\$2,000 debts incurred for the travel expenses, clothes, etc. They were told that one customer will pay US\$100 which would go to payment of their debts. They were also told that the cost of their daily meals, additional clothes, and other expenses would be added to their total debt. In effect, this made it impossible for them to settle the ever-growing amount. When they resisted, Rowena and her husband beat them up, which left them bruised and scarred. To hide the physical injuries, the couple locked up the six women for two weeks until their bruises healed.

The group managed to escape one night when the couple went out of the house to check on their other “girls.” Angie and her companions broke the door down and they fled the house. They wandered over to Serangoon Plaza where a Singaporean fruit stand owner offered to give them food and shelter in return for their help in running the business. They accepted the offer.

After one month, their visas expired. The fruit stand owner gave them fare and hailed a taxicab for them to proceed to the Philippine embassy where she said they could seek help.

On the way to the embassy, the taxicab was stopped at checkpoint by Singaporean police. With their visas expired, Angie and her five companions were hauled off by the arresting officers to the Katong Immigration Center where they were forced to admit that they were in the country to prostitute. The police punched them, dunked their heads in drums of water and cursed them to get the answers they wanted. When they could no longer stand the physical beatings, the group decided to admit a crime they were not guilty of.

They were jailed in Changi Prison. After two weeks, they were brought to court with a Filipino interpreting for them. The interpreter said that it would be best if they admit to the crime. Trusting her advice, they pleaded

guilty. They were sentenced to 1 ½ months' imprisonment in Changi Prison. It was only then that Angie's parents came to know her fate.

Angie experienced extreme depression and attempted suicide. She was brought to the "sick bay" area of the prison where she met a fellow Filipina by the name of Flor Contemplacion.

Mama Flor was being avoided by other Filipina inmates because they said she was a murderer. So when I saw her in the sick bay, I tried to befriend her. At first, she told me to stay away. I persisted. I asked for her hometown. She told me she was from Santa Isabel in the province of Laguna and I lied to her that I came from that town, too. It must have worked since she became warm to me after that.

She asked me once, "aren't you afraid of me?" I answered, "no, why should I be afraid of you?" She said, "because I am a murderer." I asked, "is it true?" but she did not answer.

One and a half months later, Angie and her companions' prison sentence was completed. But, instead of being released, they were detained at the Katong immigration because they had no flight tickets going home. They stayed there for two weeks under inhumane conditions.

"We had no change of clothes and we were not allowed to take a bath," recounts Angie. "We smelled so bad. Sometimes, the guards would even forget to bring us our meals."

They were returned to Changi prison where Angie tried to commit suicide for the second time.

I was bound by the hands for six of seven months that I was in sick bay. I met Mama Flor again and told her that I was not able to return to the Philippines because I had no flight ticket and cannot afford to buy one.

## **Flor's Story**

"At noontime of May 4, 1991, Mama Flor went to the house where her friend Delia Maga worked as a domestic helper and babysitter for a four-year-old sick boy named Nicholas. Mama Flor said this boy's body

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would suddenly become rigid and this would last for some time," Angie recounts Flor's description of the boy's illness.

Delia was scheduled to come back to the Philippines and Mama Flor brought a few items for Delia to bring to Flor's children in Manila. They talked for a long time, during which the boy, who was in the bathroom, had another seizure and drowned. Delia called up the boy's father who, upon reaching home, beat Delia up in a fit of rage and strangled her with a cord, right in front of Mama Flor who was too afraid to do anything. When Delia slumped to the floor, Mama Flor fled the house.

Even without a sentence, Flor was transferred to the Changi Prison where she was visited by Elizabeth Buensuceso, then the consul general of the Philippine embassy. Buensuceso convinced her to plead guilty on reason of insanity since the charge would take up five years. Trusting Buensuceso, Flor followed the latter's advice.

Each time before going to court, the prison doctor would give pills to Flor. Soon after taking them, Flor would seem to change. "She does not recognize me and she sweats profusely all over."

After the court hearings, Flor would then start to vomit and experience severe chills.

One day after another court appearance, Flor said, "Angie, I suffer so much. I can't take it anymore. Everything I have has been taken away from me." She referred to her children, only one of whom was patiently writing to her. She would help Angie take a bath, feed her, and comb her hair. She would even lie down beside her at night and help put her to sleep.

"Mama Flor missed her children so much," said Angie, tears in her eyes. "It seems she was trying to baby me because her children are not there and she was very sad."

One day, in 1994, Angie, who by then could understand the Singaporean dialect and was back at the regular prison cell, overheard from the guards that Flor had been sentenced to death row. Angie screamed, hurled invectives at the guards, and ran towards the Record Section where convicted prisoners were led prior to their transfer to death row prison cells. She kept screaming "Mama Flor! Mama Flor!" and from the distance, she

heard Flor call out her name. They never got to meet because the guards stopped Flor.

A letter from Flor reached Angie through another inmate. It was for Flor's husband, Efren. The letter was found in Angie's possession. For this, she was put into solitary confinement for two weeks. She was stripped naked during her confinement while the air conditioning unit was turned on. She was given uncooked vegetables for food.

After one and a half months, Angie was informed by jail guards that a stranger purchased a ticket for her flight home. She was taken to the Katong Immigration and brought to the airport. She went back to Manila with another Filipina who became a prostituted woman in Singapore, whose ticket was also purchased by the same stranger.

Upon her arrival, Angie went straight to the house of Flor's children. They, together with Efren, went to a TV station to seek assistance. A TV broadcaster facilitated a meeting between Flor's family and President Fidel V. Ramos. Ramos promised to take action on Flor's case. Angie hoped in President Ramos' words and was optimistic that something would be done to help her friend.

Afterwards, Angie met with her parents who by then had mortgaged their land just to buy a ticket for Angie's return, not knowing that she had arrived. Angie learned that her parents had gone to the Department of Foreign Affairs for help, but in vain. They were asked to come back again and again without any sign or any form of concrete assistance extended.

Last January, GABRIELA and MIGRANTE, an international alliance of Filipino migrant workers whose secretariat is based in Manila, learned of Flor Contemplacion's plight and her execution date on March 17 through the local newspapers. They picketed the Singaporean Embassy to demand for justice for Flor. They later sought out the family and approached Atty. Romeo Capulong, a known human rights lawyer who immediately accepted the defense of Contemplacion. GABRIELA came out with statements demanding for justice for Flor and other migrant workers. They also criticized the government's apparent lack of will to deal with the matter directly with the Singaporean government as Singapore had substantial commercial investments in the Philippines.

Angie, through the television, watched the public campaign on Flor unfold. The campaign compelled President Ramos to send a letter of

appeal to Singapore President Goh Check Tong to postpone the execution until all the new evidences had been looked into. Angie decided to help the campaign but did not know how to contact GABRIELA. She asked the assistance of a neighbor who got in touch with a reporter for a TV station. The reporter interviewed her and helped her find GABRIELA.

When asked by members of GABRIELA if she was willing to openly testify, Angie promptly left her four-month-old son in the care of a neighbor and went with GABRIELA to the office of lawyer Romeo Capulong.

On March 17, a few hours before the scheduled execution, Angie and Contemplacion's lawyers arrived in Singapore. At 4 a.m., she went to the police station to give her statement as a last desperate attempt to save Flor. At 5:30 a.m., she asked the lawyer who was with her to accompany her to the Changi Prison where everybody else in their group had gone.

Outside of the Changi Prison, the air was cold. Angie, the lawyers and other Filipina domestic helpers waited outside. Police heavily patrolled the vicinity of the prison compound which Angie noted as unusual. No representatives from the Philippine Embassy were in sight.

In her year's stay in Changi Prison, Angie knew when execution was about to take place because a siren sounded off minutes before the hanging. It would stop only after the convicted person was been pronounced dead. Executions only happen on Fridays at 6 a.m.

But that day, no siren was heard at 6 a.m. Angie's hopes were boosted when word got around since that day was President Ramos' birthday, the Singaporean President might grant the stay as a present.

However, Manila received the news around 8:00 a.m. that Flor was hanged. A terrible outpouring of rage and inconsolable grief swept over the Philippines, especially among those whose daughters, sisters, mothers, sons, brothers, and fathers have sought employment in foreign countries.

Angie and the lawyers received word about her death only from Manila at around noontime. Everybody wept. Angie was enraged. "This should never, ever happen again," she told herself.

The night before they came to Singapore, Angie dreamt of Flor. "Mama Flor said to me, Angie, I'm coming home. I'm finally free. Please give me a white dress which I can wear on my return."

Angie took this dream as a positive sign that her Mama Flor will be saved.

Angie wistfully looked down at the long, white skirt she was wearing and whispered,

This was one of the clothes I brought for Mama Flor. I knew she would need this because if she is to be released, she doesn't have anything to wear. I did not expect she would indeed be coming home—but dead.

She, together with their lawyers, accompanied her friend's body home where they were met by a sea of supporters, friends, hometown relatives, and members of GABRIELA, MIGRANTE, and BAYAN, the latter groups forming teams to ensure the safe arrival of Flor's body in her house and acted as marshals for the spontaneous and huge crowd which accompanied the funeral car. Huge demonstrations were held in many places, particularly in front of the Singaporean embassy in Manila. Communities in various areas of the Philippines lit candles in the street in memory of Flor. An estimated crowd of fifty thousand people joined the funeral march. It was an event that resembled the EDSA People Power uprising and one which nearly ousted the Ramos government.

Soon after the burial, Angie joined GABRIELA to work with its Commission on Overseas Filipinas. Now on her fifth month as a volunteer at the national center of the women's alliance, Angie has only this to say:

lyung sakit na naranasan ko sa pagkamatay ni Mama Flor saka ng nakaraan ko, ay nakapagmulat sa akin na bilang mga migranteng manggagawa, lahat kami ay nakakaranas ng pare-parehong opresyon, abuso, pagpapabaya ng gobyerno, pananamantala, saka kawalan ng katarungan.

Narito ako ngayon sa GABRIELA hindi lang para bigyang-katarungan ang pagkamatay ni Mama Flor kundi para sa iba na rin, saka para ipagpatuloy ang kampanya ng lahat ng mga migranteng manggagawang Pilipina sa buong mundo.

(“The pain of Mama Flor's death and that of my own experiences made me realize that, as migrant workers, we suffer the same oppression, the same abuses, the same government irresponsibility, the same exploitation, the same injustice.

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“I joined GABRIELA to seek justice not only for Mama Flor but for others, too, and to continue the struggles of all Filipina migrant workers all over the world.”)

## **The Gender Trap: An Imperialist Scheme for Co-opting the World's Women**

**A CRITIQUE BY THE REVOLUTIONARY WOMEN OF THE PHILIPPINES OF THE UN DRAFT PLATFORM FOR ACTION**

**(MAKIBAKA, MAKABAYANG KILUSAN NG BAGONG KABABAIHAN)**

*Beijing 1995*

It is a voluminous document all right—this mother of all UN documents on women. But after years of preparation, the UN draft Platform for Action to be presented in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995 only reveals the ideological influence and handiwork of imperialism. Meant to be carried out in five years, the document to be affirmed by the official conference will establish priority actions purportedly for the advancement of women.

Nowhere is the hand of imperialism more apparent than in the opening pages that lay down the document's mission statement, global framework, and critical areas of concern. These are couched in carefully crafted universal and humanist terms. But that is precisely the problem.

### **An Agenda for Reformism**

The mission statement makes no bones about it: the draft platform is an agenda for women's empowerment. Women empowerment, which is regarded essentially as "non-violent" immediately excludes "empowering" women by means of revolution. What are offered to women instead are "enabling" measures that do not question the roots of women's oppression, that disguise the adverse impact on women of reactionary programs and policies, that limit women to specific, short-term and particular actions, that encourage women to collaborate with their foremost oppressors such as imperialist agencies and reactionary governments, that mobilize women in what are packaged as "pro-people and pro-women" programs but are in fact mere palliative or cosmetic measures.

In short, the UN draft platform is no more than an agenda for reformism, pacifism and collaboration. This is the same agenda that was built upon the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement

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of Women in 1985 and in previous other UN conferences on women. But thanks to women who have seen through this ploy and also because of the inherent weakness of the program, the Nairobi strategies have not been meeting with success. Hence, the agents of imperialism are expected to use all their convincing power so that the next gathering of women in Beijing could win more adherents to the imperialist line or position, wittingly or unwittingly, on various issues affecting women.

### **Blatant Lies**

What stands out among the blatant lies spread in the document is the idea that women can achieve empowerment mainly by having full and equal share in decision-making. Yet this is difficult to achieve even by UN standards of empowerment. Not only are women hard pressed as they fight for their demands that do not even go beyond reforms; millions of women are either denied or have no access to decision-making bodies simply because they find themselves at the lower rung of the social ladder. They will stay there, as proletarians and peasants, for as long as the capitalist system and its attendant crises prevail throughout the world.

Even women who hold decision-making powers do not necessarily translate their acts into policies and programs for women's benefit. One such case was Corazon Aquino who held the Philippine presidency for six years. Save for some token measures, she made the conditions of Filipino women far worse than before.

According to the UN, equal share in decision-making also means establishing the principle of shared power and responsibility between women and men at home, the workplace, and in the wider national and international communities.

The problem with this argument is that it assumes that women and men can exercise "power" in their own terms, and that "power" needs only be shared for the sexes to attain equality. Other than disorienting women as to the real source and functions of power (as one emanating from those who own and control the economic resources and political instruments of society), the root of women's oppression is ultimately situated at the personal or interpersonal level, in the realm of sexual politics, where class struggle and class contradictions are forced to take a back seat.

## The Gender Trap: An Imperialist Scheme for Co-opting the World's Women

Another hoax which unfortunately has gained wider acceptance among women and which is enshrined in the entire document is that “women share common concerns” and that “some women face particular barriers to their empowerment.”

While women live under diverse situations and conditions, the UN document continues to regard women as monolithic—hence glossing over the fact that ruling class women along with the men of their class, have long been oppressing other women, especially women of the toiling classes.

The idea of women banding together because women are oppressed as women regardless of their class position has obscured class lines in the women's movement, has treated the issue of gender apart from or beyond class, and has set the majority of women and men farther apart from each other.

While “some women face particular barriers to their empowerment,” the overwhelming majority of women, who are proletarians and peasants, either have no claim to the UN's standard of empowerment or have suffered even more from poverty and other burdens wrought by so-called short- or long-term “empowering” measures that the UN has proposed or engineered.

Not even the mainstreaming of gender analysis or gender sensitivity methods can save poverty reduction strategies (such as structural adjustment programs by the IMF-World Bank) from inflicting more harm on the world's poor women. Such strategies are so designed as to give more advantage to transnational corporations and lending institutions than address the needs of the poor. In the Philippines and elsewhere, such strategies have thrown women out of their jobs, their lands, and their homes.

And finally, true to its elitist form, the UN places its hope for success of the platform on “a strong commitment on the part of government, international organizations and institutions at all levels” to implement the agreements made. If there is mention of mobilizing women, it is only in support of imperialist-instigated government and institutional programs.

In the case of government, the document assumes that all it takes is for the government to express the political will and leadership to advance the status of women. What is obscured is the fact that the state is the instrument of the ruling classes. It can advance the status of women without hurting its own interests and that of the ruling class it represents.

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A government in a Third World country, for example, that hedges on the issues of land reform and nationalist industrialization, both crucial issues for women, cannot be expected to advance their status. How can women advance their status while their entire country languishes in poverty and degradation? How can governments "enable" women without "enabling" the entire nation? Third World countries have long been "disabled" by years of plunder and exploitation by imperialists and their local agents. Also, state monopoly capitalism as well as client states in neo-colonies have stopped at nothing to prevent the masses from gaining any effective access or control over economic resources as well as attaining political power.

Hence, truly advancing the conditions of women is antithetical to the existence and domination of a state in the service of exploiting classes. At the very least these states are into a game of deception, offering lip service, tokenism, or just plain claptrap in a bid to appear "pro-women." Party to such schemes are national and international NGOs and women's groups who are enamored with the idea of collaborating with reactionary governments. The fact is they are reduced to being mere accessories or watchdogs of the state. The Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development that the Ramos government has issued and patterned after the UN plan has only succeeded in co-opting even some progressive women's groups into cooperating with government and turning once socially committed women activists into NGO bureaucrats.

### **Imperialism's Global Framework**

The UN not only brushes aside the role of imperialism in worsening the conditions of women. It adopts *en toto* imperialism's global framework under which women are expected to pursue actions for equality, peace and development. Such a framework is shot full of loopholes, abstractions, distortions, inconsistencies and peddles the lies of imperialist policy makers and their apologists.

First, the end of the Cold War is seen as diminishing the competition between the superpowers and inspiring the principles for peace among nations. The idea is for women to believe that progress and growth is forthcoming and creating new opportunities for women and men. The fact is that superpower competition is now replaced by the emergence of

three imperialist centers (US, Japan, Western Europe). Even as the three compete with each other, they unite against the proletariat and the people of the world and shift the burden of their crisis. This global crisis is marked by permanent inflation, massive unemployment, debt crisis, financial disasters, environmental degradation, and others. Also, these imperialist countries stubbornly hold on to their nuclear weapons, instigate wars, aggressions and interventions, fan ethnic and religious conflicts, coups d'état and counter-coups, and civil wars. Already violence has escalated, hitting women and children the most.

Second, the document evades mentioning the source or cause of the global crisis. The idea is for women to recognize the existence, but not the reasons for, the widespread economic recession and political instability that have set back even the UN's development goals. Hence such imperialist clubs and imperialist-dominated formations as the Group of 7, the OECD, the IMF-WB, GATT/WTO, and all multilateral agencies cannot be taken to task by women for their exploitative policies on investments, trade, credit, currency, and other economic issues made in the name of market reforms. Instead women are goaded to address problems within the ruling class system.

Third, a worldwide movement towards democratization has been hailed as opening up the political process in many nations. The idea is for women to reject the revolutionary party, the revolutionary process, and the revolutionary forces as undemocratic. In fact under the guise of democratic processes, the reactionaries encourage the collaboration of women in imperialist designed projects. Also, what is actually referred to as "democratization" is the imperialist-instigated "peaceful resolution" of armed conflicts and the "peaceful transition to parliamentary democracy" as what happened in South Africa, El Salvador and Central and Eastern Europe. Such democratization was made with the forced surrender of revolutionaries.

Fourth, claims have been made that important progress was achieved in the equality of women and men since the first world conference of women in Mexico in 1975. The idea is for women to believe that imperialist designed programs for women and people "empowerment" have made a difference in people's lives and has advanced gender emancipation. But apart from mentioning legislation by government and the establishment

of machineries to ensure the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in all spheres of society, nothing much was really achieved, even by UN standards. In fact the UN contradicts itself by acknowledging the worsening conditions of women in the economic and political spheres. So where lies the equality? And what type of equality would it be without real economic and political freedom?

Fifth, a recurrent theme throughout the document is still the need for women's participation in decision-making. It is made the crux of the entire empowerment framework. The idea is for women to accept imperialist solutions to the world's problems as moral, just and legal through gender mainstreaming. Here the UN deftly interconnects gender concerns, particularly the ones on participation and decision-making, to imperialist-designed programs and structures in order to seek the support of women on such issues as trade liberalization and open markets, population control, economic restructuring, negotiated armed conflicts and the like. Such schemes absolved the monopoly capitalists and their puppet and corrupt states in colonies and semi-colonies of any responsibility or accountability for bringing nations, regions, and continents into capitalist destruction, turmoil and devastation.

Worse still, blame is apparently heaped on the peoples of industrialized countries who, because of their "unsustainable pattern of consumption and production," in the first place encouraged by imperialism for profit, have aggravated poverty and global deterioration of the environment. Rather than fight imperialism that has brought about this condition, the solution offered is for women to help change consumption patterns. In effect, the world's women and men are not only victims but are also deemed perpetrators of their own victimization. Peoples of the Third World are also turned against peoples of the First World, again unreasonably raising the issue of the "North" and "South" divide, while imperialism laughs all the way to the markets, and to the banks.

### **Gender Schemes**

The entire document is strewn with gender schemes which are meant to see problems and solutions through and from a gender perspective. The effect is to cloud broader and larger social implications and elicit women's support for imperialist designed programs, which bring more women to

reforms, pacifism and collaboration and farther away from socialism and the revolutionary path.

The document cites the need to close the gender gap, to eliminate gender stereotypes and disparities, to adopt gender-sensitive approaches, gender studies and research, gender dimension and a host of other gender concerns. However, these are proposed above or beyond any class or social framework. By laying down the gender trap, imperialism hopes to co-opt the world's women and their movements to support reactionary and reformist designs. Such moves almost always throw class society further into conflict, hence aggravating the oppression and degradation of women.

A case in point is the eradication of poverty through so-called anti-poverty programs (read: structural adjustment). This one unabashedly calls for the democratic participation of women in implementing such programs. Again the manifestations and impact of poverty are discussed extensively but never its root causes. But the document is concerned not so much for women to understand the problem of structural adjustment as to immediately involve women in reactionary solutions by using the issue of participation and decision-making.

The document also takes pains to make references for example, to the failure to adequately mainstream a gender perspective in all economic analyses and planning. Such failure is viewed as contributing to an increase in poverty. Hence attention is immediately focused on the integration and strengthening of gender analysis and perspectives into macro and micro-economic policies by governments, multilateral financial and development institutions as well as NGOs regardless of whether such policies ultimately redound to the common good, and to women's welfare in particular.

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# Women Workers and Trade Unions

PRESENTED BY PERLITA LOPEZ, CHAIRPERSON, KILUSAN NG MANGGAGAWANG KABABAIHAN (WOMEN WORKERS' MOVEMENT) PHILIPPINES

*Presented at GABRIELA WISAP-1994*

## Organizing Women Workers

The women workers' movement recognizes that trade unions are the most effective organization of women workers to defend and advance their class interests and gender issues. Organizing women workers in factories and workplaces is closely related and does not defer to union-organizing. The stress is to build a genuine and militant trade union at the workplace, where women workers' concerns and issues could be introduced, discussed, and fought for.

However, trade unions must respond to all issues confronting the working class, not only to particular issues affecting a certain group or sector of labor. In this regard, there is a great need to organize a group or organization that would be the expression of the particular interests and demands of women workers. This must also be the mechanism that would harness the strength and potentials of women workers, especially in developing trade union leaders among them.

Since there is still a big part of the Filipino workforce that is still unorganized in unions, especially in women workers' formations, organizing is stressed in industries where women workers are dominant. These industries are garment and textile, semiconductor, retail/department stores, and food processing.

Organizing varies depending on the conditions of the workplace. Where there are no unions or if the dominant union is yellow or independent, organizers form the Kilusan ng Manggagawang Kababaihan, a mass movement of women workers. The primary stress is to either organize a union or turn the union into becoming a genuine trade union.

Issues particular to women workers are brought up in the context of organizing a genuine trade union in the workplace. This does not mean, however, that women's issues play second fiddle to the organizing of the union. It comes side by side with issues concerning the workers.

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Where genuine trade unions are already in place, the organizing stress is in building and consolidating the women committees. The women committee, bureau, or department has the primary task of drafting plans and programs that would respond to the particular needs and conditions of women workers. This plan and program must be in consonance with the overall plan of the union at the local, federation, regional and national levels.

It is also the task of women committees to popularize and implement women's orientation throughout the organization. This is done through the implementation of *Kursong Kababaihan sa Manggagawa* (Course on Women Workers). This course contains the following:

- Particular situation of women workers
- History of women's oppression
- Basic social problems
- The demands and agenda of women workers
- The organization and organizing of women workers

This course is offered not only to women workers, but to male trade unionists as well.

The issue at the heart of organizing women workers, where the *Kilusang Mayo Uno* (KMU—May First Movement) is already established, is convincing them to take leadership position in the union.

Despite years of work in this area, there are still few women in the top union positions. This is partly because most union men are very aggressive in taking leadership. But more importantly, it is difficult for women to participate because of their work at home. They cannot even afford the time to attend regular meetings in the union.

Women workers, especially those who are already married, are burdened by the fact that their families expect them to work at home after work. They are expected to do house chores such as cooking, cleaning, and maintaining the household, in addition to child-rearing tasks.

Organizers adjust their methods to their situation. For example, if there is a small group meeting, it is held at the worker's home so that she can watch her children or wash clothes.

Both the women committees and the KMK are trying to break the stereotyping of roles of women in the unions. The prevalent practice is to keep women's participation in the union by appointing or electing them to positions reserved for women such as secretary or treasurer.

Women organizers are putting particular stress on placing women on equal terms with men in the union organization. This means that women should also have equal opportunities to be elected or appointed in positions and tasks on the same level as male trade unionists. Women organizers target at least one of the top five positions in the organization. From this position of responsibility, female trade union leaders, together with the women committee, could advocate issues particular to women within the context of the trade union struggle, both at the enterprise and the national levels.

The KMK and women committees have varying methods of involving women workers on issues confronting the union or their particular interests. Aside from offering study circles and seminars on women orientations, they are mobilized on particular issues. Mobilizations include women assemblies where participants are unified on issues facing them, pickets and rallies.

However, mobilizations for women's issues are not exclusively for females. Males are also encouraged so that they could further understand the issues women are asserting. International Women's Day is marked in the Philippines with a march-rally of women from all sectors in the society, with men being allowed to participate at the sidelines.

### **Issues Advocated by the KMK and the KMU's Women Department**

The abuses and exploitation of women workers in their workplaces are reflective of the exploitation and repression faced by the entire Filipino working class. Where Filipino workers are exploited for their cheap and docile labor, women workers are doubly exploited, for they are discriminated against and sexually harassed at work. In addition, feudal practice carried on for generations has imposed upon women workers to carry the burdens of household chores and child-rearing.

On this premise, the issues advocated by organizations and formations of women workers do not deviate from the national issues fought for

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by genuine trade unions. While women workers' organizations, whether the KMK or women's committees, continue to organize on the basis of issues of the working class, there are issues particular to women workers, which are urgent that must be stressed. Most common of these are:

### **Sexual Harassment and Discrimination at Work.**

Sexual harassment is widespread all over the workplace. There is the "lie down or layoff" practice where women are forced to give in to the boss' advances in order to be retained in their jobs or to get promoted. Unfortunately, many female workers and employees are forced to suffer such harassment only to preserve their livelihood, especially in the condition when work is hard to come by. Such harassment is not exclusive to bosses, as male co-workers also harass their women colleagues at work.

Another is the more subtle approach of hiring women who have "attractive and pleasing personality, and single status" even if the job does not call for it. Such cases unfairly discriminate against women workers even if they are skilled enough for the job, but do not conform to the boss' idea of "attractiveness and personality."

Women, especially those who are already married, are discriminated against in the hiring process on the boss' premise that they would have to shoulder additional maternity benefits. Such cases have also caused women workers to be overlooked when there are promotions and wage adjustments. There are also many cases where women workers are paid less than male workers even if they do the same work.

### **Maternity and Paternity Leaves, Day Care Facilities and Other Facilities Particular to Women**

The KMK and women committees are fighting for longer maternity benefits for women so that they could give more time to recover from childbirth. Also, the move to give paternity leave for men is part of the effort to make the male conscious of the fact that they too have a duty toward raising the child.

Creating a day care child support system is essential for women workers, especially for those with preschool-age children. Most women with children cannot find extended families to baby-sit or afford domestic help, so women are forced to absent themselves from work.

Another important issue is the creation of special facilities and adequate health and safety standards that would be sensitive to the needs and conditions of women.

Although the issues of substandard health and safety guidelines and inadequate work facilities are common regardless of gender, it is doubly hard for women workers who have to endure discomforts brought about by their conditions such as menstruations or pregnancies.

### **The Flexible Labor, Contractualization and Casualization**

Since most work given to women workers are those that can be considered as nonskilled or semi-skilled, they are the ones who are most often employed as casual, contractual, part-time workers, under the flexible labor schemes. Such practice is reinforced by the thinking among the bosses that women who have been raised to follow the wishes of men in their family are more docile than men. It follows in this logic that women could follow blindly the wishes of their bosses and are less prone to organize unions or assert their right to job security and higher pay and benefits.

Flexible work practices are most commonly found in export processing zones and export-oriented industries. Among the industries where such practices are found, the most are industries which employ more women than men. These include garments and textile, electronics, storekeeping and food processing.



## **Organizing Urban Poor Women: SAMAKANA's Experience in Retrospect**

**PRESENTED BY WILHELMINA BALISTOY, SAMAKANA, SAMAHAN NG MALAYANG KABABAIHANG NAGKAIKAISA (ORGANIZATION OF UNITED FREE WOMEN) PHILIPPINES**

*WISAP-1994*

This year (1994), Samahan ng Malayang Kababaihang Nagkakaisa (SAMAKANA) an organization of urban poor women, is in its 11<sup>th</sup> year. Organizing the urban poor women all these years has been the core of its existence. It is with joy that SAMAKANA members celebrate the successes it has accumulated through the years, and it is also with pride that SAMAKANA recalls the organization's capacity to overcome its problems, weaknesses, and shortcomings lending the whole organization a strength derived only from positive but also negative lessons as well.

Today, SAMAKANA has implanted itself in 87 communities nationwide, of which 47 are full chapters, 17 are at the level of preparatory committee towards building full chapters, 18 are at a contact level, and five have women committees of urban poor mixed-gender organizations. It has a nationwide total of 3,573 members. Territorially, SAMAKANA is present in 11 cities, namely, Manila; Quezon City; Bacolod City; Cebu City; Mandaue City; Iloilo City; Dumaguete City; Dipolog City; General Santos City and; Davao City, and four urbanized municipalities, namely, Navotas; Malaabon; Pasig; and Kidapawan of North Cotabato.

Full chapters have elected leadership and possess a relatively advanced experience in educational, organizational, and political work.

In view of the conference's theme, I am pleased to share with you the major lessons in organizing urban poor women. In the process, we also hope to solicit from you your insights on our experiences which we might have glossed over. Surely, these would then be of great help in further advancing the current level of our work.

## **Objective Conditions and its Resulting Difficulties**

Urban poor women in the Philippines context are mainly composed of regular workers, irregular workers and prostituted women and others that have been driven out of desperation to become involved in different anti-social activities such as drug pushing, thievery, and the like. Irregular workers, however, comprise the majority. They are those who do laundry and other odd domestic work for the affluent families in exchange for an equivalent pay and who engage in small-scale buying and selling business. A lot of them are engaged in the so-called underground economy.

A major economic concern of urban poor women is the daily struggle for food. They have to do this amidst household work which they either do at night or before the sunrises. Time for them is valuable. With this, they usually would not bother becoming a member, much more an active one, of an organization not unless you could fully convince them that involvement is in their best interest.

The hand-to-mouth existence would necessarily bring forth tendencies that serve as major hindrances in organizing work wherein women's liberation is part of the long-term goal. Coupled with the problem of time constraint, it is naturally more difficult to organize urban poor women if there is no readily available project with concrete immediate gains. In recognizing this problem, there have been times when SAMAKANA has committed the error of launching projects that prove counterproductive in the long run.

Another major problem in organizing work has been the husband's efforts to dissuade or directly block their wives from participating, especially in an organization that prides itself in the struggle against the different forms of exploitation and oppression of women. Time and again, we have encountered this problem. Women are afraid to become members or sustain their membership due to fear of possible husband reprisal.

These are objective realities in the different communities which SAMAKANA recognizes. However, these have not hindered SAMAKANA in pursuing its avowed task of organizing women. Step by step, we learned the strategies in overcoming such hindrances.

## **A Holistic Approach to Organizing Work**

To cope with such objective limitations, SAMAKANA has then learned to devise different strategies for organizing urban poor women. It is the combination of these different strategies that contributes most to SAMAKANA's current strengths.

Indeed, organizing work for urban poor women is not simply a mechanics of setting up an organization. Foremost, organizing work involves all the aspects of work to ensure a dynamic organization that would truly become the channel for women's struggle against oppression and exploitation, be it of a class or of a gender nature.

SAMAKANA's understanding of this, however, is not consistent all throughout the past 11 years. There were times when our organizing work was largely characterized by sweeping propaganda and mobilization. Specific experiences also occurred wherein certain chapters became so engrossed with dole-out projects which in turn ran contrary to our efforts to develop poor women's capability to stand on their own.

But SAMAKANA has learned its lessons. Learning both from its own positive and negative experiences during the past three years, we SAMAKANA women have tried to pursue organizing work in a holistic approach. Thus, for us, organizing work would therefore mean efforts in making ourselves adept on the following aspects:

### **Mobilizing Based on Local Problems**

To hasten organizing work, it is indeed imperative for us to become skillful in mobilizing women based on concrete problems they experience at the community level. This indeed would draw their interest and, at the same time, serve as a rallying point in organizing. The type of problems may vary based on concrete conditions. They may consist of women-specific problems such as the need for day care or health care programs, the need for a recreation center, housing/demolition problems, water shortage, or community pathways.

Methods of mobilization may either be in the form of local struggle or development of specific projects based on self-help efforts.

Having learned our bitter lessons in addressing these problems, we guarded ourselves in committing the same mistakes that would only

lead women to develop a dole-out mentality. Though we are not averse to accessing outside resources, we ensure that the local women are the prime movers and saw to it that, through educational work, the correct orientation is set.

And since we regard local women as the prime movers, we now start on simple projects that they could handle. In our experience, mobilizing them without due preparation only resulted in producing few skillful women whose motivations were primarily fueled by the financial allowance given them rather than the commitment for women's struggles.

### **Awareness-Raising and Skills Development**

Although the importance of direct action concerning women's problems—in ensuring local women's commitment to an organization—could never be understated, it is also of paramount importance to consistently pursue awareness-raising and skills development.

Awareness-raising involves not only women-specific concerns. In a society where class, gender, ethnic, and national issues are reinforcing each other in the preparation of women's oppression, SAMAKANA ensures that awareness-raising addresses these matters squarely. In consonance with this, SAMAKANA conducts Women's Orientation and the Course for National Democracy (CND) as part of its regular course. However, the campaign to study CND came later. In fact, since 1992, 1,294 women had already participated in the series of studies regarding the women's situation, whereas only 227 women have finished CND.

To deepen our membership's understanding of specific issues, we also launched appropriate study sessions. Thus, the special studies on domestic violence, on violence on children, and on specific issues such as the GATT, and others, were conducted.

Skills training addresses two major concerns. One is to develop the member's capability to manage their own organization, and the other is to develop specific skills to tackle specific problems. The latter would include skills-training such as finance management, herbal medicine-making, management of day care centers, prevention of diseases, or fertility management and other courses.

For urban poor women whose world revolves around home and work areas, it is of utmost importance that awareness-raising is not limited

only to formal education sessions. To be able to reach more women, and in fact to be able to effectively draw them to formal educational activities awareness-raising through one-on-one discussions during integration is truly of utmost importance.

Though formal education is important to systematize the women's understanding, a combination of this approach has really enabled SAMAKANA to reach out to more women.

### **Developing Urban Poor Women Activists**

The concept of developing urban poor women national-democratic activists for a certain period of SAMAKANA's history was neglected mainly due to an unfounded fear of the possible isolation of SAMAKANA by the mass of urban poor women. Experience, however, has taught us otherwise.

There was a time, wherein, in certain areas, the practice of giving financial allowances to those who were active became ordinary so that later on, it was practically difficult to mobilize women without monetary remuneration. This practice even gave birth to a bad concept which became prevalent—that it is only those women who receive allowances should be active.

In contrast, in areas where this practice was not adopted, women continued to be active in their commitment in the struggle for national democracy and women's liberation as their prime motivation. This helped a lot in encouraging others to actively participate.

To further promote the latter practice, SAMAKANA then decided, during its 5<sup>th</sup> National Congress held only last September 1994, to revive the concept of national-democratic activism.

Urban poor national-democratic activists reflect the objective unevenness in the development of local women's consciousness. They are the advanced elements. By harnessing their initiatives and developing their capabilities, we could realize mass participation in our efforts to consolidate our organization—for it to become a real instrument for our long-term struggle towards liberation.

Developing urban poor women activists should be a conscious and painstaking effort. Towards this, a combination of formal mass training and informal individual focus to develop them is important. Specifically, semi-

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nars, conferences, discussion groups, proper tasking, guidance, motivations, assessments, summings-up, and so on should be collectively undertaken.

### **Developing Appropriate Organizational Mechanisms**

As part of SAMAKANA's efforts to see to it that its organizational structure is attuned to the major task of women organizations at the community level, SAMAKANA dispensed with the traditional division of tasks among officers and set up necessary functions: To wit:

- The Chairperson, who is responsible for overseeing the different aspects of work;
- The Organizational Officer who takes the lead in the completion of the different organizational activities and in ensuring continuous expansion of membership;
- The Officer Against Women Violence who takes the lead in the different efforts to address violence experience by women at the community level and, most especially, domestic violence;
- The Education Officer who takes the lead in the educational work at the community level;
- The Campaign Officer who takes the lead in the campaign that would be launched at the community level and ensures participation of local women during coordinated campaigns;
- The Health Officer who takes the lead in the different efforts to address women's health problems;
- The Livelihood Officer who takes the lead in the different efforts regarding livelihood problems; and
- The Childcare Officer who takes the lead in the efforts to draw the community to actively participate in activities for the welfare of children.

If necessary, corresponding committees are also organized in order to ensure team participation on the different lines of work.

This division of work has helped a lot in providing an organizational venue for women to address varied concerns.

Painstaking integration is an integral and indispensable part of organizing work. In all of the above strategies, integration among urban poor is a must. It is an effective approach in the daily task of recruitment, encouraging active participation, awareness-raising, soliciting suggestions, and validating decisions.

SAMAKANA believes that integration is a necessity not only for organizers but for the local leaders as well. It is only through this that we can reach out even to women who are literally confined to the four walls of their shanties. It is also through this that we could effectively encourage even the most timid to open up, and later on, develop courage in expressing themselves in formal or public meetings. This is an indispensable supplement to formal meetings and educational activities. Indeed, in revival areas, where the conditions for doing so are not encouraging, integration has helped a lot in our efforts to reactivate the local women.

By integration, SAMAKANA means the efforts to seek out the local women, be they leaders, members, or non-members. In doing this, we see to it that we are not treated as visitors nor become obstacles to performing their daily chores. We ensure this by being one with them in whatever task they might be doing.

### **Awareness-Raising Among Community-Based Mixed Gender Organizations and the Male Population**

Women who were once active but then suddenly dropped out of the scene happen from time to time among SAMAKANA leaders and members. One of the major reasons for this is the women's efforts to lessen the conflict at home brought about by their being active in the organization, other Filipino sisters and brothers, strive for basic structural changes to attain a society that is truly democratic, sovereign, abundant, and where equality of sexes prevails.

Initially, SAMAKANA's reaction was to further intensify its educational activities for the women to be more equipped in dealing with their husbands. Yet such occurrences continue unabated.

The above experience awakened SAMAKANA's need to supplement the women's individual initiatives with organized action towards aware-

ness-raising among the male population. Because of the late realization on the need, practical moves toward this are only starting. Until now, we are still trying to systematize our efforts.

### **Underlying Principles of SAMAKANA's Organizing Work**

In all of the different strategies, the principle of mass line runs through. Starting on their concrete conditions, SAMAKANA firmly believes in the urban poor women's capacity to develop their awareness and capabilities and, hand-in-hand with our other Filipino sisters and brothers, strive for basic structural changes to attain a society that is truly democratic, sovereign, abundant, and where equality of sexes prevails.

SAMAKANA tries to reflect this basic thrust not only in its long-term efforts but also in its day-to-day work and in the different strategies of the organization.

But this basic thrust on the mass of community women does not mean turning a blind eye to the existence of classes within communities organized by SAMAKANA. We are aware that within the numerous depressed communities, women who are relatively well-off practice exploitation and oppression especially among women workers and those without regular income.

SAMAKANA sees to it that its organizing efforts do not strengthen exploitation or oppression of women by women but rather enhances the capability of the urban poor women to fight exploitative and oppressive structures. In line with this, SAMAKANA relies mainly on and focuses its organizing efforts on developing community women of workers and semi-workers origin, who comprise the majority of urban poor women.

Through SAMAKANA, we, urban poor women, have bound ourselves in an effort to do our share in the struggle towards women's liberation. However, much still remains to be done. And to do this we continue to pledge our unyielding efforts to build further on current strengths and overcome problems, shortcomings, and weaknesses.

# The Role of Peasant Women in the Agrarian Revolution

BY LARA MAE ALMEDA

Peasant women in the Philippines make up 75% of the Filipino women, half of the 75% peasant population of the country's 70 million people. Roughly, Filipino peasant women number around 26 million. They not only make the main bulk of the women in the Philippines. Together with the women workers and lower petty-bourgeois women, they are the most exploited and oppressed in terms of national, class and gender exploitation and oppression.

With the new wave of globalization of the economy—a euphemism for imperialist economic aggression—imperialist intrusions in the agricultural sector of Philippine economy are becoming more intense and widespread all over the country.

In the '60s multinational agricultural corporations—the likes of California Fruit Corp. United Fruit Corp, and Del Monte made a roundabout on the landowning peasants of Davao and Cotabato in Mindanao—the homesteaders—with their growers' agreement scheme with the latter. Little did the small landowning cultivators know that they would end up deeply indebted to these transnationals who controlled land cultivation with their chemicals, pesticides and other components of high-tech mode of agricultural production including air spraying and the like, and marketing abroad, raking in most of the profit.

In the '90s, this sort of growers' agreement has spread not only in Mindanao but to other areas as well all over the country. It is no longer confined to the growing of bananas and pineapples but to other high-value crops as well, including coffee in Bukidnon, asparagus in Cotabato and cut flowers in Davao. Similar schemes have also been concocted in the development of golf courses, tourist resorts and cattle-breeding stations by other multinational corporations making supposed beneficiaries of the bogus land reform program of the government forced into joining government-controlled cooperatives as shareholders into their business ventures.

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In some cases peasant-tenant families are outrightly driven out of the land by landlords joint-venturing with multinational corporations.

Land and crop conversions do not only bring havoc to the livelihood of the peasantry but endanger the country's food security as well. Three million out of the more than five million hectares of land planted to rice and corn are being developed into high-value crop plantations, golf courses, tourist resorts, commercial centers and housing subdivisions.

Elsewhere in this collection, Mrs. Nieves Sarcos of Asian Peasant Women Network (APWN) and Ms. Liza Largoza-Maza have extensively discussed the conditions of the peasant women in the Philippines and the impact of globalization on them.

With this sort of imperialist exploitation of the peasant masses and the continuing landlord extraction of surplus produce from the peasantry through land rent, usurious interests on loans, and enormous profits from their control of the grain market and retail of fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals, we can say that the Filipino peasantry suffer the most in the field of economy.

Filipino peasants are continuously being dislocated from and dispossessed of the lands that they have tilled and have been their source of livelihood for generations. Subsequently, women peasants or women of peasant origin have continuously been forced to pay for the debt bondage of the family to the landlords who almost always sexually harass and rape them; to migrate to the urban centers and find work or means of income for the family in the rural areas, usually as domestic helpers or ambulant vendors, in and out of the country; to kowtow to the wishes of the heads of their low-heeled clans and families needing favors from the landlord power-that-be or the latter's lifelong support and care; to marry and stay in marriage even to wife-beating husbands; or worse, to prostitution. All of these have only worsened with the economic crisis in Philippine society reaching chronic proportions.

The peasantry's anti-feudal and democratic struggle for land is increasingly assuming an anti-imperialist character with intensifying imperialist intrusions in the agricultural sector of the Philippine economy. The demand for land is thus the main content of the people's democratic revolution as well as that of the women's liberation movement in the country. Overthrowing landlord rule in the countryside, the agrarian revolution

waged by the Filipino peasantry cannot be but a component of armed struggle. The peasantry is directly facing the armed contingent of the reactionary classes in their struggle to overthrow the economic and political power of the landlord class in collusion with the comprador-bourgeoisie and the imperialists.

It is in this context that Filipino women peasants are being organized in the Philippine countryside.

The peasant women's movement in the Philippines is part and parcel of and integral to the ongoing agrarian revolution and raging armed struggle with a corresponding mass base-building in the countryside. The peasant agrarian revolution is directly hitting the forces that have driven women to different forms of violence against them, including wife-beating, rape and prostitution.

The genuine land reform program being launched in the Philippine countryside by the National Democratic Front, primarily by its member-organization Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Magsasaka (PKM or National Peasant Organization, a member organization of the National Democratic Front or NDF), in coordination with the New People's Army (NPA), is paving the way for the economic independence of the Filipino peasant women with a provision on equal rights for women to own land for distribution to the landless peasants.

In building the mass base for the launching of the anti-feudal peasant struggles from its early stage onwards, peasant women are sometimes mobilized to take a non-antagonistic dialogue with an enlightened landed gentry, or to participate in a militant but legal mass movement against a multinational agricultural firm encroaching on their lands.

Peasant women are being organized into the revolutionary underground through a separate and distinct mass organization—the Makabayang Kilusan ng Makabayang Kababaihan or MAKIBAKA—from the village level up. MAKIBAKA is a member organization of the NDF. In its effort to influence the open mass movement, MAKIBAKA on some occasions links up with other women's organizations, on the local or higher level of responsibility.

In the process of organizing the peasant women, they are being freed from the patriarchal shackles of home, family and clan and exposed to political and economic matters other than their traditional areas and scope

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of domestic responsibility. This is a big step forward in widening the social horizons of peasant women, a step forward in socially emancipating them from their feudal environment. It is in the concrete practice of the people's revolutionary struggles that women are liberating themselves step by step. With the continual raising of their political and social consciousness, women learn how and concretely act on transforming their social relations with men.

By exposing women to progressive ideas in both public and personal spheres of their lives, peasant women's emancipation starts. Even the idea and practice of democratic discussions in decision making in their organization is a new thing for them. But women's emancipation in the countryside does not stop here. It goes even further with their participation in the armed struggle and the agrarian revolution. It is their all-rounded participation in the struggle that will free them economically, politically and socially.

With their active participation in the revolution, perceptions and conceptions of women, the peasant men begin to change. Wife-beating lessens, although in some cases, intercessions from the village women's organization and the people's army sometimes have to be resorted to. Rape is meted with a death sentence for the rapist by the people's court under the guidance of the NDF.

Self-help socioeconomic projects among women in the village somehow augment their income and prevent them from migrating to the urban areas where more often than not they end up in more dire conditions than before: either living in urban poor communities where in most cases living conditions are not fit for human beings or in prostitution, here and abroad.

The peasant women's movement also has its national aspect in that the peasant women also suffer the consequence of the lack of national industrialization which could have created jobs for displaced peasants from the rural areas. From their own experiences, both in the rural and urban areas, they know too well that it is US imperialism which is stunting industrialization in particular and economic development in general in the Philippines. The women's liberation movement in the Philippines cannot but be part and parcel of the more comprehensive national-democratic revolution, not only because of the sheer number of women—making half

of the country's population—but more because the demands that women should fight for intertwine with those of the whole people in the quest to achieve genuine and all-rounded liberation.

With the national character of the peasant women's movement, the peasant women in the countryside cannot but align with the other working women in the urban centers—the women workers and that of the urban poor—in building the national and democratic women's front in the Philippines. This basic alliance of working women is the basis of the broadest united women's front against all forms of national, class and gender oppression's suffer by the women of the democratic sectors and strata in the country.

In their revolutionary education sessions women and men come to know that only socialism, the perspective of the people's democratic revolution they are actively waging, is the only solution to the class and gender exploitation and oppression they are burdened with in semi-colonial and semi-feudal Philippine society.

But in the course of the last three decades, both revolutions—the overall national-democratic revolution and the revolution for women's liberation—have had their twists and turns. Consequently, they are not shielded from the effects of the movement's errors and weaknesses.

Together with their men folk, they suffered the brunt of callous militarization especially when the people's movement turned militarist in its conduct during the '80s. Also, when petty-bourgeois feminist ideas crept into the ranks of peasant women through legal gender-sensitivity training seminar or caucus brought into the countryside by a handful of bourgeois-feminists, peasant men and women unity was temporarily put in jeopardy. They put the issue of patriarchy at par with the three major problems of the Filipino people (imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism), and even made it appear to be the major overriding problem of the Filipino women. This effort to elevate the men-women contradiction above the need for people's unity—men and women—only detracted from effectively advancing the anti-feudal struggle. The effort only resulted in tying women down to their subordinate status to men and push back the general anti-feudal struggles of the Filipino peasantry—both women and men.

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Peasant women are being organized through the step-by-step method of solid organizing in the countryside. With an initial contact in the village sitio (smaller area in a village or barrio/barangay), a women's organizing group (OG) tasked to group and organize the women in the area starting with the poor and lower-middle peasants, is formed. With two or more OGs, depending on the size of the village/barrio/barangay, the formation of an organizing committee (OC) tasked to continue on organizing and leading the women on the barrio level follows.

Revolutionary education work with courses corresponding to the level of the organizational formations are simultaneously launched in the process of organizing. Education work among the peasant women covers overall political and particular gender courses, beginning with the basic peasant orientation course and basic women orientation course, respectively.

The three main tasks of MAKIBAKA in the countryside are: 1) to get organized and actively get involved in the launching of the agrarian revolution; 2) actively participate and support the armed struggle being waged principally in the rural areas where peasants are concentrated; and 3) carry onward the women's liberation movement in all spheres of life and relationships—both public and private, economic, political and personal.

In organizing and involving themselves in the agrarian revolution, the peasant women become part and parcel of the broad anti-feudal united front in the countryside and the broader national-democratic front. In actively supporting and participating in the waging of armed struggle in the countryside, women can and should go all the way up to the extent of being members and leading elements in the guerrilla zones and fronts of the New People's Army, most of them are of peasant origin. An interview of a women peasant guerrilla is included elsewhere in this collection.

# Organizing Indigenous Women

THE CORDILLERA EXPERIENCE

PRESENTED BY BERNICE A. SEE, SECRETARY-GENERAL INNABUYOG

*WISAP-1994*

This is a sharing of experiences in organizing indigenous women in the Cordillera by indigenous women themselves. It is not an attempt to prescribe an approach or methodology to organizing work among indigenous women.

The indigenous peoples of the Cordillera region are collectively called Igorots. They are the majority population in the five provinces of the region, numbering about 1.4 million. The Igorots belong to different ethnolinguistic groups, each village having an ethnic identity of its own.

A significant number of communities, many of them in the more remote parts of the region, still have retained their indigenous socio-political institutions and way of life. However, in the towns and provincial centers, and in the city of Baguio, these institutions/structures are deteriorating or have totally been abandoned. Leadership in the traditional society is through the council of elders, which is actually a male council.

In some communities, inter-village relations are governed by a peace pact (*bodong*), the holder of which has traditionally been a male. However, we see now an increasing number of women who are active peace-pact holders. Many of our villages are still not accessible by motorized transportation, some only through days of hiking. Our region is abundant with forest resources, hydropower, minerals, and industrious hard-working people.

Organizing women along the lines of a women's national-democratic framework started in the late '80s in the Cordillera. When we went to the communities, we found traditional women's organizations already set up. These were either set up by the church, politicians, or the government agencies. A few were self-organized though. These were traditional in the sense that they acted as housekeepers of the church, as a forum where the government can "teach" the women home management (including nutrition and child care) as community welfare/development assistants. In

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other words, they were organized in order that their traditional roles may be reinforced.

Of course, the organizations were in various stages of operation. Some were already as good as dead, while some were very active in community affairs. Almost all of them were left on their own as soon as they were organized. The challenge was then how to reorient these existing organizations toward a women's national-democratic framework.

The organization was already there in the community with its own membership, leadership, and structure. It already had some form of organizational life and the women identified themselves with it. This was the kind of situation we found ourselves in a majority of the communities we went to. There was no felt need then to set up another organization. What was needed was education work, which was crucial in raising the class and gender consciousness of the women. On the other hand, there was also the need to integrate the struggle of the indigenous peoples in their work.

Before the Cordillera women were organized, there was already a movement for self-determination in the Cordillera. This arose from the opposition of communities to develop projects in the region in the '70s. Some of these projects were the World Bank-funded dams along the Chico River in the Mountain Province and Kalinga, the massive logging operations of the Marcos-crony-managed Cellophil Resources Corporation in Abra, and the mining companies' prospecting efforts. These were direct intrusions into the ancestral lands of the Igorots. Thus peoples' resistance rose because these meant submerging villages, logging off communal forests, destroying centuries-old rice fields, desecrating ritual areas, among others. This was an assertion of their rights as indigenous peoples. In these struggles, the Igorot women were at the forefront. They were not only cooks for men in the struggle, they themselves were in the arena pulling down tents, confiscating prospectors' paraphernalia, barricading, and some ultimately taking up arms.

This did not make it difficult for the women to appreciate the women's national-democratic framework within the indigenous people's struggle. On the other hand, the women's national-democratic struggle in the Cordillera has had to integrate the indigenous people's cause in it. Thus, when we look at Cordillera woman, we say that she has four oppressions: as a national of a semi-feudal, semi-colonial state; as a member of a class;

as an indigenous person; and as a woman. In organizing the Igorot women then, all these four facets must be fully addressed.

At the very start of organizing, it was the issues of land and resources, maldevelopment and government neglect that were the felt problems of women. It was then our responsibility as women organizers to raise the awareness of the women on their oppression as a gender. Participatory approaches to education work were necessary in order for the women to discover the manifestations of women's oppression in their own societies. It was empowering for them to be able to analyze their situation from a new perspective—that of a woman in an indigenous society.

The issue of indigenous people's rights in their ancestral land and to self-determination is very close to the heart of Igorot women because they are the primary food producers. They are small owner-tillers mainly producing rice and root crops in the fields and swiddens. Aside from this, the Igorot women also live in a society whose worldview is one where the human being is only just one of the creatures on this earth and, for it to survive, it must live in harmony with the rest of creation. The rest of creation includes the spirits of our ancestors, the woods, the water, the stones, the air, the stars, the moon and the sun and the cosmos. Thus, the land where we live in is not simply the soil and the plants that grow on it. It is life itself.

Thus, when dams have to be constructed and our villages are submerged, when our forest are to be logged off, when the bowels of the earth have to be bored into and our mountains stripped and scraped in order that our gold and other mineral wealth are squeezed out of our land, then our life, our identity, which is rooted in our physical environment would be gone. It is no wonder then that, when all of these happen in our land, we women would be the first to resist.

These issues of indigenous peoples then must be well-integrated into the women's national-democratic framework when we are organizing in our sector. Their right to their ancestral land, to cultural integrity, to their system of governance, to their vision of development, among others, must be recognized, respected, and promoted.

Looking back at how we have organized ourselves as indigenous women in terms of approaches and methods, there is nothing new. What is different is that the issue of ancestral land and self-determination is

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a paramount concern. The lack of awareness of indigenous peoples in their right to their own lifeways and systems is a rich ground for their own exploitation.

Where the indigenous society is still functional, communality and cooperation is the way of life and these are the roots of which we build community actions in confronting problems. Decisions are made through consensus and this must be promoted as the basis of governance.

On the other hand, we must also look at the patriarchal structures and systems in the indigenous societies in order to transform them or completely get rid of them. For instance, in the Cordillera, wife battery can be included in the provisions of the peace pact as a basis for breaking the pact. However, we also know that the practice of parental engagement is still going on. Also, in many communities, rape is considered a crime as grave as murder and thus its punishment is the taking of life also. It is probably because of this that our grandmothers do not remember any case of rape in their childhood. On the other hand, there are those who believe that it is to the best of all concerned that the rapist and the victim should get married in the cases of rape, if both are single. Thus, although we may have women-friendly indigenous practices, there are also many other matters that we have to struggle against.

One of the issues that we have been confronted with is the issue of militarization. The massive deployment of military forces in the region definitely affected our organizing work. The forced displacement of people from homes, and thus from their sacred places and livelihood sources, from their cemeteries, and from the only world they know, is a violation of their human rights and their rights as indigenous peoples. Their removal from their ancestral land is ethnocide for they cannot anymore practice their life cycle and production rituals which makes them what they are as a people. Also, increasing violence against women has been reported. For instance, in some villages, rape occurred for the first time, perpetrated by soldiers. "Mistressing" of indigenous women by soldiers, both single and married, also has been reported. Voyeurism is taboo in many communities. Women and men openly bathe in streams and springs. But with militarization, this sickness has been brought into the community. Pathways are usually narrow in the villages. Cases of mashing by soldiers along these foot-trails have been reported. These cases are only an overview of the

impact of militarization on individual women and to the women in the communities as a whole.

The issues that confront us every day are also opportunities/challenges by which we can rally other indigenous women. For instance, in the campaign to stop violence against women, we were able to mobilize women for specific cases. In one province, and in the city, we were able to form task forces. Since the majority of us are peasant women, we have joined peasant organizations in order to bring in the perspectives of indigenous peasant women. Some of us are active in the alliance of indigenous peoples in our region. At the village level, we have forwarded women's agenda. We have taken it upon ourselves to implement village resolutions on liquor, gambling, and wife battery. We have caused the approval of such resolutions where there are none. We have lobbied for projects from the government and implemented them ourselves. We have run in the village elections and some of us have won. There are many more. Small victories, yet giant steps.

This is the story of women in INNABUYOG. We know that we cannot be fully liberated if we do not join the struggles of the Filipino people for genuine democracy and sovereignty, of the peasants and workers against class oppression, of the indigenous peoples for self-determination and of all women against women's oppression.



# Organizing the Moro Women

BY LARA MAE ALMEDA

The subgroup among the special group of women in the Philippines that needs to be organized is that of the Moro women. The Moro people are the Islamized sector of the indigenous peoples of the Philippines. They came to embrace Islam even before the coming of the Spanish colonialists to the country. With the Christianization of the majority of the indigenous peoples in the present day Philippines, the different Moro groups that once were the most advanced economically and politically—having been into feudal social formations ahead of the predominantly slave formations amongst the indigenous peoples before the Spanish colonization, found themselves quantitatively in the minority and politically marginalized. They have been heroically resisting political and social integration since the Spanish colonial period up to the present oppressive social order, with at least one political group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, still on the revolutionary path.

With the continuing resistance to their integration to the oppressive semi-colonial and semi-feudal social system, some remnants of the feudal and even slave social system—particularly in the field of socio-cultural relations—have strongly persisted, affecting women and children among their ranks. The practice of *buya* or the giving of a bride price for a Moro woman being forced into marriage to a man of her parent's or clan's choice is still prevalent, especially in the rural areas. And since Moro women are supposed to be under the care of the men in their lives—father, husband and son—they are only entitled to only half of the amount their eldest brothers receive as inheritance. Divorce is a right granted only to Moro men and not to Moro women who find it hard getting divorce from their husbands. Moro women are prohibited from marrying Christian men of their choice more than the men since it is believed that they cannot goad their partners to convert to Islam.

In the recent years, with the spread of Islamic fundamentalist teaching in southern Mindanao, women are more than ever being subjected to a stricter moral code including the strict implementation of the Islamic way

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of dressing. The Moro *agama* or *umma*, the Muslim community religious organization—most of which are conservative, at the village level led by an alim (pl. ulama or Muslim religious leader like the *udstadz*) are increasingly strengthening their hold on the Moro women, not only in their way of dressing but in the conduct of their relationships with their husbands.

Majority of the Moro women are peasants. This is not only due to the lack of national integration brought about by the imperialist grip on the country's economy which has affected the Christian population as well, but also because of their minority position in predominantly Christian Philippine society. The Moro people—men and women alike—are unjustly discriminated against in job placements in the service, manufacturing and the minuscule industrial sectors of the economy, even in southern Philippines where they are relatively concentrated.

Like the majority Christian peasants—men and women alike—the Moro peasantry is also a victim of the landlords' extraction of high land rent, usurious interests on loans and profit through landlord-merchants' control on the grain market and retailing of agricultural inputs. But Moro women peasants were subjected to additional feudal corvee services—at least up to the '60s—to those claiming lineage from the once royal house of the sultanate: the likes of fanning and holding the umbrella for the Moro princess as depicted in the traditional Moro dance of Singkil.

The Moro peasantry also share the burden with their Christian brothers and sisters of producing surplus value for the multinational agricultural corporations which had hoodwinked them into becoming contract growers of bananas, pineapples, asparagus and other high-value cash crops for the international market.

As of late, Moro homelands heavy with gold ore are now being encroached upon by foreign mining multinational companies like the Western Mining, with the implementation of the more recent Mining Act of 1995 by the US-Ramos regime. The dangers of dislocation and land dispossession are again looming over them.

Pushed into poverty and with the men actively engaging in war in the '70s, the Moro women who are supposed to be under the care and protection of their men, ties that belong to that of men before, i.e., vending all sorts of wares in public markets and the streets. Many go abroad to work as domestic helpers, with some encountering experiences harsher

than that of Sarah Balabagan. A lesser number even fall into prostitution considered taboo in their Koran and meted with the death penalty by the Muslim Sharia court.

Burdened with the same forms of national and class oppressions, the struggle for the self-determination of the Moro people also assumes national and democratic characteristics, although they carry the added load of struggling against majority chauvinism in the context of the Philippine society. Their struggle for the right to self determination is part and parcel of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal national-democratic revolution since the forces pinning them down in the minority position are the same forces oppressing and exploiting the Christian majority.

Likewise, the Moro women's struggle for social emancipation is also anti-imperialist and anti-feudal, albeit they carry heavier burdens than their Christian sisters both because of their being in the minority and of religious authority taking a firmer hold on them.

In organizing, Moro women confront the same issues and lay down the same demands as their sisters in the majority do, although they have to give extra focus on the liberalization of the hold on them by the religious authority of the agama. The method of organizing also differs in that the agama also has a hold on the political positioning of the village.

But the women's movement in the Philippines has somehow made an impact on the status of Moros in society particularly in the urban areas in that their subordinate position have been brought out into the open by women's non-government organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations. Some NGOs working on the Moro women's concerns concentrate on developing socio-economic projects run by organized Moro women. Some tackled the legal status of women as essayed in the Code of Muslim Personal Law codified in 1977, which among other things made divorce proceedings initiated by women too cumbersome. While the more political Moro women organization, i.e., KHADIDYA based in southeastern Mindanao, aside from initiating socio-economic projects among the Moro women, are active in political consciousness-raising activities and involve them in political mass actions, i.e., protests against the oil price hike and the Western Mining encroachment in their homelands. For a short while the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in its revolutionary days in

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its beginnings in mid-70s, had its FATIMA—a contingent of armed Moro women actively participating in the armed struggle during that period.

# **Women and the Global Agenda: Strengthening International Solidarity Among Grassroots Women**

**PRESENTED BY ELISA TITA LUBI, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OFFICER,  
GABRIELA-PHILIPPINES**

*WISAP-1994*

The global situation today presents a big challenge to women's struggle for liberation. How to advance our agenda in the midst of a sophisticated campaign by the imperialist countries and transnational corporations (TNCs) to consolidate their hegemony over the world's peoples and resources, systematically assisted by national big business and the land-owning class through the state apparatus, is a question that has profound implications for women of the oppressed classes, especially in the colonized and semi-colonial countries.

Women liberationists are necessarily internationalists. But our internationalism must be based on a solid commonality of analysis and perspectives on the fundamental question of women's oppression, and therefore on the range of strategies by which we aim to bring about our emancipation. Imperialism, capitalism, and feudalism—the basic sources of women's exploitation and subordination—are sustained and strengthened by patriarchy. At the same time, these systems intensify the oppression and male domination of women by patriarchal structures and cultures.

We have seen and heard of our own experiences—landless peasant women, women laboring in factories owned by TNCs, migrant women, indigenous women, women in urban poor communities, women of color, refugee women. Former women political prisoners and women activists—that we are exploited and oppressed, not only because we are women of the disempowered, marginalized classes, and are of the Third World, whose labor and sexuality enable the forces of imperialism and the ruling elite within our own countries to continue exploiting the countries' resources to extract huge profits.

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How imperialism, capitalism, feudalism, patriarchy and the reactionary state suppress our struggles for liberation should by now be clear to us. But there are still insidious methods to subvert and destroy people's and women's movements that we should guard against, expose, and resist.

For women in liberation struggles and for those who are working for change within their own spheres, this development has profound consequences. By denying the feasibility of an alternative society, we are intimidated into accepting a social order that we have long rejected and which is the root of the immiseration of our lives and that of our children. Our capacity to eliminate our destitution is challenged and ridiculed, the gains that we have achieved through decades of struggle threatened and eroded.

There are both subtle and overt efforts to isolate liberation and militant people's and women's struggles. Through the extensive use of the controlled mass and other media, these movements are discredited by pointing out the fallacy of their socialist perspectives, reviving the "red scare," over-emphasizing internal struggles and splits, and giving more projection to the views and opinions of the conservative-reformist fractions.

Third World problems are presented "outside their context of class analysis." De-contextualization

direct[s] all attention to a part of the truth (what is said), while avoiding to relate this to imperialism (what is not said), ending up by blaming the victim (how it is said). And by removing it by its context, a partial truth can become a most blatant lie.

Slash-and-burn farmers are blamed more than logging concessionaires for deforestation. People of the North are held more responsible for environmental degradation due to their wasteful consumption than the TNCs and their plunder of natural resources and the US military bases for their toxic wastes. And Third World women and Third World "overpopulation" blamed for poverty. Responsibility for the global, especially Third World problems, is shifted from the TNCs and other imperialist agents to the ordinary citizens.

Liberation movements are pressured to negotiate for "peace" with governments that kill, torture and imprison activists and their suspected mass supporters without a guarantee of the fundamental resolution of the

bases of armed conflict. The non- or minimally involved are made to believe that the masses are tired of struggling for freedom and democracy, a gross violation of the historical truth that as long as the people are exploited and oppressed, they will carry on the fight to unshackle themselves from imperialism and all other systems that exploit and oppress them.

A third way is presented as the alternative for class struggle. Civil society, humanitarian diplomacy, the mediating role of the NGOs between grassroots and authorities are some of the core ideas that are emphasized.

There is a selective protection of human rights. The United Nations Declaration and other instruments are used and interpreted to rationalize selective interference where the United States, the worst violator of human rights, becomes the champion of democracy with license to conduct global aggression with the Japanese economic expansionism and militarism, where fundamentalist groups are allowed to threaten the lives of dissenters, and where UN peacekeeping forces keep “comfort women” for their “rest and recreation.”

The position of bourgeois “feminism” which upholds piecemeal reforms as the ultimate solution to women’s oppression is strengthened to negate the gains of women’s liberation struggles. Women in Development (WID) strategies, and the even more diluted Gender and Development (GAD), shift attention from militant women’s actions to project work. Overemphasis is given to management skills, professionalism, and efficiency more than political analysis and commitment.

Some support groups start to act like little funding agencies. Some women activists are being turned into NGO bureaucrats, co-opted through financial support and career opportunities.

While we recognize international lobbying as another area of attention for advocacy work, we do not harbor illusions as to how much we can achieve. The recent Cairo Conference adopted a lot of feminist language but still stuck to the framework of population control. As a sister who has been working on the issue of health and reproductive rights stressed, “you cannot change a racist by putting lipstick on it.”

We guard against giving international conferences too much time and effort to the detriment of women organizing, education, and mobilization. Effectiveness of our lobby work depends on the strength of our women’s movements.

## **The Imperatives for International Solidarity Among Grass-roots Women**

It is the recognition of the class question as a basic dimension of women's oppression that internationalism finds real meaning among women. For not even the universality of patriarchy can guarantee a strong unity among women, whose political standpoints are ultimately determined by their respective social and individual contexts.

An international solidarity of women of the basic masses (workers, peasants, urban poor, indigenous) is the decisive instrument to advance the struggle for women's emancipation and to confront the attempts of imperialism to perpetuate the subjugation of women.

We propose the vision of an international united front of toiling women in colonized and underdeveloped countries and working women of capitalist and imperialist countries who share a similar marginalization, which will jointly undertake anti-imperialist actions either on a specific or comprehensive basis; women who will mutually support and learn from each other's struggles while respecting the particular contexts and national realities within which such struggles are being undertaken.

It will be unity that will affirm the gains already achieved by marginalized women in different parts of the globe and the viability of the alternative social order; and supports the struggle of women to build socialism according to feminist perspectives and ideals.

It will be an alliance that counters the efforts of imperialism to co-opt women's struggles, participating in the process and structures of international institutions only to preserve what has already been gained by the global women's movement in terms of registering women's issues in the international agenda and to register our protest at the way people, especially women, have been exploited through centuries of colonialism, imperialism, and patriarchy.

For these, it is imperative to strengthen our movements at the grassroots level, especially in the Third World. Such grassroots based women's movements will enrich the conceptual framework in building our women's mass movements and draw in the participation of the widest possible number of women of other democratic classes the world over.

At the same time, there is a compelling need to strengthen grassroots women's participation and leadership in gender-based, class-based sectoral movements within our own countries, and to echo this call to the level of international working class and anti-imperialist movements. We propose that this network of primarily grassroots women, whether on a short or long-term basis, conduct worldwide solidarity actions on issues such as GATT and SAP; the continuing menace posed by TNCs; migration; traffic in women; racism and fascism; militarism and imperialist aggression; and fundamentalism.

For women confronted with the problems of a development paradigm imposed by the West, we call for greater networking, information-sharing and education and education campaigns to make the general public, and even women among our ranks, aware of the real situation in each other's countries.

We can jointly call on governments in "transition societies" to protect and preserve the gains already achieved by women in the sphere of social and support measures, policies, and legislation, and continue laying the conditions and implementation programs of total women's liberation.

It is the grassroots based women's movements that will give substance and driving force to the internationalism that must be nurtured and strengthened among the oppressed women of the world. It is from these movements that the global women's movements will continue to derive strength. It will be these movements that will sustain our hopes in the midst of the crisis that grips the world.



## Some Notes on the “Woman Question”

BY LARA MAE ALMEDA

The gross lack in ideological building on the revolutionary theory in general, and the women question in particular, augured well for the seeping in of bourgeois-feminist ideas inside the Philippine proletarian party. Several key questions on the women’s emancipation movement were left unanswered or just left to flourish even among the leading elements of the national-democratic women’s liberation movement. This trend even went to the point that the correct political orientation on the women question laid down in 1972 was already being viewed as limited, if not grossly incorrect, for not raising feminism at all.

To rectify thoroughly the political mistakes and weaknesses committed in the conduct of the revolutionary women’s liberation movement in the Philippines from the ‘80s to mid-’90s, the following ideological questions on the women question should be fleshed out and understood by proletarian women emancipationists, men and women alike.

### **On Patriarchy**

For some time, the revolutionary women’s movement in the Philippines had placed patriarchy as one of the major problems of Filipino women, on par with imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism. It dichotomized the problems of women into class and gender. Women of the basic classes confront imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism as part of the working class, the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. Bourgeois feminists, too, assert that as women, they confront patriarchy.

With the emergence of private property and alongside it the class society, all ideologies that have prevailed within the context of class societies are patriarchal ideologies. Patriarchy emerged at the juncture of social development when the means of production passed on from being publicly owned by a primitive communal community to being privately owned by individuals belonging to particular social classes. At this juncture, the once matriarchal community became patriarchal, when matriarchy or mother right was overthrown by patriarchy. Pairing marriages developed from group marriage to properly determined lineage from the father passing his

privately owned means of production to his rightful children. The monogamous nuclear and father-centered family emerged.

The prevailing ideology in a slave society was patriarchal with the slaves economically dependent on and politically bound to their masters who could sell them at the right price. Women had a slave-like status in relation to men in a slave society. The landlord right to the first night in medieval feudal society began during the stage period of social development. The practice of giving women in marriage with the right bride price that still persists in some indigenous communities reflected the practice of the slave master of selling his slaves—both men and women.

Feudal ideology is also patriarchal. The peasants were vassals to the king, the patriarch, whose power emanated from the god. Women, on the other, with the biblical Adam giving life to Eve, remained subordinated to men. As peasants are bonded to the landlord, peasant women are bonded to the men in their lives—fathers, husbands, brothers and sons. As peasants should be grateful to the landlord for having them till his land, the peasant woman should also thank her husband for taking her under his wings, providing for her subsistence and protecting her from harm. The prevailing misconception is that patriarchy is a characteristic only of the ideology of the landlord class.

Likewise patriarchy is embedded in the bourgeois ideology of the capitalist class. Workers should “thank” the capitalists for being “benevolent” for buying their labor power and exploiting them to the hilt in return. Neo-colonies should kiss the ass of imperialism as personified by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for investing and extending them loans with onerous conditionalities. Just as the workers—both men and women—produce surplus value for the capitalist, women workers should also do so in relation with their husbands. They remain to be tied up with domestic work even if they have been integrated to the social labor force.

Only socialism guided by the ideology of the working class and its advanced detachment can create the conditions for the complete emancipation of women. This has amply been demonstrated by the revolutionary practices of socialist construction in the now defunct Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) the former under Lenin and then Stalin, and the latter under Mao. Women

were fully integrated into the socially productive work force. Women were leading factories and communes. Women were enjoying equal rights with men. Daycare centers and nurseries were provided for them to actively participate in economic and political activities. Prostitution was eliminated. All these and more were accomplished in both countries when they were still socialist. No other social system and political ideology can accomplish what the proletarian ideology guiding the building of socialism was able to in the USSR and PRC.

Thus, to put patriarchy on par with imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism is tautological. All these forces run through all the gamut of social life in semi-colonial and semi-feudal societies like the Philippines—economic, political and socio-cultural. They all dictate how patriarchal and hierarchical social relations should be, including that between men and women.

These forces are the ones perpetuating the subordinate status of women to men, both in public and private spheres of relationships—be in the workplaces, schools, churches and the home. They pin down women to low wages and job discriminations, unjust crop-sharing scheme in agricultural productions, non-inclusion of non-propertied women in political structure, to sexual abuses, domestic violence and as sex-commodities. These forces are the root causes of national, class and gender oppression of women in the context of semi-feudal and semi-colonial Philippine society.

Petty-bourgeois feminists limit the definition of patriarchy to the subjugation of women by men. They do not see that the landlord, imperialist power and bureaucrat capitalist patriarchs behind the high land rent, the stunted national industrialization and militarization are the same patriarchs behind sex-related tourism, military bases, the conservative church, the clan and the individualist nuclear family lorded over by the husband.

Along with formulation of putting patriarchy on par with the three major problems of the Filipino people—both men and women—the women’s movement in the Philippines began to look for “feminist demands and issues, advocating for feminist analysis and feminist everything.” Even in analyzing poverty there is such a thing as its “feminization” which actually pertains to the increasing involvement of women in economic activities with the social contradictions in a society in transition being already bursting at its seams.

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Political undertakings and activities without particularization for the women sector were considered to be gender-biased. Thus, the campaign for the release of all political prisoners during the US-Marcos regime was particularized into the release only of all women political detainees.

Putting patriarchy on the same footing with the major social problems makes bourgeois feminism a supraclass ideology. Patriarchy that resulted from the development of a class society becomes instead standing over it. Putting patriarchy above class, petty-bourgeois feminist organizations pride itself for having members from all walks of life, combining women from the oppressed classes with women of the oppressor classes.

On the other hand, non-recognition of the existence and prevalence of patriarchy or patriarchal attitude, ideas and practices towards and against women among revolutionaries—both men and women—will lead to confusion in the handling of the women question both in and out of the Philippine proletarian party. The need to build a national-democratic women's front and the correct conduct of the women's emancipation movement will both be jeopardized. At its worst, the revolutionary party will be reduced to giving lip service to the women's liberation movement.

Bourgeois-feminism and the revolutionary women's liberation movement, bourgeois feminist ideas began to be crystallized at the height of the anti-feudal bourgeois-democratic struggles in Europe in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, feminists started to question their slave-like status vis-à-vis men and the feudal institutions they were in control of. But full-blown bourgeois feminist movements only came to take shape during the peak of the bourgeois-democratic struggles in the United States and Europe, i.e., during the American Revolution of 1776 in the USA.

Bourgeois feminism is part and parcel of the old type, anti-feudal, bourgeois-democratic revolution under the leadership of the bourgeoisie who saw to the development of society towards full-blown capitalism. Bourgeois feminists, or what German socialist August Bebel called the "women's-rightsers" only have the attainment of bourgeois democratic rights already gained by men, as their end-goal of their struggles. Thus, on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, feminist struggles only centered on the following demands: property right, right to higher education and women's suffrage.

The bourgeois-feminist movement to attain these bourgeois rights in the context of a society struggling against feudal fetters is revolutionary in character. As has been proven in industrial economies, bourgeois feminism lends a hand in pushing women into the social work force, thus freeing them from the patriarchal shackles of home, family and even the conservative church. Bourgeois-feminist organizing efforts to involve women in charity work and church activities at the early years of capitalist development drove unorganized and isolated women to go out, socialize and get organized.

It taught women the rudiments of organizing and eventually towards organizing themselves in their own struggles for property right, the right to higher education and suffrage. The bourgeois-feminist demands for women workers to be allowed to unionize is progressive vis-à-vis the unorganized conditions of working women.

In this vein and in the context of the still backward agrarian and pre-industrial condition of the Philippine society, where remnants of clan, landlord and religious authorities still prevail, especially among the majority of Filipino women, the struggle for bourgeois-democratic rights for women is progressive. Bourgeois-democratic rights free women, even if only on paper.

The revolutionary women’s movement should work in stretching these bourgeois-democratic rights just as human rights activists stretch the universal declaration of human rights to show the limitations of bourgeois democracy in upholding people’s livelihood and political freedom—men and women both.

But bourgeois feminism in the era of socialist revolutions has outlived its purpose. Having achieved relative equality with men, even on paper, the women’s emancipation movement has to be raised under the leadership of the proletarian party and link up with the class struggles of oppressed and exploited classes in society. It now has to take the interests and demands of the working women—the women workers, peasants and lower petty bourgeois.

It is in this context that bourgeois feminism had proven divisive, individualist and sectarian. It sowed division among the revolutionary ranks along the gender line by organizing women principally not on class issues but on gender issues. Gender sensitivity training workshops

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and seminars instead of strengthening relationships between men and women fighting against their common class and gender enemies instead pull them apart.

Instead of demanding for the liberation of the whole classes exploited and oppressed under the semi-colonial and semi-feudal Philippine society, the struggle was reduced to a “for her principally” demand. This smacks of the individualism of the petty bourgeois. Political analyses were based on “her individual experience” rather than a thoroughgoing social investigation and class analysis.

In the field of organization, this individualism finds its expression in narrow sectarianism. Instead of uniting the people—men and women alike against the common enemy, petty-bourgeois feminists hard-headedly try to organize and consolidate themselves into autonomous women's movement based on women's issues alone and apart from the people's mass movements. Almost always, they find themselves wallowing in each of her individual angst for individual identity during meetings.

Worst, a bourgeois feminist organization takes on issues that instead of emancipating women will all the more confined them to the drudgery of household work. Take for example the “socialist feminist” demand of giving value to women's work at home. Instead of demanding for the full integration of women into the social work force, they want the capitalist to increase wages of men workers in consideration of the work done by women to keep their husbands fit for the next day's work and in rearing the future workforce. The bourgeois capitalist would not even increase workers' wage based on their productivity, how much more increase it on this “for women” consideration.

Some Filipino petty-bourgeois feminists like their counterparts in the industrialized countries have even thrown their materialism behind and have started performing rituals calling for intercessions from the goddess women priestesses prayed to during the Neolithic age. As if this Neolithic age ritual would magically change the thinking of the ruling class and grant whatever demand they are fighting for.

The social status of women goes on changing, quantitatively, that is, with the continuing changes and developments in economic, political, social, and science and technology. The demands of women to further improve their social status also develop in accordance with the concrete

conditions in society. The demand for women’s reproductive rights, for example, could not even be imagined without the more recent developments in birth control methods. The women’s demand for an equal right in decision-making in political matters could not be articulated at all even by bourgeois women in leading positions, without the continuing integration of women into the labor force in capitalist societies. The issue of prostitution would not have occupied center stage for bourgeois feminists without the IMF-dictated development of the dollar-earning sex-related industry on a global scale.

Having achieved some degree of economic independence through higher education or self-employment, petty-bourgeois women are now demanding more for the furtherance of their social status. Coupled with the advancements in science and technology, they are now zeroing on demands related to sexuality and reproduction and the like. It is in this social context that petty-bourgeois feminism developed in the ‘70s. This goes hand-in-hand with renewed vigor of liberalism in the field of ideology.

This neoliberalism has led petty-bourgeois feminists not only to the morass of reformism but to metaphysics as well.

The issues of prostitution, sex trafficking and the like secondary to the national-democratic women’s emancipation movement can be taken up by emancipationist national-democrats together with some petty-bourgeois feminist groupings. But these issues should not be taken without taking to tasks the social forces driving women to prostitution, mail-order bride scheme and the like.

### **On the Relation of the Women’s Emancipation Movement to the National-Democratic Revolution.**

As has been discussed earlier, the forces that have been pinning down the Philippine society into its semi-colonial and semi-feudal conditions are also the same forces that perpetuate the subordinate status of women in society—both in the public and private spheres of relationships. These forces, by stunting national industrialization, shut out women from the social labor force. The full integration of women into the economic force would have laid down the basis for the women’s emancipation.

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Within the context of the semi-colonial and semi-feudal conditions in the Philippine society, the women's liberation movement in the country cannot but be anti-feudal and anti-colonial, hence national democratic.

*One*, the complete overthrow of feudalism through agrarian revolution being waged in the Philippine countryside by the CPP-NDF-NPA will pave the way for the overthrow of landlord authority weighing down on the Filipino women. Remnants of clan authority still persisting in indigenous and Moro communities will likewise be smashed as its feudal landlord patriarch falls on his knees.

*Two*, the smashing of the imperialist grip through the national-democratic revolution will pave the way for socialism. Socialist construction efforts will see to wide-scale agricultural production and national industrialization in the country. This will harness to the full all available labor power—young and old, men and women. Full blast economic activities and the subsequent full integration of women into social production will revolutionize the status of women in society. It will provide the material basis for the full social emancipation of women.

*Three*, the fall of the reactionary state lorded over by bureaucrat-capitalists and sees to the perpetuation of violence against women through their policies on the development of sex-related tourism industry, export of labor and military relations with US imperialism among others, will likewise loose the social grip on women.

*Four*, it is only under socialism that the building of the necessary infrastructures for the socialization of domestic work and child rearing will be fully implemented. Coupled with the full integration of women into the social work force, this will substantially complete women's emancipation in economic and political spheres of life.

*Five*, a proletarian cultural revolution bombarding unscientific, antisocial, anti-people and male-chauvinist ideas and prac-

tices among other things will see through the emancipation of women in the ideological field.

There is no reason for genuine women’s emancipation movement not to be part and parcel of the national-democratic revolution with its socialist perspective.

On the other hand, national democrats all along know that the victory of the ongoing revolution will not be possible without the active involvement and support of women for their sheer number alone. The women of the basic masses make up half of the motive forces of the people’s democratic revolution.

But they should remind themselves every now and then that class issues alone are not enough to fully mobilize women. A conscious program of social enlightenment and consciousness raising on the women question has to be made an integral part of the overall revolutionary program. Revolutionaries, men and women alike should be ideologically and politically conscious of the need to arouse, organize and mobilize women to achieve total victory for the national-democratic and socialist revolutions. Practices and infrastructures that will organizationally free women revolutionaries from the shackles of home and family for them to fully accomplish their political tasks should be put into place.

The national-democratic revolution has to attend to the building of the revolutionary women’s front just as it is attending to the development of genuine trade unionism among the working class and to the launching of the agrarian revolution among the peasantry. This revolutionary women’s movement should be firmly based on the basic alliance of women workers and peasants under the leadership of the proletarian party.

The women’s liberation movement is part and parcel of the national-democratic movement. Both are fighting against the same social evils of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. This makes the revolutionary women’s movement an integral part of the overall people’s revolutionary movement. This alone is reason enough to say no to the sectarian petty-bourgeois feminist demand for the political autonomy of the women’s movement.

But aside from fighting against national and class exploitation and oppression, women are also struggling against all forms of gender oppres-

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sion. This makes it doubly important for a distinct women's emancipation movement within the context of the national-democratic revolution. In terms of organization, this distinct character of the revolutionary women's movement means the building of a distinct and autonomous women's organization linking up with the broader people's movement. MAKIBAKA is the revolutionary women's organization operating autonomously within the broad National-Democratic Front.

This autonomous nature of women's organization means that the women emancipationists are the ones running their own organization at all levels, from village level up. This will train them in their thousands not only for the benefit of the struggle for women's liberation but the whole people's movement as well.

Women's organizations will teach them not only the rudiments of organizing work but train them in administrative work that will prove of immense value in organizing and administering people's state apparatuses and infrastructures that will be needed for socialist construction of society. Who will lead in organizing factories and communes, community kitchens, nurseries, laundry halls and whatever that will be needed in building socialism even in the sphere of domestic work? Women trained in the process of the revolution will prove capable of taking these gargantuan tasks into their hands.

# Women and Revolution

BY THE SECRETARY OF THE WOMEN'S BUREAU, NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPP  
CONTRIBUTIONS PREPARED FOR THE CPP DELEGATION TO THE INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF WOMEN HELD IN KATMANDU, NEPAL

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## **Some Lessons from the Revolutionary Women's Movement in the Philippines**

The Philippine women's movement has gained international repute as being very active. Indeed, it is so. All over the Philippines today, various women's groups have sprouted espousing women's causes.

At the forefront of this movement, undeniably, is the national-democratic women's movement led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) under the ideological guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought.

The CPP has been consciously advocating and struggling for the liberation of women since its reestablishment. It has recruited into its ranks and developed the leadership of an ever-growing number of women in the struggle for national and social liberation. It has unleashed the revolutionary initiative of women in various spheres of work, whether in the line of armed struggle and the agrarian revolution in the countryside or the democratic protest movement in the cities.

No Party member can talk of revolution and leave the women behind. The national liberation struggle cannot be won without the participation of the female half of the population. This reality strikes every revolutionary in the face. Thus every revolutionary's credo is to arouse, organize, and mobilize the masses and this includes women.

This is a belief that comes from the realization that women, especially from the basic exploited classes, bear the brunt of the worst exploitation and oppression from a comprador-ruling system subservient to the US imperialism.

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In the countryside, peasant women along with their families are being dislocated in larger numbers as they lose their lands to export crop plantations, real estate developers, and mining concessions. In the cities, women workers lose their permanent jobs as subcontract labor and labor-only contracting has become the norm under the auspices of monopoly capitalist globalization.

On top of this, women are also at the receiving end of the worst physical, sexual and mental and emotional abuse, with no redress under the ruling system.

The oppressed condition of women is the basis for organizing them. Our nation's history has consistently witnessed women taking up arms—in the struggle against Spanish and American colonial rule, against the Japanese fascist invaders and against landlord oppression and exploitation. In these struggles women have fought side by side with the men and, in many instances, outstanding women fought as leaders of the struggle.

This revolutionary heritage has been translated exponentially in the current struggle for national and social liberation, of which the women's struggle for emancipation is a part.

Thus, we witness women guerrillas in the New People's Army, peasant women huddled in meetings and trooping to military camps and government offices in protest actions, picket lines of women workers, community women—young and old—barricading their homes against demolition teams, female students fighting against tuition-fee increases, minority women with kids in tow bravely fighting military and police serving ejection order for them to leave their ancestral homes to make way for some multinational or government "development" projects. These are all too commonplace to mention.

It is in the course of these struggles that women emancipate themselves. Their participation in economic and political struggles has enabled them to raise the status of women and gain certain concessions even within the ruling system. This has resulted in the elevation of more women to higher positions, in the punishment of violators of women's rights, in more attention to child care, in more interest in women's education, in the increase in women's committees and other women's organizations, in songs, skits and publications that celebrate the struggles and victories of women.

In the Party, policies have been laid down as early as the '60s to involve women in armed struggle at par with the men, to organize them into separate associations at the barrio level, to have them duly represented in the organs of political power.

In the book *Philippine Society and Revolution*, the Party's founding chairman Amado Guerrero recognized that women suffer from male oppression in addition to their class oppression and that to emancipate themselves they must participate widely in the people's democratic revolution, performing regular as well as special tasks.

The New People's Army at its founding in 1969 declared as a cardinal rule respect for women and strongly stood against their exploitation.

Heeding the Party's call, mass organizations from among the peasantry, workers, and petty bourgeoisie have recruited as many women members as possible. The last two decades have shown a marked increase in the recruitment of women not only into mass organizations but also into the party as compared to its early years.

Women have also been escalating their struggles. In fact, towards the end of the Marcos dictatorship when victory seemed almost within the people's reach, women were going out of their homes and their workplaces in ever-larger numbers and intensifying their attacks against the ruling system. The installation of the Cory Aquino regime gave even more impetus to women's actions even as the regime was erroneously perceived initially as liberal-democratic.

### **Halting the Advance of the Women's Movement**

All told the women's movement seemed to be heading towards greater heights. But not quite.

The combined initiative, visibility and activism of women throughout these years could not conceal the fact that the advance of the revolutionary women's movement was being halted, even pushed back, by errors in the political line that affected the entire revolutionary movement in the '80s until the early '90s.

The errors of premature regularization of the people's army, military adventurism, and urban insurrectionism dealt more damage to the national-democratic movement than the most ferocious attacks of the enemy. Serious questions were raised regarding the analysis of Philippine society,

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as well as the strategy and tactics of protracted people's war. The central leadership of the Party was riddled with disagreements. Disorientation on the movement's strategy and tactics seeped down into the rank and file, opening the floodgates for the entry of ideas and influences that emanated from various models abroad.

The revolutionary women's movement particularly in the cities was not exempt from these errors and deviations as it vigorously implemented policies from the Party. However, apart from this, Party cadres in the women's movement contributed its own disorientation into the entire movement by flirting with bourgeois feminism masquerading as socialist-feminism and obliquely attacking Marxism.

The general climate of disorientation became a fertile ground for bourgeois feminism to flourish especially as it brandishes what it called the best insights of feminism and socialism in a new category termed "socialist feminism."

Before long, quite a number of city-based women cadres were referring to Marxism as "orthodox" and borrowing their analysis on the woman question from various socialist-feminist readings. Some comrades get hooked on to the socialist feminist line that found Marxism wanting on the woman question without as much as making a serious study of Marxism, and henceforth distorting Marxist analysis as well.

In due time, the socialist-feminist analysis had influenced theoretical, political and organizational questions in the revolutionary women's movement and led to various distortions and disorientation on the woman question.

Such disorientation took various forms and influenced a lot of cadres who by this time were not even keen on spending time to study the theoretical works of Marx and Lenin and had almost forgotten Mao. Worse, for years, they even stopped to conduct concrete social investigation, mass work, and summing-up of practical work.

In the backdrop were the bourgeois funding agencies, UN institutions, the academe, and nongovernmental organizations pushing their eclectic wares of supraclass feminist theories. Because of the general lack of ideological work within the Party, many cadres became uncritically attracted to feminist studies and "gender development." What is common among these theorizing is the elevation of gender as a supraclass issue and

the downplaying of the class question. The idea is to “mainstream” gender issues clearly along the reformist path and mainly serving the imperialist ideological offensive against the proletariat, class struggle and revolution. Funding would come easy for as long as the women’s movement could be drawn into the path of co-optation.

Bourgeois feminism in several guises seeped into the Party largely unopposed. It pitted gender against class and glossed over class divisions among women in the name of sisterhood. Either women’s oppression was viewed as either biologically determined or simply as a question of “power relations” between men and women, or as both.

If class relations were acknowledged at all, this was treated on par with gender, race and ethnicity. Comrades who would continually raise the class question as decisive in the resolution of the woman question were derided as vulgar Marxists, class reductionists, productionists or instrumentalist.

### **The Question of Class and Gender**

Downplaying the class struggle while overstressing the common interest of women as women had led to compromises. The effects are most apparent in political work.

For example, the idea that women share common oppression regardless of class brought together women into single organizations, with unreformed upper-class women, at times even landlord comprador women, assuming leadership over the broad masses of working women. Also in one such case, by venturing into women’s alliances or coalitions without a clear understanding of class interests, the basic demands of lower-class women such as land reform were set aside in deference to landholding women who were deemed allies.

“Coalitionism” in fact resulted in the proletariat’s surrender of its leadership to the bourgeoisie. With little or no sweat, bourgeois-feminist leaders gained ascendancy in women’s mass organizations which cadres of the proletarian party had labored to set up, and were allowed to peddle every variety of bourgeois feminist notions.

The worst case was the full support given to President Aquino in the first six months in office not only because she was deemed a “liberal-democrat” (in fact and in essence still a landlord-comprador) but also

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because she was a woman. It was only after Aquino “unsheathed the sword of war” against the entire revolutionary forces in 1987 that the revolutionary women's movement in the cities understood the full meaning of class interest over gender.

Also by viewing women as one monolithic group and apart from classes, the revolutionary women's movement tended to treat itself as parallel to the national-democratic movement. Calls were issued to make the women's movement entirely and exclusively of women's organizations and to raise primarily specific women's demands rather than develop the women's movement within the framework of the class movement and the entire national-democratic movement.

Women in other revolutionary organizations such as the New People's Army, for example, were in effect excluded from the revolutionary women's movement even as they exemplify liberated women. And simply because theirs is not a women's organization.

In education, the study courses tended to overlook the fact that women belong to various classes and have diverse situations. The tendency was to stress the common oppression of women as women, oblivious to the fact that gender issues affect women from different classes in different ways.

Such issues as sexuality, domesticity, child care, rape and other forms of violence against women could impact differently on different women. A poor peasant woman who labors in the field along with her man but still has to assume a larger chunk of domestic chores is miles and miles away from a ruling class woman who does not only share the privileges of her own class but has a retinue of servants to do the housework for her. And yet culturally, as women, they are both expected to attend to household chores.

Alas, de-emphasizing class distinctions among women blurs understanding of the national-democratic line that draws the line between the masses and their enemies. What comes to the fore are women pitted against men, where the problem stops at patriarchy (a problem that defies a single definition and is interpreted or understood differently by as many groups of feminists as there are).

In the case of the Philippine women's movement, reducing women's oppression to anything and everything as patriarchy has had the effect of

turning non-antagonistic contradictions among the masses into antagonistic ones. Even within the revolutionary movement, seeds of dissension are planted by insinuations and irresponsible comments that the Party and the New People's Army are bastions of patriarchy.

Also, the so-called "feminist perspective" had led to further confusion and demagoguery, as this took on a peculiar world outlook based on gender which saw the world divided between men and women, and adherents went overboard in stressing that different issues impact on different genders, without so much as conducting concrete social investigation. In this light, people's issues that made no mention of the word women, or in short "gender-blind" were deemed not issues of women. What matters only is what matters for women.

Such sectarian view relegates the proletarian world outlook to oblivion. In fact even the tried and tested method of social investigation and class analysis in arousing, organizing and mobilizing the masses had become alien to new recruits to the Party. What sparked interest was a new research instrument called social gender analysis that refused having anything to do with discussing classes and social contexts but focused almost entirely on monitoring or making random surveys of the changing roles of men and women.

The push to "mainstream" feminist issues, including making the reactionary state "gender-sensitive," also became the overriding reason why certain Party-led women's organizations had been co-opted by the reactionary government into entering into partnership with its various agencies, and thus helping create the illusion that the reactionary government is pro-people, and particularly pro-women.

Instead of exposing the reactionary state and isolating it from the people, these women's organizations were used as props by the reactionary state to refurbish its image under the guise of "democratic consultations" and "people empowerment." Aquino's landmark Philippine Development Plan for Women, for example, got its ideas from progressive women's organizations which so willingly aided the regime in drafting the document through a series of consultations between government and nongovernmental organizations.

But unknown to these women, the regime was more interested in going through the motions of consultations than in putting into effect

their proposals that were screened anyhow to suit the pro-landlord, and pro-imperialist medium-term development program of government.

The activist nature of women's organizations also collided with foreign-funded programs for women that required "professionalism" and "management skills" (read: bureaucratism) in the running of organizations termed "NGOs." The bundy clock system,<sup>7</sup> locator charts, fixed schedules, job descriptions, salary increases and benefits transformed women's organizations into institutions where employer-employee relations became dominant.

As women's organizations relied heavily on foreign funding, the dictates of funding agencies became pronounced. These agencies required them to draw up three-year "strategic" plans subject to the funding agency's approval, monitoring and evaluation. Women's programs and women's organizations that got funding from these agencies were also pushed to hold gender-sensitivity courses and feminist management training, among other things.

The issue of foreign funding has not only redirected the course of women's organizations and institutions. It has also spawned the problem of economism among women in urban poor communities as well as in the countryside. No different from the regime's concept of "empowerment," women were encouraged to set up small-scale and labor-intensive "income generating" project.

The problem was not so much that these projects failed—as these were bound to fail, subject to the inherent laws of the capitalist market—but that so-called socio-economic projects competed with or emasculated existing women's organizations in the area. It turned out that personnel for these projects were recruited from among members of legal organizations who lost time for mass organizing and activities as they became more and more engrossed with economic activities that earned for them allowances and benefits for the duration the project period.

### **No Room for Expansion and Consolidation**

While all these problems were besetting the revolutionary women's movement, especially in the cities, the movement's campaign activities

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<sup>7</sup> A bundy clock is a mechanical, or time punch clock used to track workers' hours.—*Ed.*

were put on a high gear, championing the cause not just of women but of the people as well. Both nationally and internationally, the open women's movement was at forefront fighting issues against sex trafficking, rape and prostitution, sexual harassment, abuse of migrant women, and the like.

At the same time its propaganda, campaign and educational work against the removal of the US bases, economic crises, total war and other human rights violations shone brightly in the open mass movement, earning for it considerable mileage even in the bourgeois press. In 1991, at the height of the Gulf War crisis, the open women's movement was averaging two rallies per week, with mobilization peaking at 9,000 women in Manila alone.

However, the intensification of women's campaigns left the movement no room to expand and consolidate its mass base. In fact mass organizing was primarily geared towards mobilization for campaigns. At that time, the error of urban insurrectionism was catching up on the women's movement. There was the call for the revolutionary forces to intensify mass struggles even more. At one point directives were issued to revolutionary women and the masses to take over government granaries as well as various government agencies at the local level at the height of the economic crises.

The call was sounded at a time that the forces of the revolutionary movement had stagnated, including those of the women's movement, and the Party was losing large chunks of its guerrilla fronts to enemy attacks as well as to demoralization of the masses in areas where grave errors were committed as a consequence of military adventurism and premature regularization.

In the cities, the advent of armed city partisan (ACP) warfare transformed legal organizations of women in the communities into combat-support machinery. No longer was distinction drawn between legal and illegal work. Members of legal organizations were trained to become insurrectionary forces, openly advocating insurrection and recruiting supporters for ACP work. Even offices and daycare centers were carelessly used as meeting places of armed city partisans. This carelessness put the women's organizations at the receiving end of fascist attacks as state troopers stormed communities and arrested suspected subversives, among them housewives.

However, the error of Right and "Left" opportunism that remained unchecked for more than a decade did not succeed in decimating the revolutionary women's movement even in the cities where the influence of bourgeois feminism and urban insurrectionism were growing.

This is due to the fact that despite the disorientation, confusion and deviations that marred the movement's work for many years, many cadres and forces persevered in pursuing the general line of the national-democratic revolution and upheld the basic principles of the Party, hence the erroneous line did not succeed in consolidating its influence in the movement.

All things considered, the Party and the revolutionary forces in the women's movement still had the strength to check and overcome the dangerous trend brought about by the major deviations and errors. So much so that when the Party and the revolutionary masses embarked on the second great rectification movement by 1992, cadres of the revolutionary women's movement were among the first to support the Party's stand. They actively fought the wrecking crew of counterrevolutionaries who attempted to thwart the rectification movement.

### **Onward With the Rectification Movement**

The rectification movement immediately took on the character of summing up of experiences, criticism-and-self-criticism, and the repudiation and rectification of the major errors and deviations that had seriously damaged the Party and the revolutionary mass movement, including the women's movement. Lessons were drawn and basic principles were reaffirmed.

For its part, the revolutionary women's movement affirmed the correctness of the national-democratic revolution with a socialist perspective as the road to Filipino women's emancipation. Without the people rising up in arms against the ruling system, women can never hope to be liberated. For under semi-feudal and semi-colonial conditions, it is through armed struggle that we can overthrow the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism that has long kept the entire Filipino national under the yoke of oppression and exploitation.

And this struggle is not only for men but more so for women who, in the course of the national-democratic revolution, stand to gain most

from the weakening and destruction of feudal-patriarchal structures in society. Hence the revolutionary women's movement has actively called for the widest participation of women in various tasks of the national-democratic revolution.

Various people's movements have responded to this call by recruiting more women into their fold, paying attention to building specific organizations of women, raising women-specific issues, and addressing problems related to housework and child care. At the helm of various people's and class-based movements are women who fight not only for the resolution of their class demands but also for their demands as women.

It is clear from the above that the revolutionary women's movement in the Philippines is an integral part of the national-democratic movement. This is because the interest of women is one with the interest of the entire nation for liberation, and more so because the national-democratic struggle builds the material foundation such as organizations of poor peasant women, women's committees in unions, associations of working women in communities, etc.

Women youth organizations on campuses and in groups or networks of professional women are also set up. These organizations fight for their class demands and general people's issues as much as they fight for specific issues of women.

In the sense that women—whether from women's organizations or not—fight for their specific demands as women, makes the revolutionary women's movement distinct or separate from other movements. In the sense that women also fight for their class interest and general interests as part of the entire Filipino people makes the revolutionary women's movement an integral part of class movements as well as the national-democratic movement in general.

Worth noting too is the fact that the revolutionary women's movement in the Philippines is not limited to women's organizations but brings under its wings all revolutionary women even as they are part of various class movements. This is to rectify the error that the women's movement is exclusively of women's organizations. Whether in separate organizations or in mixed organizations, women know that they can only win their demands as women in the context of the class struggle.

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At the same time, declaring the revolutionary women's movement as class-based means that its main force comes from the basic masses of workers and peasants. It is also to underscore the fact the demands of women workers and peasants have to be fought for within their class movements. A peasant woman wanting liberation has to participate in the anti-feudal struggle along with peasant men simply because the political authority of the landlord serves as the main barrier to her liberation first as peasant and second as a woman. So must the woman worker join the workers' movement in order that her demands, say, for maternity leave or against sexual harassment in the workplace can be addressed by the union. In a broader context, women's demands for employment, equal opportunities or freedom from violence cannot be effectively addressed without taking to task the ruling system that breeds the conditions for women's oppression.

Meanwhile, to educate the entire Party and the revolutionary mass movements on the issues of women and their emancipation, the Party has come up with a special mass course on women that is required study for all mass activists. The course tackles the situation of women in a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country, the tasks of the revolutionary women's movement, and specific organizing of women.

Party cadres in the women's movement are also undertaking studies on the historical roots of women's oppression and on women and socialism. Interest in theoretical studies, including writings on these particular issues by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao and Stalin, has been awakened.

To remedy the situation of a loosely developed mass base and recover from past mistakes, Party members have given priority to mass work and integration among the peasant masses in the countryside. No longer are revolutionary forces preoccupied only with launching propaganda campaigns or intensifying actions. Expansion and consolidation of the mass base now take precedence over other tasks.

Office-based staffers are required to spend weeks familiarizing themselves with the situation of workers and peasants, sharing experiences, doing organizing, propaganda and education work. Integration in the countryside takes about three to six months and usually in the company of NPA unit doing mass work among the peasants themselves. Deployment of cadres in the countryside is top priority.

Re-emphasis on mass work has had its fruitful results. It has not only broken what had been a growing isolation of the revolutionary movement from the masses, but it has also taught Party cadres and mass activists to concretize issues about women and ground them on the everyday life of the masses. Where before the tendency was to speak of women's issues only in general terms, now these issues are given flesh and blood. The rudiments of social investigation and class analysis have been relearned. Through it, we discover the diversity of women's issues and how these should be addressed by the women's movement and their respective class movements.

By reaffirming the women's movement as integral to class movements, the revolutionary women's movement has solved a thorny issue between it and other movements.

Where before the women's movement was perceived as divisive and middle-class, now other movements welcome and anticipate the growing demand for women's education, propaganda, and organizing in its ranks.

In fact Party forces within the revolutionary women's movement can hardly cope with requests from regional territorial and sectoral organs for theoretical studies on women and sharing of summed-up experiences. Women's studies have never been as lively as it is today within the Party.

As has been often stated, the rectification movement is mainly and essentially an educational effort to recognize, criticize and repudiate the deviations, errors and weaknesses and thereby further strengthen the Party and the revolutionary movement. The objective is to bring about a higher level of revolutionary consciousness and militancy and therefore a higher level of unity within the Party. Recent developments in the revolutionary women's movement point to this trend. As the revolutionary consciousness of Party forces is raised on the woman question, so can the entire Party become ever more vigilant in combating subjectivism and impetuosity. The rectification movement is committed to win its battle against bourgeois feminism and all other ideas and notions.

In the final analysis, the masses of women wanting liberation will benefit from this.



## Women and Socialism

**BY THE SECRETARY OF THE WOMEN'S BUREAU, NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPP**

In both theory and practice, socialism has amply demonstrated that it can create the conditions for the complete liberation of women.

Despite all the revisionist and other reactionary attacks against socialism, it is undeniable that for some decades in the Soviet Union under Lenin and Stalin and in China under Mao, socialist revolution and construction brought such sweeping and gigantic changes in both the objective and subjective situation of women that oppressed women in bourgeois states could merely dream of in their time.

Nowhere in the world has such monumental leaps in so short a time and in so large a scale been duplicated, involving not just hundreds or thousands, but hundreds of millions of women in Europe and Asia. Women joining the workforce and working full time. Women entering professions formerly restricted to them. Women developing special skills. Women enjoying equal rights with men. Women are organizing at every level.

So, too, inequalities in law redressed. Prostitution eliminated. The right to divorce guaranteed. Daycare centers and nurseries provided in huge numbers. Public canteens, cafeterias and restaurants with subsidized meals provided. Laundry services at every block. Free education for children. More boarding schools. Maternity leaves extended. Free contraceptives. The list could go on and on.

The essential thing is this: all these changes were made accessible not just to a few women, a few from the upper and middle classes, but to the overwhelming majority of working women-workers and peasants-in the proletarian state.

This could not have been achieved without socialist revolution and construction. This came immediately after the feudal system which held women in bondage was abolished through the bourgeois-democratic revolution led by the proletariat. The bourgeois-democratic revolution was a

necessary step before the tasks of the socialist revolution could be carried out. This was true in the Soviet Union as well as in China.

### **Socialism Delivers the Goods**

Scientific socialism promised the liberation of women and delivered the goods. Marx and Engels were clear on this, that the first major step in the liberation of women is to bring the whole female sex back into social production. The socialist reconstruction of the economy opened massive opportunities for work.

Looking toward the future, Engels remarked that women can only engage in social production if they are freed from the demands of child care and housework. Later Lenin called domestic work petty, repetitious, irritating, stultifying. Calls for the participation of women in every sector of society would come to naught unless they are unchained from domestic slavery. Lenin stressed early on that in a socialist society housework including child care shall be society's responsibility.

Stalin moved for legal changes in the status of women in one fell swoop that bourgeois states had long denied women. Stalin made sure that women would have the equal right to work, to wages, to days of rest and recreation, to social security and to education independent of the men in their family. He also called for state protection for mothers and babies through state subsidies especially to women with many children and to unwed mothers, paid maternity leaves, and the setting up of more maternity hospitals, nurseries and kindergartens.<sup>8</sup>

Mao further revolutionized the role of women. Aware that "women hold up half the sky," Mao called for the massive mobilization of women unheard of in recent times to attack feudal remnants in society and encouraged the participation of women on equal footing with men in all fields. The great proletarian cultural revolution which Mao unleashed against the bourgeoisie so inspired the women of China that one could hardly distin-

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<sup>8</sup> It should be noted, however, that from the early '30s onwards, these advances in material support for mothers were part of a broader natalist policy, which led to serious errors being made under Stalin, such as the abrogation of the right to unconditional abortion in 1936, and the recriminalization of (male) homosexuality in 1933.—*Ed.*

guish women from men in their enthusiasm to bring about socialism and defend it against revisionism.

### **Socialism Betrayed**

However, as in the case of the Soviet Union as in China, socialism has been betrayed and defeated. The rise of a new bourgeoisie in the Party, the state bureaucracy, the economic enterprises and the intelligentsia undermined the rule of the proletariat, redirected the road of socialist construction to that of bourgeois and capitalist reforms, and changed the entire character of the state and society. Despite Mao's repeated warnings, the revolutionary party of the proletariat in China became vulnerable and was considerably weakened by bourgeois influences and manipulations.

This new bourgeoisie has proven to be the deadliest opponent of socialism and the proletariat. Still functioning as Party functionaries, these revisionists deviated from basic Marxist propositions by declaring that the "proletariat has accomplished its historic mission," that "there are no more classes," that proletarian dictatorship is old hat, and that the "class struggle is dying out." Reforms have been rationalized to restore capitalism and open the economy to imperialist penetration.

The effects have been devastating to women. As capitalism went on full speed, women increasingly lost the gains they had won in the course of revolution and socialist construction. The revisionist betrayal of socialism had turned back the revolutionary tide. Prostitution, sex trafficking, rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, sex in advertising, female infanticide, arranged marriages, discrimination, wage cuts, restrictions on benefits, among other things, have come back with a vengeance. The phenomenon of mail-order brides and overseas employment has hit even women scientists, doctors and physicists who want to escape the crises attendant to the open restoration of capitalism (called "democratization") in these once socialist bastions.

The revisionists have indeed gained the upper hand. But the revisionist betrayal also shows the stark contrasts between a socialist society under the rule of the proletariat and a society undergoing capitalist restoration under the rule of the new bourgeoisie. The "get-rich-quick" mentality apart from rationalizing the bourgeoisie's penchant for capital accumulation has further sharpened class contradictions in society. The

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once workers' state has become a paradise for the bourgeoisie with all its property and privileges intact.

As its rapacity and greed know no bounds, it leaves behind in its trail masses of workers and peasants in the most abject and downtrodden conditions.

### **Strengthening Women's Resolve**

Far from discouraging the revolutionary women's movement in the Philippines, the betrayal of socialism by the revisionists only strengthened the women's resolve to carry out the rectification campaign of the Communist Party of the Philippines against deviations and distortions in Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought not just in the Philippine context but in the world context as well.

In the Philippines, the Party's ideological campaign is raised not only against revisionists but also against bourgeois populists and anticommunist "socialists" or liberals who continue to propagate the notion that the Philippines is no longer semi-feudal and that the vanguard role of the proletariat can be dispensed with.

Along with the need to clarify the character of Philippine society is a better understanding of the two-stage revolution. It is repeatedly stressed that the bourgeois-democratic revolution led by the proletariat must be carried out before the socialist revolution can begin in a country where feudal and semi-feudal conditions permeate. Only by putting an end to semi-feudalism and semi-colonialism could the socialist revolution start.

In the early period of the socialist revolution and construction, the proletariat must first build its alliance with the peasantry through land reform so as to prevail over local and foreign reactionaries. Concession must also be given to the petty and middle bourgeoisie as transitory measures.

For the peasantry, land reform will give full play to their revolutionary participation, strengthen the worker-peasant alliance and lay the basis for cooperativization and mechanization.

For the petty and middle-bourgeoisie, concessions are aimed at preventing disruptions in the economy, keeping production running, and accumulating capital in the context of making positive contributions to socialist construction. The petty and middle-bourgeoisie can still

play a positive role in the rehabilitation and construction of the country after the civil war and in the development of the productive forces to a certain extent.

However, such measures are subject to socialist policy. While bourgeois rights are allowed, these are restricted and regulated such that they would not lead to the rise of private monopolies. This is to preempt capitalism from becoming dominant in society.

In fact the factors and conditions for launching the socialist revolution in the future are developed in the course of the new-democratic revolution. For one, the proletariat through the Party exercises leadership over other democratic classes and strata. The people's army as well as other components of state power are under the absolute leadership of the proletarian revolutionary party. The socialist perspective is laid down as the direction of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The revolutionary women's movement is very much aware of this, having been nurtured and guided by proletarian leadership in various stages of development and without which the women's movement could have easily surrendered or been co-opted by the bourgeoisie.

### **Continuing to Draw Lessons**

One advantage of the CPP is that it can continue to draw lessons from the experiences of the Soviet Union and China in the course of waging the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the socialist revolution.

An exceedingly important lesson learned, as stated in one editorial of the CPP/CCs theoretical and political journal *Rebolusyon*,

is the need to deliver the blows accurately at the enemy in the exercise of the proletarian dictatorship, dissolve the old bourgeoisie as a class, watch out for the rise of the new bourgeoisie, rely on revolutionary mass education and mobilization, raise up a great number of new proletarian revolutionary cadres and prevent anyone who has systematically espoused revisionist ideas from getting a share of power even when he says he is already repentant and reeducated.

The editorial adds that in the face of the disastrous results of modern revisionism and capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union and China,

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Mao's "great achievements in Marxist-Leninist theory and practice are incontrovertibly proven and shine even brighter." Had it not been for Mao's criticism of modern revisionism, China would have succumbed to it much earlier. Without Mao's theory of continuing revolution and the initial practice of the great proletarian cultural revolution, socialists and communists the world over would have less confidence in building socialism and defeating the bourgeoisie in their own country at a time that imperialism has yet to be defeated on a global scale.

That the theory and practice of scientific socialism has had profound impact on humanity, and particularly on women, remains with the revolutionary women's movement in the Philippines today. That there are problems related to the building of socialism is recognized as well by revolutionary women.

But that the proletarian class struggle must be waged ceaselessly before and after the victory of socialism so as not to allow the bourgeoisie to emerge as the ruling class is a legacy that all revolutionary women must practice, uphold and pass on to the next generations who will feel more proud as the cry, "Long live socialism!"

## How Can Socialism Ensure the Full Liberation of Women?

BY JOAN HINTON, FORMER NUCLEAR PHYSICIST AT THE ACADEMY OF AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION SCIENCES, BEIJING

I'm really excited to be able to attend this meeting, and especially to be able to come to the top of the world, Nepal, to discuss problems facing woman all over the world.

First a little about myself. I'm an American citizen. I'm 75 years old. I spent the first 27 years of my life in the US where as a young nuclear physicist. I did my part in the creation of the atom bomb. I spent the next 48 years working in agriculture as a participant in the Chinese revolution.

My topic here is "How can socialism ensure the full liberation of woman?" I feel so strongly about the positive experience of socialism as practiced over 30 years in China, that I'm particularly happy to have this opportunity to speak. Today with the collapse of the whole socialist camp, which comprised one third of all humankind, there is a great disillusionment with socialism. People everywhere are confused. They are looking for another way out.

Was it the economic system of socialism that failed? I say no. Definitely not. Socialism—the elimination of labor as a commodity, that is, the elimination of buying and selling labor power for the purpose of profit, combined with a planned economy—is the only way out. There is no other way that can solve the problems of the people of the world including the problems faced by woman everywhere.

What benefits did 30 years of socialism under Mao bring to the people, especially the woman of China? By 1980 this vast country, formerly known as "sick man of Asia" had no internal debt, no external debt. It had had 30 years of stable prices and had built up an "all-encompassing system" of social benefits for those employed in the state sector—which meant virtually the whole urban population of some 200 million people. These benefits included not only employment, but housing, education, medical care, maternity care, pensions, etc. In an

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enveloping community setting [...] there was essentially no unemployment, begging or homelessness, virtually no crime, no shanty town slums, no prostitution, and even among the very poor, no underclass of social outcasts in desperate degrading poverty. Thus employment in a Chinese work unit under Mao “allowed even at the very low level of the Chinese economy, conditions of society completely unfamiliar in the vastly more wealthy United States!”<sup>9</sup>

Of course, there were still some married women who were themselves not part of a work unit. But more and more women were drawn into the work units as the need of socialist construction expanded. By 1980, those urban woman still not in work units as such, all organized themselves into street committees running the affairs of their local communities. They also formed an incredible number of production cooperatives recycling factory waste products, sewing, running canteens, etc. So that in fact, with the children all in school, everyone—men, women and children—belonged to one type of unit or another.

For the rural population, before the “reforms” began, security was provided by the village collectives, the building blocks of the people’s communes. After deducting costs of production, as well as funds planned for expanded production and welfare, the yearly village income was divided out to each individual member according to work points earned.

Land reform had been the first great leap forward for rural women in China. Under Article 6 of the 1947 Land Reform law

all land of landlords and all public land... and all other village land, in accordance with the total population of the village, irrespective of male or female, young or old, shall be unwieldy and equally distributed; ...and it shall be the individual property of each person.

Under this law, women for the first time owned their own land. After the new marriage law of 1949, which introduced freedom of choice in marriage and divorce, the work point system introduced with the for-

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<sup>9</sup> Robert Weil, *Monthly Review*, December 1994, p. 27.

mation of agricultural collectives was the next tremendous leap forward in the process of woman's emancipation. Since by the new commune rules, income from work points had to be paid to the individual who earned them and not to the "head of the family" women suddenly stood equal with men as earners of family income rather than non-paid virtual household slaves.

With income counted in work points, women for the first time pressed to join work in the fields. Was this an asset or a liability? Many men were worried. If women joined work in the fields and got work points too, wouldn't that just decrease the value of the work point? Peasant leader Chen Yonggui, in the far-off, barren mountain village of Dazhai, Shaanxi Province, saw things differently. With so much to be done, how could there be too much labor power? Mobilizing the strength of the collective—old and young, men and women—he led the whole village into battle. During the slack farm season, gullies became fields, little fields became bigger fields, and terracing brought crops to steep mountain slopes. Year after year, income of the coop steadily increased. We once made a simple calculation. If all of China's peasants had followed Dazhai's example in transforming their crop land, China would not only have enough grain for her own needs but would have enough excess grain to feed 500 million people, more than the whole of Africa at that time. Clearly the world food problem is not due to overpopulation but to capitalism's waste of human resources. Do we need family planning? Yes, I think we do, but not to solve the problem of food. We need family planning to liberate women, to give better care to children and to conserve the environment. A planned economy naturally includes some planning of population growth.

Talking about woman in the collectives, I'd like to tell a story here from our own experience. In the middle '70s, my husband Sid (Erwin) Engst and I worked on the Red Star Commune south of Beijing. The commune was having difficulty carrying out their quota for family planning. In those days, each couple was urged to have not more than two children. But peasant families wanted boys, not girls. Without making girls as welcome as boys, there was no way out of the dilemma. What was wrong with a girl child? By custom, she must leave her parent's family and become a member of her husband's family upon marriage. Usually that meant leaving the village and becoming a member of another cooperative, a different

economic unit. As to the parents, she had no obligation to care for them when they got old. As to the village, people thought what good would it be to train girls in any technical skills if they would soon be leaving? "We hardly have enough resources to train people for our own village"; said the village leaders, "let alone train them for other villages!" Just at that time, a woman in one village rose up to challenge the leadership which had changed her daily work points from 10 to 8 points just because she had gotten married. Under these pressures, the question of women's equality was put to the whole commune for discussion.

Women asked, "when we do the same work as men, why do we get less work points?" The men replied, "because you are weak and we are strong!" The women retorted, "OK, for everyday in the year that our work depends on strength, we'll agree to getting less, but for the other days we must get the same! Let's see who plants rice the fastest!" So they organized a rice planting competition. The women outstripped the men by far. The men conceded. From then on, women got 10 points the same as men. The women said, "we work all day just like the men, why, when we get home, should we have to do the cooking while the men sit on the kang smoking their pipes waiting to eat?" Party secretaries from the whole commune were called on to discuss this issue. In those days, highlights of these discussions came to every village through the commune loudspeaker network. One evening we heard criticisms of party secretary Wong from such-and-such a village. In the discussion he had agreed that since women also worked in the fields, men should help with the housework. He announced proudly, "I'll do anything needed at home. Except for emptying the pot and changing the baby's diapers, I'll do anything." "What's wrong with men emptying the pot?" came a sharp woman's voice over the loudspeaker. Men everywhere started emptying the pot! One day there was suddenly a great commotion—beating of drums and clashing of cymbals. What's going on? A group of young couples were getting married. The bridegrooms had all volunteered to become members of their wives' families instead of the wives becoming members of the bridegrooms' families. Within a few months, with all these changes going on, villages started training young women as electricians, carpenters, tractor drivers and even mule drivers!

“Women hold up half the sky!” What excitement! Having a girl child might be almost as good as having a boy!

A short five years later, the “reformers” came to power in China. Capitalism’s insatiable demand for commodity labor broke the communes. Under direct pressure from the top, agricultural collectives were replaced by the so called “family contract system.” The “excess” labor power used by the peasants to steadily transform their crop land, now flocked to the cities serving the needs of imperialism’s new invasion. The coastal cities burst with new skyscrapers. Luxury hotels, foreign banks and superhighways rose like mushrooms after a spring rain. Coca-Cola, Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonald’s—the whole works flocked in. As to agriculture, who cared? Old people, women and children were left to tend the fragmented fields. What did this mean to the millions of Chinese peasant woman? It meant abolition of the work point system and the return of the patriarchal family. Since by custom heads of families can only be men—father, husband, or son—some 400 million peasant women lost their economic independence and, with it, lost the hard-won gains they had made towards political equality with men.

Up until 1980 (i.e., before the communes were broken up) socialism had already brought personal security to over 800 million peasant men and women, in their case not from the state as such, but from their collectives. In those days, “excess” rural labor turned to basic construction of the land. With expanding irrigation networks, drainage systems and the development of local agricultural related industries, agricultural production steadily increased. From 1949 to 1984 the annual increase in grain production outstripped the increase in population.

Increased collective income also meant more money could be set aside for the village welfare fund. Even in the poorest villages, the village welfare fund guaranteed each member a subsistence grain allowance. The grain distributed according to work points was added to this. By 1980, aside from basic food, the welfare funds provided essentially universal primary school education, minimal care for the old and, most striking of all, a nationally integrated health care system starting with “barefoot” doctors at the village level.

Weil’s article quoted earlier gives a well-documented description of the “reformer’s” 15-year dismantling of this unprecedented system of social

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benefits built up under Mao in China—a system which had encompassed more than a fifth of all humankind, half of whom are women. Being at the bottom of the ladder of oppression, women had gained the most from socialism. And, therefore, had the most to lose.

Why this ferocious attack not only by the Chinese “reformers” but by the media of the whole western world against this system which had brought so much to the Chinese people, and to the Chinese women in particular? What crime had the system committed?

Clearly there is but one answer. The crucial crime of this system was its fundamental legal code abolishing labor as a commodity. My brother William Hinton, on page 664 of the newly published book, *Ninth Heaven to Ninth Hell*, ponders this question:

What is the source of this hatred? ...It stems I think, from the same source as the gut hatred most Chinese landlords harbored for the Chinese Communist Party. If the Party won a victory it would mean land reform, the end to land rent and the end of landlords, not as individuals, but as an exploiting class. For it was clear to all, including the landlords, that land rent collectors cannot get along without laboring peasants, but laboring peasants can get along very well without land rent and the landlords who collect them. By the same token, at the end of the twentieth century, in spite of the collapse of the first socialist experiments worldwide, the bourgeoisie and would-be bourgeoisie are now faced with a similar reality. Capitalists cannot get along without wage workers, but working people, including working peasants, can get along very well without capitalists.<sup>10</sup>

To those who would live off the profit of other people's labor, what could terrify them more than this? For some 30 years, not only did the Chinese workers get along just fine without capitalists to “give them jobs” the Chinese peasantry got along just fine without landlords or rich peasants to employ them. What's more, in spite of US blockade, the Chinese

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<sup>10</sup> William Hinton, *Ninth Heaven to Ninth Hell: The History of a Noble Chinese Experiment*, 1995, p. 664.

economy developed extremely fast without “help” from the World Bank nor the IMF, and without foreign investment. And most disturbing of all for the bourgeoisie, this remarkable speed of economic development was done by reliance on the creativity and enthusiasm of the Chinese people themselves. What has happened once can always happen again. Mao died, capitalism has been restored, polarization has set in with a few becoming extremely rich. But no matter how much the present leaders in China try to bury these 30 years, the “terrible” ghost of Mao’s achievements will never cease to haunt them.

These achievements did not come easy. The new society was not a utopia. It was a real society born in fierce struggle. What was the main obstacle? Was it the US economic blockade? No. Was it the split with the USSR? No. The main obstacle to the development of socialism in China was internal, not external. Over 30 years by far the most complicated, the hardest to understand, and the most difficult to handle was the omnipresent fierce internal party struggle. Talking about these fundamental questions, am I leaving the topic of women? No. Certainly not. In all types of social oppression, women are always at the bottom of the ladder. I feel very strongly that if we do not dig down to the bottom to unearth the complicated relation of women’s own special oppression with that of all oppression, we can never get anywhere. We cannot just look at the phenomena, we must try hard to understand the essence.

After years of study, investigation and analysis, not only of China, but of all the socialist countries at that time, Mao finally formulated what we consider to be his greatest contribution to Marxism. That is that under socialist economic conditions, the main class struggle in society between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie changes its form, appearing not as a struggle between economic classes which no longer exist as such, but as a line struggle in the top echelons of the party. This dialectical metamorphosis, where inner-party struggle becomes the predominant form of class struggle in society, occurs after the communist party in power has essentially completed the socialist transformation of the economic base, i.e., after the transformation of private ownership of the means of production into public or collective ownership. At this point the old bourgeoisie has lost its teeth. Without connections within the party in power, it has no chance of a comeback. Though the bourgeoisie has disappeared, as Wil-

liam Hinton mentions above, the “would-be” bourgeoisie is still very plentiful both inside and outside the party.

The necessity of making class analysis without classes is something completely new in human history. It is something none of us has ever experienced before. From this point of view, Mao's method of educating people was very interesting. For over 18 years my husband and I worked in state farms in Shaanxi province. Every morning before going to work we had an hour of political study. In the early sixties, after the so called “failure of the great leap forward” and before the open split with the USSR, two questions for discussion came down through the party to our study. The first question was, “Are there classes in socialist society?” The second was “Is there class struggle in socialist society?” No answer was given. We discussed this for a long time. We tried to figure out whether there was exploitation or not. I can't remember exactly what our conclusion was, but as I recall, we all agreed the “relations of production” depended a lot on the management. Of course, at that time we never dreamed this could become an antagonistic contradiction. If this question came to our study, it came to every corner of China.

Just think, way back then, Mao mobilized hundreds of millions of people to discuss this question!

In socialist society, without a bourgeoisie, what criteria could be used to discover this “would-be” bourgeoisie? This question became more and more acute until it finally burst in the Cultural Revolution. At this point Mao pointed out, the only way to distinguish them is by the line they carry out.

During those years some leading cadre only appeared to believe in socialism. They did not correct their mistakes, or only made a show of correcting them, and clandestinely obstructed in one way or another all advances along the socialist road. Mao called these cadres “those in authority in the party taking the capitalist road” or simply “capitalist roaders.” Personally, I found that an extremely sensitive test of line was and is the attitude toward women. In China “capitalist roaders” were invariably male chauvinists. To them women's place was in the home. Women were naturally weaker than men so women should naturally have lower wages.

Women can't be trained for technical jobs because they take off too much time for getting married and having children, etc., etc.

Of course, not all male chauvinists were “capitalist roaders.” The real “capitalist roaders” could gradually be detected by the consistency of their line. They invariably pushed a policy which would have changed the economic system itself to legalize both the transposition of public assets into private capital and the accumulation of private capital through exploitation. Their attitude towards women was just one facet of this overall strategy. It was the struggle against activities of this kind which appeared as a two-line struggle. The taller the tree, the bigger the shadow. Struggle originating at the bottom could only have a local effect.

The higher the cadre, the greater the effect, until struggle at the top of the party affected every aspect of society as a whole.

Once we capture the analysis of the two-line struggle—the struggle between the “bourgeois reactionary line and the proletarian revolutionary line” as Mao called it, is precisely a class analysis of socialist society—then we realize the tremendous work Mao has done in formulating this analysis. It is a creative development of Marxism.

During the Cultural Revolution, Mao tried in every way he could to teach the Chinese people how to detect “capitalist roaders” in the leadership of the party by analyzing the line they pushed. The three main criteria were “who do they believe in, who do they rely on, and who do they mobilize?” Clearly, relegating woman to the kitchen is leaving out half of humankind! The “reformer’s” call for a few people to get rich first is an excellent example of “believing in the few, relying on the few, and mobilizing the few.” As soon as the “reformers” came to power in China, they cut the right to strike from the constitution, forbid people to hang big-character posters, and cut out all mass movements. The June 4<sup>th</sup> 1989 “Beijing massacre” unmasked once and for all the true meaning of their line.

The opposite is what Mao called “the proletarian revolutionary line”—“believe in the masses, rely on the masses, mobilize the masses.”

Do decisions being made by leaders take into consideration the interests of all the people or just those of a few? Of long term or just immediate interests? Do the policies pushed by the leaders help unite all the people in building a new society or do they cause splitting between different ethnic, regional, gender or any other groups? Do leaders discuss things with those they lead or do they do things secretly behind closed doors? Do they involve people in decision making or do they just hand

out orders? Do they welcome criticism from below or do they fear it? If so, why? With nothing to hide, why should they fear criticism? Are women encouraged to do their part in building the new society? It was these kinds of questions that Mao mobilized the Chinese people in their millions to ask during the Cultural Revolution.

Using these criteria, people all over China soon began unearthing “capitalist roaders.” The “capitalist roaders” immediately counter-attacked with the deadly weapon of factionalism. The situation became extremely complicated. As the proletarian leadership called on all the people to unite against a “small handful” of the “capitalist roaders”; incited factionalism both in relentless personal power struggles against each other and as shields to protect themselves from detection by the people.

Since the main ideology in society was petty bourgeois, the majority of the people were left helpless, unable to extract themselves and the leaders they chose from the entanglement of factionalism. In my opinion, this was the main objective cause of the failure of the Cultural Revolution. It is also the main objective cause preventing the working people of the world—men and women, black, white, yellow, and brown—from uniting to defeat their common oppressors. The oppressors have always instigated and thrived on our fighting among ourselves.

With the collapse of the socialist camp, the world bourgeoisie has triumphantly taken over. The ball is now in their court. But they are helpless. Capitalism's insatiable greed for maximum profit leaves it with no solution. Corruption, crime, drugs, environmental destruction, ethnic wars, unemployment, destitution in the midst of abundance are all it can offer. With billions upon billions of dollars going into armaments, it has no money for education, health, social welfare, or common sense.

But I'm an indomitable optimist. Since capitalism can't possibly solve the problems of the people, the people will certainly throw it out! For 30 years in China I lived the future. I know it is beautiful and I know it works. Eventually socialism will certainly sweep capitalism off this earth and with it the oppression of all people, including women.

Thank you.

## Ka Julia

MEMBER, NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY FROM *WOMEN OF COURAGE*

PRODUCED BY GABRIELA

*Introduction: The New People's Army (NPA) is the military organization of the Communist Party of the Philippines-National Democratic Front (CPP-NDF).*

*Established on March 29, 1969, the NPA began as a small group of guerrilla fighters. Under the Marcos dictatorship, it grew, according to newspaper reports, to as big as 50,000 regular fighting forces. It successfully staged series of big, punitive actions against government military forces and enjoyed popular support in the majority of the thirteen regions of the country.*

*While experiencing setbacks in both political and organizational strength as a result of deviations from the strategies and principles of the protracted people's war by a factional militarist group within the then leadership of the CPP, the NPA is reportedly recovering territorial influence under a rectification program which did away with large military formations and called for a reconcentration of efforts on winning broader support among the masses in the countryside. Some of the leaders responsible for these deviations are now considered counter revolutionaries by the CPP-NPA-NDF.*

*The NPA adheres to a strategy of protracted guerrilla warfare of "encircling the cities from the countryside," a strategy that calls for building up revolutionary strength and organs of political power among landless peasants in the countryside. The NPA is currently aiming for national liberation from imperialism, bureaucrat capitalism, and feudalism, upholding socialism as a perspective for the Filipino people's struggle for liberation. The NPA's fighting force is largely composed of guerrillas of peasant and working-class origins.*

I was thirteen years old when our family lost our only piece of land. I was very young then but I can remember this man who came to our house, one of the rich landowners in our place, offering to buy our land, promising to pay a high price. It was an offer my grandfather could not refuse. About a year after he came again and asked my grandfather to sign a piece of paper. My grandfather did not know how to read, but he signed it anyway because he trusted the man. It turned out later to be a contract,

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which stated that the man had bought and paid for our land, though he had not given my grandfather any money. We could not fight to get our land back because we were so poor and filing a case in court was too costly for us. We had nothing else but that small piece of land, but even that was taken away from us.

We moved to another province where my parents became tenants in a coconut plantation. It was a hard life. The work was physically exhausting. I grew up on this plantation and eventually got married to a man whose family also worked there as tenants. In a few years, we already had five children. Though we had a regular income from selling copra,<sup>11</sup> life was still very difficult for us because I had five little mouths to feed.

It was around 1979 when I began to hear rumors about the NPA in our barrio though I had never really seen one. At that time, my eldest son was already twelve years old. I began to notice something unusual about his behavior. He was always out of the house and sometimes would not come home for a week. As a mother, I could not help but worry, fearing he was doing something bad like gambling. I decided to confront him one time when my husband was away. He confessed that he had been meeting with NPA guerrillas, that they had explained to him their aims and why there were so many poor people like us. He had kept it a secret, because his father was a drunkard and he feared he might tell other people during his drinking spree. But not wanting to cause me any more worries, he had asked the NPAs to come to our house and explain their cause to us. At first I refused as I heard from rumors that the guerrillas kill people. "They are good people, mother," my son assured me.

I did not tell my husband about my son's secret, likewise fearing he might tell. Moreover, the owner of the land where we worked was a retired military officer and I didn't want to put my son at risk. At first I tried to dissuade him from devoting all his time to working with the NPAs. I feared for his safety because we were then under Martial Law. Besides, we needed his help in the copra plantation.

Not long after, we were visited by my son's comrades. We began to have regular discussions. This was when it became clear to me why we remained poor in spite of all the efforts we exerted to survive decently. I

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<sup>11</sup> Copra is dried coconut meat.—*Ed.*

began to understand the inherent exploitation the sharecropping system, where only one-third of the produce goes to us and two-thirds go to the landlord, despite the fact that he never worked on the land and it was us who shouldered the costs of all the agricultural inputs. We began to see the unjust structures in our society where only a few families owned and benefited from vast tracts of land which the poor people's toil.

A year later, my husband and I decided to join my son in the underground movement. They did not recruit us; we volunteered.

We both became leaders in the revolutionary peasant association in our district. I was appointed by our comrades to head the organization in our barrio. At first, I refused, telling them I was just a woman and did not feel capable for the task because I didn't have any experience. But our comrades told me that I was chosen because of their trust in my ability and dedication and assured me of the support. They also told me that I will not be alone since decision-making was to be done collectively. I was very happy and accepted this task. By this time, comrades began to convince my husband to change his ways. I also pleaded with him, trying to explain the effects his drinking was having on our family. With these, and with his growing political consciousness, he eventually changed and soon after also became a leader in the revolutionary organization of an adjacent barrio.

It was a very productive period for our organization as our membership expanded and attained political strength in a short a period of time. Our place was like a liberated zone as almost all of the barrio people joined our association. We began to establish revolutionary organs of political power, a shadow government, as it was commonly called. With our strength, we were able to implement land reform on a limited scale and to effect changes in the sharecropping system.

Our own landlord, who eventually learned about our involvement with the NPA, himself offered to increase our share of the produce. We paid much attention to organizing women in the barrio. Every member, man or woman, who was recruited into the revolutionary organization has to attend discussions on the oppressed situation of peasant women and why it is important to draw their participation in the revolutionary movement.

We also used our mass meetings as opportunities to discuss women's problems, such as when their husbands try to stop them from devoting a big portion of their time to revolutionary activities outside the home or

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when the husband becomes jealous. We talked to men who did this to their wives and after some patient explaining, they would normally listen. In more serious cases which involved battering, rape or other forms of sexual abuse, comrades intervened upon receiving information of such incidences. Depending on the gravity of the crime, a corresponding punishment disciplinary action was meted out to the offender, but only after a thorough and impartial investigation was done by comrades or people from the barrio. In cases where the crime committed was so grave that it merited the death penalty, the victim and her unit were consulted and it was they who decided whether the sentence will be carried out.

Anyone who joined the NPA was required to adhere to a Code of Discipline, which upholds the welfare and interests of the masses above everything else. It was forbidden to take even a single needle or thread without the masses' or the owner's permission. There were also very rigid penalties against the abuse of women. Relationships, particularly among unmarried couples, were guided by principles of revolutionary relations if only to protect the woman from sexual opportunists.

Any NPA member who stayed in the barrio was required to help with the domestic chores and also work in the fields with the people. When land reform was implemented even on a limited scale, we made sure that women also had access to decision-making and cultivation of portions of the land.

As a leader, I was conscious of being a good example of a woman who had liberated herself from the traditional mold. I conscientiously performed my tasks and opposed my husband's attempts to delimit my involvement.

Two years later, my eldest son, who was then fourteen years old, decided to devote his full time to the revolutionary movement. Two of his younger brothers followed suit.

But then came the military's counterinsurgency campaign, which eventually destroyed everything we have gained in our district. Gradually, our revolutionary organization weakened in the face of continued enemy attacks. Due to some weaknesses in the tactics which our leadership employed, many comrades became disoriented and our morale plunged. One of my younger sons was not able bear the difficulties. He surrendered to the military.

Not long after, my eldest son was killed. A traitor tipped him off to the military. They also arrested my husband. Fortunately, people from our barrio never abandoned him, even accompanied him to the military camp which forced the authorities to release him that same day.

Two days after, the military sent word, “inviting” him to go to the camp this time, without any companion. We did not have any choice. That was when he decided to become a full-time guerrilla fighter. It was around September 1982.

It was a turbulent period for me. I could not accept my son’s death. Though our comrades were telling me that he died a hero as he sacrificed himself in order to save the lives of his companions, still the pain was excruciating.

I also faced the difficult responsibility of being both mother and father to my children. Continued attacks by the military and rumors that they were planning to arrest me eventually forced me and my children to migrate to another province. I lost contact with my husband who was by then already operating in another province.

My children and I settled in a town near a military camp. In this place, smalltime gold mining was the main source of income for most people. Military officers themselves acted as financiers for most of the mining activities. It is actually a dangerous job, as one has to enter a small tunnel hundreds of meters deep to search for gold ore. There have been cases where the tunnels collapse—as they also sometimes use dynamite to blast the soil—killing all people inside. Sometimes they get poisoned by the chemical fumes they use or develop some kind of lung disease.

People’s values have become so corrupted as the military encourages people to go on spending sprees. All kinds of vices can be found here. Crime rate is high. Prostitution also thrived in this town. Sometimes the soldiers organize big social dances in the barrio then ask people to shoulder the expenses. No one can refuse because the military harms those who do. It is a different kind of control done by the military on the people.

I earned a living through gold panning, a process that involves sieving gold ore from the sand that gathers on the goldminers’ clothes. My son, who was then ten years old, worked as a goldminer to augment my income. I was always afraid when he entered tunnels called “150”,

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for the tunnel's depth is equivalent to that of 150 electricity street posts joined on ends.

My life here was hell. I felt so alone, I could not find comrades. I did not know where my husband was. I felt that I was beginning to be separated from the revolution. But I didn't want a life that was distant from the care and wisdom of comrades. I was beginning to grow desperate.

But at the same time, I had to be strong for the sake of my children. At night, I would gather them around me. While I breastfed my youngest child and cradled him in my arms, I would tell them the things I learned from discussions I had with comrades, why we were poor, why many people were poor. I discussed with them the topics on organizing and raising the political consciousness of different sectors within the peasantry—men, women and youth. They kept asking many questions and I was glad because it was my desire that all my children will understand what their parents were doing, in the hope that someday, when they grow up, they will also be like me, their father, and their eldest brother. I particularly taught them that we all grew up in a system that oppressed our people, women especially that women were just considered as housekeepers or as sex objects. I told them it is not right, that women should learn to be brave. For me, it was important that my children understood the principles we were fighting for.

Fortunately, someone who was sympathetic to the revolution and who knew my husband found me in this place about a year later. She told me that my husband had sent someone out to our barrio to fetch us but we had already left and he had been searching for us since then.

Two months after, I was re-integrated into the revolutionary movement, in the same province where my husband was operating.

I was so happy to be reunited with him and with our comrades. My other son at this time also decided to become a guerrilla fighter. I spent the next few months as a member of the revolutionary peasant organization in the barrio. At the same time, I ran a small store to help feed my children. Comrades and peasant supports raised some capital for this store. But at this time, my husband's political resolve began to waver because of the problems and conflicts in the revolutionary movement. He insinuated that I give up my political work and concentrate on raising our children. I chided him for that by asking him: "Don't you realize that without the

revolution, we will all the more suffer from our poverty? Our eldest son is regarded as a hero. Do you want his supreme sacrifice to be rendered meaningless?”

I had to help strengthen my husband’s fighting will. We constantly discussed our situation and the state of the revolution with the help of other comrades who have persisted despite the problems. I told him that even if the revolution was experiencing problems; it is one’s own experience which teaches us the correct ideas. It was from our own experience that we derived our knowledge and wisdom. It is from our experience that we must derive our strength.

Despite all the poverty and suffering we experience, I never blamed the revolution for it. It was clear to me that without the revolutionary movement, we are nothing. That it was the revolution and nothing else, which was advancing our interests as poor peasants.

Our experience of poverty and my own experience as a mother to all my children and then a mother whose son is in the revolution has taught me to be strong, to be the key to the unity of the whole family and to the strength of each individual. In my own experience, it was important that I lead in raising the political consciousness of my own children so that when they grow up, it will not be difficult to accept if they decide to join the revolution as guerrilla fighters. This is what I tell other mothers—that they should not raise their children based on individualism.

I also tell the men that they should respect women’s equal rights and capabilities. They should not obstruct their wives’ full participation in the revolutionary movement. Women, on the other hand, should not separate their struggles from the struggles of the people for national liberation. Otherwise, it will just be individual liberation, which will not really benefit the majority of truly oppressed and exploited women.

Today, there are four of us, myself, my husband, a son, and my youngest daughter, who have joined the New People’s Army. We are also making arrangements for my other two sons who are married to eventually join us. We are trying to raise a little amount to leave for their families’ sustenance.

I believe that changes will only come if all exploited peoples persevere in the struggle. Even with the recent changes in government there hasn’t really been any difference in our situation. Some of our former com-

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rades who have forsaken us and are not living in the cities are talking about what peace is there when people remain poor and the basic problems of imperialism and feudalism remain? In our experience, the government pretends to talk about peace, but uses military force to suppress us. What will be left of us if we put down our arms?

I have no other dream but for the revolution to achieve victory. But even when we have already achieved victory, I am still alive, I still see myself and our whole family as revolutionaries. For I know that by then, it will still be a long and difficult struggle to build the kind of society that we aspire to. I have no other wish for my family but to stay in the struggle: myself, my children, my children's children, and the generations that are yet to come.

# **CPP's Guidelines on Marriage and Courtship: On the Relations of the Sexes**

**APPROVED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES (CPP)**

*First Published: April 1983*

## **1. Why is it necessary to have guidelines on marriage inside the Party?**

The freedom of love and the right to be happy in marriage are the democratic rights of every Party member and every individual in society. The freedom to choose whomever one desires to love and marry must not be restrained.

On the other hand, we are against anarchy, or against allowing just any uncontrollable desire of every individual. Anarchy in love results in the wanton disregard of the rights of others, in the irresponsible initiation and termination of relations, and in loose morality. Anarchy in love is opposed to our objective of establishing a just and progressive society. It is also contrary to our responsibility to remold the proletarian families and masses who are fighting without letup to achieve our objective.

In love, there is freedom and discipline; rights and responsibilities; part of it is emotion and part of it is seriousness. In accordance with this outlook, we have formulated guidelines in order to guide all Party members and units.

The first objective of our guidelines is to safeguard the interest of the Party and the revolution. The second objective is to protect the rights of every Party member and all others affected. And the third objective is to advance healthy, proletarian relations of the sexes inside the Party.

The present guidelines are the final version of a draft outlined by the Executive Committee of the Central Committee (EC-CC) in April 1977. The said draft has been changed, and some parts have been added, according to suggestions coming from the regions.

Our guidelines are based upon the proletarian principles on marriage, and provide concrete policies for the proper implementation of

these principles. Our guidelines clarify the rights and responsibilities of comrades in courtship, sweethearts or married couples, and the respective collectives to whom they belong. Our guidelines pay strict attention to the particularities of married life inside the Party while we are still fighting to seize political power.

Because of this, some of our guidelines are stricter than what may be propagated outside the Party.

As a whole, the Party is correct in its handling of the question of marriage, even when there were as yet no standard guidelines on the matter. We uphold proletarian principles, safeguard the rights of Party members, advance discipline, and strive to improve marital relations that are beneficial to the revolution.

Based on their respective experiences, the regional Party organizations have voluntarily formulated and implemented their own guidelines.

Nevertheless, we hope that by issuing standard guidelines, we will be able to resolve remaining problems, and more actively improve marital relations inside the Party. We would like to remove whatever major discrepancies there may be between some policies of the regions. At the same time, we would like to correct some cases of excessive strictness or laxness.

### **2. Why is it necessary to provide education about marriage inside the Party?**

Inside the Party, we would like the relations of sweethearts and married couples to be truly healthy and proletarian relations. These relations thrive for as long as they are based on genuine love, as opposed to exploitation and oppression. These relations thrive for as long as they build the determination of couples to fulfill more fully their respective duties to the Party and the revolution. Proletarian marital relations also assure the revolutionary rearing of children.

Our guidelines define the necessary conditions and pointers in forming these relations, although our guidelines do not discuss or cover many matters sufficiently. This particular need should be addressed by means of collective and individual study.

Education work is also necessary for the strict implementation of these guidelines. It is necessary to make Party members understand well the principles upon which these guidelines are based. In this manner, their

compliance will be conscious, and their ability to remind, or criticize, other comrades, as necessary will be enhanced.

Education work is key in combating inside the Party the influence of feudal and bourgeois ideas on love and marriage that are prevalent in society. The ruling classes, religion and old customs have long upheld these wrong ideas. They bring about problems in marital relations, and even bring harm to the organization and political work of the Party. We must, therefore, clarify to all members why these ideas are wrong and what ideas are correct.

In the past, the education work in these matters was neglected in many Party units. The excessive use of regulations in cases was most noticeable even at times when persuasion and explanation were more necessary or more beneficial. This tendency must be corrected and education work on marriage must be given proper attention. We must simply avoid devoting too much time of the units, and even the members of the Party, in discussing these matters. It is important to explain to comrades our principles of marriage, but this work is minor in relation to the bigger political matters that the Party now faces.

### **3. For sweethearts or married couples inside the Party, what are the correct sex-love and class-love relations?**

Love is a natural emotion that arises between a particular male and female when an appropriate age is reached. It is the product of human emotional and physical characteristics and needs. Love is formed based on attraction in personal characteristics.

Class love, on the other hand, is the wholehearted embracing and advancing of the revolutionary ideals of the proletariat. Class love is fighting oppression and exploitation without end. It is part of the class consciousness of proletarian revolutionaries, and can be seen in the thoroughgoing service to the Party, the revolution and the people.

For sweethearts or married couples inside the Party, love and class love are both necessary and inseparable. Love is necessary because this is what binds two comrades to a relation of sweethearts or to a marriage, different from other relations between comrades. Without love, a marriage or a relation of sweethearts has no basis. Class love, on the other hand, is

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necessary because it is the mark of any important undertaking of proletarian revolutionaries.

This is what must prevail in all relations between comrades. In courtship and marriage inside the Party, love is immediately influenced and merges with class love, from the selection of one's love partner up to the rearing of a family. Revolutionary standards and objectives always determine the desires and dislikes of a proletarian revolutionary: the subordination of personal interests to the interests of the people.

Love is subordinate to class love when:

- a. In choosing one's love partner, the revolutionary standard is made to prevail even without overlooking the most personal bases. However, it does not mean not setting the highest standards in ideology and politics. The most important consideration is to ascertain first that the partner whom one has chosen will support actively and participate mutually in the revolutionary work of the Party member involved.

Therefore, we encourage Party members to choose their partners from among fellow members, or from among those about to become members, of the Party.

- b. In relating to one another, the sweethearts or the married couple are able to excel in fulfilling each other's revolutionary tasks and in helping one another to improve revolutionary consciousness and to combat their weaknesses.
- c. One maintains a principled stand even when a sweetheart or spouse is involved. The sweetheart or the marital relation is not allowed to stand in the way of the Party's ability to form a correct analysis and decision in whatever matter.
- d. The sweetheart or marital relation is not allowed to become a hindrance to the promotion of the policies and discipline of the Party.
- e. Courtship is not allowed to result in the trampling of the rights of others.

- f. The interests of sweethearts or a married couple are not allowed to harm the interests of the revolution and the people. We must always be ready to sacrifice our personal interests whenever the interests of the revolution and the people call urgently for them.

#### **4. What are the wrong ideas found inside the Party regarding love and class love relations?**

It is a wrong idea to allow love to take precedence over class-love. This means putting the interests of the personal relation ahead of the interests of the people. If this is the belief of a comrade, then the comrade is placing what benefits his/her personal relation above what benefits the Party and the revolution, whenever the two are at odds. If this wrong, harmful idea is not promptly combated, this might only lead to the abandonment of the principles and objectives of the revolution.

This wrong idea about relations between sweethearts and married couples persists whenever the guidelines, laid out in the answer to Question 3, are violated directly. The seriousness of the influence of this idea in the relations of sweethearts or married couples is also the degree of non-proletarianness of the relationship.

Putting one's love over class-love is the result of an individualist concept of love, usually brought by the petty bourgeois in the cities and the countryside with them into the Party. The core of this concept is giving completely or too much importance to what one likes, or what will make one happy, even if this is harmful for the interest of the majority. Sometimes, this manifests itself as an anarchist reaction of the petty bourgeois to the restrictions on their freedom of love, dictated by old ways.

The influence of feudal and bourgeois concepts of family also strongly prod those who allow love to prevail over class-love. These concepts stress that the primary responsibility of someone who has a family, aside from oneself, is one's own family.

On the other hand, it is also a wrong idea to stress ideological and political bases one-sidedly, and to disregard the personal bases altogether. This idea is the particular result of a "left" concept of love that has surfaced from inside the Party.

Furthermore, many sweetheart comrades and married comrades have quickly cooled off their relations, have become burdened by their

relations, and have separated because they have been unable to overcome the unsteadiness of the personal relations that they have entered.

Sweethearts and married couples are not the only ones affected by problems brought about by this wrong idea. The revolutionary work of sweethearts or married couples is also harmed, and the units to whom they belong are likewise saddled with problems.

One form of this wrong idea is to use Party work as an excuse to cover up the irresponsible conduct toward one's spouse. However, it does not mean consenting to the irresponsible conduct toward one's spouse. It is necessary to provide the appropriate space to develop the personal relations of married comrades. To comrades with heavy responsibilities, it is necessary to allot time to fulfill this duty.

At other times, this wrong idea is manipulated in order to push women comrades into a relationship with those they do not love. In these instances, the basic right of these women comrades to choose freely whom to love is trampled upon.

### **5. What is the correct outlook on women? Why is this a fundamental issue in a proletarian marital and sweetheart relationship?**

Everyone included in the exploited and oppressed classes—whether men or women—suffer under a semi-colonial and semi-feudal system. But there is an added burden on women since they are oppressed by male dominance inside and outside the family structure, and by feudal and bourgeois customs and ideas that uphold this kind of dominance.

At present, the condition of women in society is lower than that of men. The capability of women is looked down upon, and there are so many obstacles preventing them from participating fully in facing major issues in society. It is widely perceived that women are only good for the kitchen and the bedroom. Even in the family, they are usually oppressed by the dominance of men.

It is the Party's stand that women are a powerful force that should be organized and mobilized fully for the revolution. Women should be equal partners with men in changing and running the society and the family. The revolution will not succeed without broadly arousing, organizing and mobilizing women. In the meantime, as a whole, while women should take the special role of raising children, this responsibility

should not be shouldered fully by women. It is also necessary to alleviate them of this burden and to invigorate their participation in carrying out revolutionary tasks.

At present, the most important thing is to raise the political consciousness of women, to organize them, and to uphold their democratic rights inside and outside the family in order to mobilize them decisively in the revolution.

We must combat ideas that belittle women and old ways that oppress their rights and obstruct their ability to participate in important issues inside and outside their home. It is also necessary to arouse their own interest in social issues, to develop their capability to participate in the revolution and to convince them to assert their rights. Women should be encouraged actively to join the broad people's organizations, and to build special organizations of women that give particular attention to advancing the revolutionary movement of women.

On the other hand, we are opposed to giving too much emphasis on women's liberation, and separating it from the national problem of liberating the entire nation from the clutches of imperialism and the exploiting classes. We oppose the "sexist" propagation of the women's movement that seeks to limit it to the "war of the sexes," forgetting that the biggest and most important struggle of all is the national and class struggle. The defense of the democratic rights of women—and the struggle against their feudal and bourgeois outlook—should serve to mobilize them more diligently for the revolution, and to unite them with the exploited and oppressed classes in order to direct the strongest blows on the enemies of the country as well as the class enemy.

In forging the women's movement, we should avoid too much emphasis on issues like the division of work in household chores. While something like this can be remedied in the practice of Party members and those of the advanced section of the people's movement, it cannot be resolved fully—and will not be changed among the broad masses of the people—until a radical change in the relations of production and the stage of development of the forces of production has transpired. The women's movement should be placed strictly within the framework of the national-democratic movement. And the full democratization of the family and

the full emancipation of women will only be realized with the success of the socialist revolution.

The correct proletarian outlook on women is essential in forming the proletarian relations of sweethearts and married couples. If the feudal and bourgeois outlook on women is strong and dominant in relations, relations based on mutual respect—and conducive to developing the revolutionary consciousness and practice of each other—will not form. Instead, what will develop is the disregard for the rights of women, their subordination to men, and the prevention of their full participation in revolutionary work.

In accordance with the Party's outlook on women, we give particular attention to invigorating the revolutionary women's movement. We uphold the equal rights of men and women inside and outside the Party. We ensure that a healthy democracy thrives in marital relations, that couples help each other in their work and in resolving problems. We uphold the institution of marriage; one of its objectives is to defend women against the exploitation of men. We uphold family planning in order to give married women a greater opportunity to participate in revolutionary work. We protect the right of women to choose freely whom to love and to turn down the courtship of someone they do not like. We also acknowledge the right of women comrades to court freely someone on their own.

## **6. Why is it necessary first to ask the permission of one's Party unit before courting or allowing to be courted?**

Courtship—to court or be courted—is the right of any Party member who does not have a sweetheart or a spouse. However, it is necessary to secure the permission of the Party unit to whom the concerned member belongs.

It is necessary in order:

- a. To make sure that the suitor and the one being courted are in proper standing and that the rights of everyone involved are respected;

It ensures with certainty that no right is trampled upon if the requested permission is granted. The Party also balances the right

of the suitor to express his/her love and the right of the person being courted either to accept or to decline such overtures.

- b. To give everyone involved the necessary orientation and guide; and,
- c. To see to it that the requirements of security and the work are considered in setting ways to communicate with each other.

Permission may be denied if either the suitor or the one being courted is in clear violation of our guidelines. Permission is withheld when either the suitor or the one being courted:

- d. Has been established to be a counterrevolutionary or a traitor to the revolution;
- e. Has the likelihood or has been found to lead the other away from the revolutionary path; or,
- f. Already has a sweetheart or a spouse.

Permission may be temporarily denied if the person one wishes to court is already being courted by someone else. The purpose of this is to avoid any misunderstanding that may arise from rivalry in love. In such cases, the concerned Party units will ensure that the rights of both suitors and that of the person being courted are correctly balanced. The first suitor shall be given reasonable time to express one's love and to take steps for a favorable reception. However, time allowed shall not be extended at the expense of other suitors waiting in line. And the wishes of the person being courted must always be considered.

Permission may not be granted immediately if the suitor or the one being courted is facing large problems in their Party work, and it is unlikely that courtship will contribute to the prompt resolution of those problems.

For members attached to the field units of the people's army or other full-time work, a clear provision exists regarding the length of service requirement prior to courtship. This provision allows Party members to attend fully to their tasks and responsibilities as demanded by their new work during the first year.

Basically, a comrade who has been accepted into the Party is ready for courtship. But a new and very young recruit should be encouraged to

wait until the age of 21, or at least observe the one-year provision, before engaging in courtship so that the member can concentrate fully in improving and enhancing his/her ability to work within the Party. If the member remains unmoved and is determined to engage in courtship, permission cannot be denied.

Except in cases where the guidelines prohibit them explicitly, freedom to engage in courtship shall be accorded freely to all members as a whole. We must not resort to regulation as a way to prohibit the easy-going courtship among new recruits to the Party. We must use persuasion and education work, and heighten the interest of new recruits to engage in Party work.

### **7. Why must there be a sufficient period of engagement as sweethearts before marriage?**

Our guidelines state that marriage is a serious matter that those who wish to marry, and their concerned Party unit or units, must prepare well for. Impetuosity and frivolity must be therefore be discarded when entering this matter. Hence, it is necessary to give a sufficient period of engagement as sweethearts before marriage.

During this period of engagement, preparations are made for marriage. The sweethearts make sure that they are truly decided on their relation, and if they are, they exert efforts to strengthen their relation. They deepen their understanding of each other's characteristics. They develop effective ways of relating to one another. They develop understanding of different issues and matters pertaining to their relation and their tasks in the Party. And, they strengthen perceptions of each other based on mutual respect, mutual cooperation and criticism and self-criticism.

During this time, the sweethearts already study the principles of proletarian marital relations, and they prepare for the responsibilities and needs of raising a family. They already plan and initiate concrete steps to address the new situation, new tasks, and the anticipated needs of a married life inside the Party.

The Party unit or units to whom they belong shall help them in their preparations. The sweethearts will be given a Party orientation on developing their relation and on proletarian marital relations. They will be guided and assisted in addressing problems that their relationship will

face. When necessary and if conditions permit, the Party will make the necessary arrangements for the couple to be assigned together in the same geographical location and similar work assignments once they are married.

During this period of engagement, the couple may also realize that there is insufficient basis for their relationship. In such cases, the relationship can be severed with fewer complications.

In our guidelines, it is stipulated that the period of courtship and engagement must be no shorter than one year before permission to marry may be granted. This period may be shortened a little upon the request of sweethearts who are already at an advanced age or who already know each other for a long time.

## **8. Why do we uphold the institution of marriage?**

The essence of marriage is the agreement of a man and a woman to enter a monogamous relation that is formally recognized by society and approved by the state.

Feudal and bourgeois marriages also formally recognize the monogamous characteristic of a marriage. However, while monogamy is recognized, feudal and bourgeois systems also condone prostitution, overtly or covertly.

That is why it is common in feudal and bourgeois marriage that monogamy is only for the wife. On the other hand, in proletarian marriage, monogamous relations are strictly enforced both for the man and for the woman.

Moreover, proletarian marriage is based on love and equal rights of men and women. In feudal and bourgeois relations, however, marriage is based on the male domination of women and the usual overriding considerations which are opposed to the freedom to love—such as the dictates of parents, coercion on the woman, and the quest for fortune and social stature.

We uphold proletarian marriage against feudal and bourgeois marriage. We also uphold this against anarchy in love.

The institution of marriage is necessary to safeguard the well-being of women against the exploitation of men. Marital responsibilities are not just responsibilities to one's spouse, but they are also responsibilities to society as well. We also need the institution of marriage in order to set clear

parameters in the relations of others to those who are already married. By upholding this institution, we also uphold the responsible conduct of marital relations, and we are opposed to the initiation and termination of marital relations based on flimsy or shallow reasons.

Presently, we recognize the marriage contract entered into outside the Party. Nevertheless, we are changing the orientation of the relations of comrades who were married outside the Party.

In accordance with upholding marriage as an institution, we forbid premarital sex—sexual intercourse between sweethearts before marriage. To condone premarital sex is to encourage loose morality that weakens the revolutionary spirit of Party members, causes disruption in the organization, and harms the prestige of the Party.

We also strictly forbid the courtship of one who is already married or by one who is already married, and to have sexual relations with anyone other than one's spouse.

## **9. What are the responsibilities of Party units in developing the relations of married comrades?**

Aside from the efforts of married couples to strengthen the foundation of their relations, the help of Party units is also necessary. Other comrades, especially those who have been married for a long time, should impart their experiences of marriage. It is the responsibility of the Party units to give sex education and family planning to those comrades who are about to get married, or who are already married. These can be done in informal conversations. Women comrades may impart advice to other women comrades; likewise, men comrades to other men comrades. We must overcome shyness and remove malice in discussing these matters.

It is the responsibility of Party units to criticize the mistakes and shortcomings of married couples, while reinforcing their positive qualities.

The Party shall help married couples, including their children, to straighten out their families so that they can fulfill their revolutionary tasks. The Party will extend help through the respective Party unit or units to whom they belong.

In cases where the parents cannot attend to the care of their dependent children, the Party will assist the said parents by assigning their care to the appropriate individuals. If the children will be left to the care of

relatives who are not yet politically conscious, the Party will help not only to improve their own political awareness, but also for the proper rearing of the children.

Our general policy is to assign married couples to one or related Party units in order that they may live together as a couple.

### **10. What is the role of the witnesses or sponsors to the marriage?**

Our guidelines establish that it is necessary to have three or more witnesses or sponsors, aside from the permission of the concerned Party unit, in order to validate the marriage.

It is the responsibility of the witness or sponsor to share their knowledge and experience regarding marriage and family inside the Party. They impart advice and suggestions to the couple.

After marriage, the witnesses or sponsors must strive to check up periodically on the condition of the couple and their family. The couple may seek their help in order to resolve problems that surface in their relationship.

The witnesses or sponsors who are chosen must have rich experience in the revolution and in marriage. This is the reason why our guidelines establish that there be at least two full Party members among the witnesses or sponsors.

### **11. What are the responsibilities of married comrades?**

It is the couple's responsibility to present to the Party unit or units to whom they belong, any problem in the relation, or any problem with oneself in relation to the stability of their relationship, or any problem that can affect their revolutionary work. Included among the matters the couple has to discuss with their collective or collectives are any plans to have children so that the Party unit or units to whom they belong can also prepare for them.

The couple will use persuasion and criticism and self-criticism in order to correct mistakes and weaknesses as Party members and as a married couple. It is beneficial that from time to time, the couple sums up the experience of their relation in order to strengthen their unity in facing problems and issues that have something to do with their relation.

All married couples inside the Party must live simply and frugally, and must avoid lavishness. If either or both of the couple are earning a living, or receive regular financial support from their relatives, they should give to the Party any income in excess of what is needed for their continuous and effective fulfillment of their duties.

The couple inside the Party must voluntarily share their prosperity in life and their experience with any other needy couple they reach. The couple must look after the revolutionary education of their children, and must strive to build a Communist family. They should nurture the love for the revolution and the masses among their children, and imbue them with the spirit of simple living and arduous struggle.

The married couple must plan their family. We consider it appropriate to have only a few children, and to make sure that there is at least a few years spaced between children. The purpose of this is to give women comrades the greatest opportunity possible to participate fully in revolutionary work. If child-bearing is planned, preparations for attending to the needs of child rearing will also be better. As a whole, too many children and frequent childbearing become burdensome for married comrades, for their revolutionary work, and for the Party units to whom they belong.

## **12. How do we view divorce?**

Divorce is the dissolution of marriage. We believe that divorce should be granted when there is no longer a basis for continuing the marriage relation because of political, physical, mental or emotional considerations. We must not continue to insist upon a marriage relation if this will only harm either one of them or the revolution.

However, since we strive to ensure that the foundation of the relationship is sturdy even before granting permission to marry and to continue to strengthen this foundation after marriage, we avoid—as much as possible—to resorting to divorce as a means of resolving the problems of married couples, especially those who have children.

The recognition of the right of divorce is a natural part of recognizing the democratic right to choose freely whom to love. However, if instead of providing mental and emotional well-being and invigorating one's participation in the revolution, the marriage relation already becomes a big burden to either one of the couple and their revolutionary work, it is

only reasonable to recognize the right to leave this relationship. Marriage should not be viewed as a contract from which there is no escape once entered into, even if it is already against one's will and its continuation is already harming its effectiveness.

On the other hand, we uphold the institution of marriage, and we firmly oppose the initiation and termination of marriage based only on flimsy or shallow excuses. We should see to it that the right to divorce is not being manipulated in order to evade simply the responsibilities of the relationship, and to accommodate the capricious views and handling of marriage.

It is important for both husband and wife to recognize the right of divorce and the careful handling of it. We are in the midst of the most intense struggle, and because of this, there are many dislocations and many trials in the relations of married couples, especially inside the Party. But despite all else and because the inability to surmount the effects of the most intense struggle has damaged particular marriage relations and the relations must be formally dissolved for the contentment of those affected, then their right to divorce must only be recognized. On the other hand, because of the abnormal conditions of married relations inside the Party, it is necessary not to be frivolous in resorting to divorce, and still attempt to other means of saving the relationship before dissolving it.

Our guidelines clarify the bases for granting divorce, as well as the process of airing and deciding on a case. We must ensure that the process of deciding on an application for divorce is not arbitrary. We must thoroughly investigate the basis for requesting divorce, listen well to different sides, allow the free explanation of those involved, and whenever possible, to bring both sides face to face in airing and deciding the application for divorce.

If the couple is divorcing inside the Party and the unity in politics of the former spouses will continue, they must both continue relating to one another as comrades. They should refrain from putting down one another, secretly or openly, especially in front of their children.

If they have children, the former spouses have equal rights and responsibilities in rearing their children as parents. They should help one another in correctly raising the children and in resolving problems in rela-

tion to this. The Party units concerned shall see to it that the children of divorced comrades are well taken care of.

### **13. Some observations on the disciplinary actions for violating these guidelines.**

In upholding our guidelines and principles about courtship and marriage, regulation and education are both necessary. Regulation alone is not enough, because we would like our comrades to follow our guidelines willingly and consciously. But education by itself will also not suffice, because the rights and responsibilities of everyone must be set clearly and all members are expected to follow the principles of organizational authority that are bigger than any one of us.

In dealing with violations of our guidelines, we must balance discipline and individual freedom, firmness in principle and understanding. We must avoid excessive strictness and excessive laxness, and ensure that the prevailing principle is that of helping comrades who have erred.

Excessive strictness is usually the result of thinking that this is necessary to prevent violations of the guidelines. Together with this is the reliance on regulation and the lack of education work. Instead of helping strengthen organization, excessive strictness results in an unhealthy outlook, such as secrecy from the Party, and harms the trust of comrades in the broadness of the mind of the organization.

Liberalism, on the other hand, is the characteristic of excessive laxness. We must actively defend our principles, and in accordance with them, discipline those comrades who overstep the acceptable bounds. If we do not apply discipline, comrades will be confused in recognizing right from wrong, and our organization will become loose.

The principal basis of disciplinary action is the actual serious violation. While we consider fully the circumstances that make a case serious or light, we must avoid making them decisive in setting the disciplinary action. If that is the case, violations which are the same in nature and seriousness shall basically receive the same disciplinary action. There will only be a difference in discipline depending on the gravity or lightness of the circumstances.

In accordance with being generous in allowing Party members freedom in courtship, except in serious cases explicitly forbidden by our guide-

lines, we must avoid being excessively strict in dealing with cases of courtship without permission. Oftentimes, these cases can be dealt with even without resorting to disciplinary action.

In cases of premarital sex between sweethearts, we must look after the welfare of women comrades aside from applying the appropriate disciplinary action. If there is sufficient basis and preparation for those concerned, even if the proper time has not been served, it is better to marry the sweethearts. This is necessary especially when premarital sex has resulted in pregnancy.

We must remove the conditions that encourage or entice premarital between sweethearts. We must also conduct education work on marriage and married life in order to avoid cases of premarital sex.

We must avoid applying serious disciplinary action on sweethearts engaged in premarital sex. This case is qualitatively light that disciplinary action need not be applied if the sweethearts are determined to develop their relationship, and if it is not done repeatedly.

It is noticeable in some parts of the organization that what has usually occurred in the past prevents the correct handling of disciplinary action in cases of courtship and marriage. We must sum up our past experiences and clarify to the organization what is correct and what is wrong. In this manner, we can learn well from our past experiences, promptly correct the mistakes, and develop our handling of these matters, instead of allowing past mistakes from becoming baggage in carrying out correct policies.

In accordance with the current policies and guidelines in the application of disciplinary action, it is important to review past cases that have made the disciplinary action serious or light in comparison to the offense. As a whole, rectifying them shall be coursed as a matter of setting their record straight in the Party. In cases where the disciplinary action was in excess of what was called for, the current disposition of those affected may be changed as long as it does not result in dislocations in the organization and the work. The current standing and disposition of those erring comrades, who were meted less than appropriate disciplinary action, may also be changed especially when their offense was serious.

In the effort to review and remedy—if there is going to be an effect on the current standing and disposition of those affected as a result of this rectification, we must consider fully the length of time that has elapsed, the

actual track record of those affected during that time, and the changes in the conditions and work of the Party since that time. The principal objective of the review is to rid ourselves of baggage, to firm up the unity of the Party, and to invigorate the involvement and initiative of Party members. We must avoid discussions that results in the insignificant dredging up of past quarrels and regrets. The spirit of study must prevail in order to learn from previous mistakes and to achieve understanding.

### **Guidelines on Marriage Inside the Party**

In the Communist Party of the Philippines, we excel in promoting the revolutionary interest of the masses in marriage and in all matters related to it. We assume that there is love in a relation, and it has a personal basis. But as members or candidate-members of the Party, we strive to subordinate love to class-love; meaning to say, we devote ourselves to the revolutionary ideals of the Party and the proletariat.

#### *a. Courtship*

1. Courtship is a right of a member or candidate-member who does not have a spouse or a sweetheart. Nevertheless, we submit this right willingly to the guidance and discipline of the Party.
2. In order to court, it is first necessary for a member or candidate-member to secure the permission of the Party unit overseeing one's work. If the person being courted belongs to another Party unit, the unit of the person courting shall convey or ask permission for courtship for as long as the person being courted is agreeable. If the person being courted turns down the overture, it is beneficial to clear the reasons for the denial.
3. If a member or candidate-member would like to court a non-member, the Party unit must see to it that the non-member has sufficient basis to become a candidate-member six months after permission is requested.
4. If a member or candidate-member is being courted inside or outside the Party, the member or candidate-member must notify the Party unit granting permission. If the suitor or suitor-to-be is a non-Party member, the Party unit must see to it

that the non-member has sufficient basis to become a candidate-member six months after permission is requested.

5. A member or candidate-member shall not be allowed to court or be courted by anyone who seeks to turn the member or candidate-member away from revolutionary work, or by anyone who is considered an outright counterrevolutionary traitor.
6. The member or candidate-member, who is assigned to a field unit of the New People's Army (NPA) or other full-time work, is not allowed to court or be courted until after one year of service.
7. No one shall be granted permission to court or be courted by more than one suitor at a time. If there are two suitors who ask permission at the same time, the person being courted shall determine who among them will go first. If a suitor would like to court someone who is already being courted, the intention may be conveyed to the person already courting through the concerned organs. But the suitor cannot as yet court until the person being courted has decided whom to choose among the suitors.
8. The time of courtship shall not be shorter than one year before permission to marry is granted. Nevertheless, sweethearts who have known each other for a long time, or are at an advanced age, may be given due consideration.
9. No one shall be allowed to court or be courted by anyone whose marriage to another is not yet dissolved.
10. Sex is not allowed between sweethearts. It is the responsibility of the concerned units to remove any conducive conditions.

*b. Wedding*

1. Marriage is a serious matter that those who wish to marry, and their respective Party unit or units, must prepare well for.
2. The requisites for seeking the permission of the respective Party units for marriage are similar to the requisites for courtship.

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3. The Party unit or units, to whom the sweethearts belong, shall discuss their request for marriage and, if allowed, shall make a recommendation to the immediate higher organ of the Party. The section shall be the lowest Party organ that may grant permission for marriage.
4. After the concerned organs grant permission, the marrying couple shall select a cadre, from their unit or from a higher unit, to marry them. The marrying cadre shall administer the marriage ceremony, marriage oath, and the signing of the marriage contract.
5. It is necessary for the marrying pair to have three or more witnesses or sponsors chosen or invited to attend the marriage ceremony. Among the witnesses and sponsors, there should be no less than two full members of the Party.
6. Before the marriage, the marrying pair, the sponsors and the marrying cadre should discuss the history and the political significance of the relationship. Each of the couple should analyze and criticize oneself and the other. The couple may be questioned by those they face about their relationship or about matters related to it, and they will be counseled as to how to improve their relation.
7. In the marriage ceremony, the marrying cadre shall state and explain the rights and obligations of marriage as follows:
  - a. The rights to each other are in accordance with the rights in the revolutionary cause;
  - b. The revolutionary rearing and education of the children; and,
  - c. The couple, or any one of them, may approach any one of the sponsors, Party organs or marrying cadre with regards to any problem in the marriage or family.
8. While the couple is joined by the red flag of the Party as a cape connecting both of them, the couple shall recite to the marrying cadre the following oath contained in the "Contract of Marriage Inside the Party":

On this day, we, (The couple should state each other's names in the struggle), unite willingly in marriage as a couple.

As members (or candidate-members) of the Party, we are wholeheartedly determined to carry out our tasks in the revolution, and we shall strive fully to advance it.

We vow to carry out our duties to each other, and to respect each other's rights in accordance with the Party's guidelines on marriage. Neither one of us may break free from the marriage relationship without just grounds, or without the Party's permission.

We have the right to consult the Party, or to seek the Party's counsel at any time that we encounter a problem in our marriage. Each one of us also has the right to bring up any request in the interest of fulfilling our agreement as a married couple.

We vow that neither one of us will be a hindrance to the overall benefit of the revolution and the masses.

9. The marriage shall take effect immediately after the marriage contract is signed by those getting married, their sponsors or witnesses, and the marrying cadre.
10. It is beneficial for Party members who were first married outside the Party to marry inside the Party according to the ceremony as stated in No. 5 to No. 8 above.

*c. Divorce*

1. Because the Party asks for the utmost deliberation and preparation for marriage in the first place, the Party also strives to avoid resorting to divorce as a way to resolve the problems of a married couple.
2. Divorce shall be granted to one of the couple when one's partner is proven to obstruct one's revolutionary work, or when one's partner turns traitor, or when one's partner becomes an outright counterrevolutionary.

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3. Divorce shall be granted when one of the couple requests an application on the basis that the partner is guilty of adultery, bigamy, cruelty, or threatens the life of the plaintiff.
4. Divorce shall be granted when a couple agrees in cases where one of them can no longer fulfill the duty as a spouse after more than five years because of enemy obstruction, or because of a permanent physical impairment. If the impairment is mental and does not improve, divorce shall be granted after three years.
5. Divorce shall be granted when one of the couple fails willfully to discharge his/her marital duties for two years, or disappears and does not establish contact in five years.
6. Divorce shall be granted when it is insisted upon by the couple, or by either one of them, because personal differences have resulted in a damaged relation, and the relation is becoming burdensome to the couple and their Party work. Nevertheless, it is necessary to have the keenest analysis of these cases to make sure that the application for divorce, and the reasons for it, is really serious. It is also necessary to allow one year up to two years from the time the application for divorce is made in order to try to save the relation. In cases where both parties agree, the divorce shall be granted after six months up to one year of trying and realizing whether or not the relation can be saved.
7. When there is divorce, the Party shall see to it that the children are well taken care of.
8. When one of the couple granted a divorce is neither a member nor a candidate-member of the Party, the Party must try to explain to the nonmember the basis or bases of the divorce. Where the conditions of security warrant, the Party must strive to hear the side of the non-Party member in the effort to analyze and hear the application for divorce.
9. The application for divorce shall be heard and decided upon by a committee of three that will be created by a leading organ which has jurisdiction over the couple, although the committee

of three cannot be lower than the level of a district committee of the Party. In cases covered by the sixth point of this section, the committee of three cannot be lower than the level of a provincial committee of the Party. If there is a punitive measure that needs to be decided in relation to a divorce case, the committee of three will make a recommendation to the concerned Party organ.

*d. Disciplinary Action*

1. Concealing one's married status, and using force and intimidation in courtship, are grounds for disciplinary action, ranging from a minimum of over a year suspension of membership up to the maximum of expulsion from the Party.
2. The promise of position, the use of position and the presumption of high position—in order to acquire consent in courtship—are grounds for disciplinary action, ranging from a minimum of demotion from one's post up to a maximum of one-year suspension of membership.
3. Grave cases of sexual intercourse without marriage, such as sexual intercourse with someone who is not even one's love relationship, and sexual intercourse with various other love relationships—that show clearly a rotten outlook in sexual relations—are grounds for disciplinary action, ranging from a minimum of one-year suspension of membership up to the maximum of expulsion from the Party.
4. Courting someone who is already married, or already has a love relationship, is a basis for disciplinary action ranging from a minimum of being made to undertake studies to the maximum of a one-year suspension of membership and a reassignment of work within a year.
5. Courtship without permission—even though the suitor and the one being courted are in a position to request permission—will not be a basis for disciplinary action, but will be grounds for criticism. Cases of courtship without permission not cov-

ered by previous provisions—when one is not in a position to court or be courted, and when one's actions result in big problems in security and compromise our politics—are grounds for disciplinary action, ranging from a minimum of being made to undertake studies up to a maximum of demotion from one's post and a reassignment of work within a year.

6. Serious violations of marriage, such as infidelity, bigamy, cruelty or threats to the life of one's spouse, are grounds for disciplinary action, ranging from a minimum of a one-year suspension of membership up to a maximum of expulsion from the Party, aside from other measures of disciplinary action which may also be decided.
7. It is necessary to analyze every case thoroughly before disciplinary action is undertaken. Those in charge of analyzing and deciding a case should cite the circumstances that make the case grave, and those that make a case light. They must consider these circumstances in determining the gravity or lightness of the disciplinary action.

## **Some Clarifications on the Guide and Rules on Marriage Inside the Party**

EC-CC

*October 2020*

It was deemed necessary to make an initial clarification on dealing with violations of discipline in relations with the building of relations as lovers and as a married couple.

The OPRS helped guide the comrades within the Party and organization on the principles of building a revolutionary relationship and family. In December 2016, the concerned Party organ decided to review and amend the OPRS based on the long experience of its implementation.

In the process of its implementation, there emerged excesses when dealing with violations and enforcement of the Rules which led to the imposition of disciplinary actions beyond the actual gravity of the violation of the Rules. We shall line up some prominent features of excesses so we are more conscious of the need of an intelligent and correct way of dealing with violations of or deviations from the Rules.

Disciplinary action is imposed if the collective has not been notified beforehand of the courtship and relationship development. In the Rules the more important issue in forming a relationship between two comrades is whether their status allows them to enter into a relationship and they mutually like each other. Mutual preference may take precedence over presentation to the collective (if together) or the respective collective (if in separate units) without regard to the collective liability that disciplinary action must be taken.

However, it must be constantly advised to be conscious of informing the collective of the courtship proposal so that the collective can deal with other situations that are important to the unity of the unit (if many want to court), giving time for the development of the work if the partner is new, and other work considerations.

We give the woman the right to decide who she wants to have a relationship with in a situation where many would want to woo her. It is not considered a violation of a male comrade's the right to woo if the

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woman comes to a decision even if there are many others in line wanting to woo her. It is necessary to explain and educate male comrades that the formation of the relationship depends on mutual preference and the liking of others for the woman should not be a barrier for her to decide early on who she likes.

Violations related to infidelity towards one's spouse vary in severity and should be dealt with according to the severity.

We still need to codify the actual form when we say that the violation of the person meted the disciplinary action that affects one's status in the Party is grave, extreme infidelity, or is leading to a criminal case. Prudence must be exercised in promptly resorting to disciplinary actions affecting one's status in the Party without competent investigation of the circumstances and confirmation of the actual nature of the violation.

Resist the tendency to be overly emotional or a strict Catholic moralist in cases of violations of the nature of infidelity and treat such as more serious than serious violations of democratic centralism or political error.

Basically, infidelity is a breach of the marriage contract between spouses that has to be dealt within this framework (whether or not the marital relationship is still grounded). And in clarifying the nature of the weakness or breach involving a third Party.

If there is a mutual recognition of wrongdoing involving infidelity or courtship without the proper status, but willing to rectify and continue their marital relationship, the Party must give the comrades the widest opportunity for it. Thus, personal issues do not become long time baggage in the continuing performance of their tasks while correcting their mistakes.

Avoid exaggerating issues beyond the actual fact, try to deal with and resolve them calmly, quietly and with respect, avoid being scandalous.

Violations of the Rules on building relationship and marriage do not immediately mean the decay of the ideological and political standpoint of the comrade involved.

The amendment of the 10<sup>th</sup> Plenum still stands. Cases of violation of the Rules will be further codified to further develop the Rules.

## **Message to MAKIBAKA on the Women's Liberation Movement**

**JOSE MARIA SISON**

*Read at the First National Congress of Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (MAKIBAKA). March 18–19, 1972, Sampaloc University Center, Manila.*

During the last two years, the Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (MAKIBAKA) has contributed a great deal to breaching the wall of reactionary prejudices against women and preparing the way for the flood-tide of the women's liberation movement in the Philippines. Because the activities of the MAKIBAKA have been centered on urban areas, especially in the Manila-Rizal area, there is certainly quite a number of people who do not realize what a great inspiration the MAKIBAKA has given to the rise of women's associations in the rural areas. A significant part of the revolutionary mass movement today consists of women's associations at the barrio level of the type of the Samahan ng Kababaihang Makabayan. The vigorous campaign to form this type of association has been encouraged by the effective participation of the MAKIBAKA in revolutionary mass struggles. We can be certain that in a few years' time, the women's liberation movement in both cities and countryside shall become a colossal force for revolutionary change under the banner of the national democratic revolution of a new type.

### **The Women's Liberation Movement in the National Democratic Revolution**

In a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country like the Philippines, it is inevitable that women like men suffer from the three systems of authority, such as political, clan and religious. In addition, however, women suffer from the authority of the husband or what we may call "male authority." These four authorities that women have to contend with can easily be seen as expressions of the feudal-patriarchal ideology and system. Though in urban areas, there seems to be a blatant reign of bourgeois ideas and values, perceived in their most decadent forms as bred by a cultural imperialism,

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the feudal-patriarchal ideology and system persists as a countrywide base for prejudices against women. Decades of modern imperialist culture lay over centuries of feudal patriarchy in our history:

The women's liberation movement has every reason to exist and advance. Though women compose half of humanity, half of the nation and half of every revolutionary class, they have been prevented by the four systems of authority from fully unfolding and realizing their revolutionary capabilities. It is therefore necessary for women to unite, assert themselves and take their share in the most important endeavor, that is to say, in the present national democratic revolution.

It is extremely important for the women's liberation movement to grasp the line that political authority is the backbone of all the other systems of authority. By overturning that authority, we begin to overturn all the other systems. Political struggle, participating vigorously in the national democratic revolution now, is therefore the key link to the great cause of women's liberation. The women's liberation movement is basically a political struggle, with a revolutionary class character. The political authority of foreign imperialism, domestic feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism must be overthrown if Filipino women are to be liberated and achieve equality of the sexes.

As early as on the eve of the old democratic revolution, there was already some definite concern about the important role that women could play in effecting social change. The reformist Rizal gave focus to the contradictions between women and the feudal-patriarchal system in his "Letter to the Young Women of Malolos" and he made it a point in his novels to caricature women in a colonial and clerical milieu. In a more positive and revolutionary way, such historical figures as Gregoria de Jesus and Teresa Magbanua proved in the old democratic revolution that women can fight like men. The historical figure of Gabriela Silang also inspired the women then.

Alas, the old democratic revolution has been frustrated by US imperialism and its local reactionary stooges. The Maria Claras, Dona Victorinas, Dona Consolacions and Sister Putes and Rufas have merely taken new dress to set a new colonial fashion. Their quiddities and weaknesses have been further cultivated by a persistent feudal-patriarchal system that is linked to cultural imperialism. To counteract the villains of

the women's liberation movement, let us raise as our heroines the masses of women as well as their outstanding representatives who fight for the new democratic revolution. Liza Balandó, the woman worker who died in the hands of the US-Marcos clique at the May Day massacre of 1971, is one of the heroines whose revolutionary orientation and courage we must emulate and live up to.

### **The Women's Liberation Movement in the Rural Areas**

The majority of women in the Philippines are peasant women. Necessarily the backbone of the women's liberation movement here cannot but be the peasant women. The revolutionary course that they take under the leadership of the proletarian revolutionary party determines the character of the women's liberation movement in the Philippines. If the MAKIBAKA has to have a correct revolutionary orientation, it has to keep this view in mind all the time. However, we can neither deprecate nor depreciate what MAKIBAKA has already achieved and what it seeks to achieve further in urban areas.

As a whole and in so many ways, the women's mass movement that takes the national democratic line in the cities is linked to the women's mass movement in the countryside. Both are important. One is principal and the other secondary. And concrete linkages can be made between the two. For instance, women cadres tempered in the women's mass movement in the cities can easily find their way into the women's mass movement in the countryside. Under the guidance of the Marxist-Leninist party, the deployment of women cadres for various kinds and spheres of revolutionary work can be best effected.

The rise of the revolutionary armed struggle and the peasant movement is creating increasingly better conditions for women to assert their equality with men. Women's associations are being created from barrio to barrio as an important part of the support for the people's democratic power. These perform a wide range of functions in revolution and production which were not previously possible. Great masses of women in guerrilla zones and guerrilla base areas are now performing many functions which were formerly the exclusive domain of men and also specific functions that are most convenient for women. Red detachments of fighting women will in due time excel in the battlefield.

## The Women's Emancipation Movement in the Philippines

Peasant women, especially those belonging to the poor peasant stratum, have comparatively more say than other women on family affairs because they are engaged in production work as much as their menfolk. Among Filipino women, they are also the least restricted by religious inhibitions. Though they are given to childbearing, necessity compels them to work hard. Like their menfolk, they work hard under the weight of extreme exploitation. But with the women's associations as their common base, the poor peasant women are not only enhancing their equal status vis-à-vis their husbands but are also asserting their important role in the revolution. They are helping a lot in winning over the middle peasants and neutralizing the rich peasants through their fellow women.

The days when women were considered as mental burdens for fighting men are fading out in the guerrilla zones and guerrilla base areas. They have become more conscious of their revolutionary role and have started to contribute in so many ways to the total revolutionary effort. Because women's associations are springing up, wives and mothers no longer feel left out even as their husbands and sons are in guerrilla units or regular mobile-party.<sup>12</sup>

### **The Women's Liberation Movement in Urban Areas**

The majority of women in the cities belong to the working class. They are either wives, sisters or children of workers or they themselves are directly wage-earners in various enterprises. MAKIBAKA should pay special attention to this social fact in developing the women's liberation movement in the urban areas. While MAKIBAKA has in its present early period drawn its membership mainly from the urban petty bourgeoisie, especially students and young professionals, it should vigorously promote the national democratic line, draw itself closer to the women of the working class and recruit members from this class. MAKIBAKA chapters can be established in factories and in working-class communities.

There are more than enough issues that can be taken up by the women's mass movement under the banner of the national democratic revolution in the cities. For instance, the issue of rising prices and decreasing real income of the masses can easily arouse and mobilize the masses of women.

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<sup>12</sup> In the original text, this word was written as "warty." Party is our best guess as to the actual intended word.—Ed.

This issue can be used to expose the evils of US imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. Certain projects for the good of the community can be established to maintain continuous and daily interest in an urban women's association. "Cottage industries" can be set up to supplement the income of working-class families; nurseries and kindergartens can be set up to give women more time for productive work and for political work; free medical services and low-priced medicine can be worked out; and the like. To keep politics in command of economically ameliorative efforts, the women in urban areas should always be encouraged to engage in political discussion and participate in mass actions.

The trade union movement cries out for assistance from the women's liberation movement. There are certain lines of capitalist enterprises where women workers relatively abound, to cite some, the textile, shoe, cigar and cigarette and confectionery factories, airlines, marketing firms and stores, banks, eateries and mass media. Activists of the women's liberation movement are most welcome by their fellow women here. Special attention should also be given to organizing and leading the domestic servants, mostly women, who are concentrated in major suburban subdivisions. In any workplace where there are women workers or where women can work, it is necessary for the women's liberation movement to see to it that there are no discriminatory rules and practices against women, that women should have equal footing with men and should receive equal pay of equal work and that women should get the necessary privileges of maternity. Together they can push forward both the national democratic movement and the trade union movement.

The male workers also need the special assistance of the women's movement. They would be very grateful if their wives, mothers, sisters and children can be organized in support of the worker's struggle. A strike can easily weaken because there is no ample political preparation for those who depend on the worker's wages for their daily bread. Also, in the daily course of life, the menfolk should always be reminded that though they bring their wages to hearth, their womenfolk toil for them in back-breaking household chores and in that manner share their oppression and exploitation. The fact that many more women than men cannot realize their political, productive potential shows how extremely rotten the present social system is.

## The Women's Emancipation Movement in the Philippines

We have dealt at length with the women of the working class. That is because they call for some basic attention and emphasis. With regard to the role of the women of the urban petty bourgeoisie, the MAKIBAKA has already amply indicated by words and deeds what direction they must take. This mass organization must continue to increasingly involve the women of the urban petty bourgeoisie in the revolutionary mass movement, even as it strives to arouse and mobilize the women of the working class and develop links with the women of the peasantry. The few but influential women of the national bourgeoisie can also be encouraged to support the anti-imperialist front. But in the cities and major towns all over the country, the urban petty bourgeoisie-students, teachers, professionals and other women of self-sufficient means will be more enthusiastic in supporting the aims of MAKIBAKA and in joining its chapters.

There is no doubt that MAKIBAKA has done much by way of advancing the national democratic cultural revolution of a new type. It should further do so. The role of women in any educational process can never be discounted. The old saying that mothers are the first teachers is completely true. If mothers and even women who choose the teaching vocation are themselves miseducated, how can there be beneficent education for children? We have therefore the utmost concern that among Filipino women the spell of the four authorities be broken through the national democratic cultural revolution of a new type.

Other than MAKIBAKA, there are various women's associations. There are those "nonsectarian" or "nonreligious" ones that in the main distinguish themselves from others by the high professions of their members and that avow to be bourgeois liberal in their standpoint. There are those that distinguish themselves from others by their religious affiliation and consider it most important to practice certain religious rites. There are those which find reason for their existence because their members are wives of the members of some male organizations. There are also the small circles of "high society" women as well as "social climbers" who always consider it their highest pride to be seen at some "exclusive" gathering of the wealthy and powerful. In varying degrees, these women's associations have reactionary views about themselves, about women in general, and about the revolutionary mass movement. It is important for MAKIBAKA

to seize leadership and initiative from these other urban-based organizations and distinguish allies and enemies among them.

Perspective for the Women's Liberation Movement

The women's liberation movement must go through the national democratic revolution of a new type in order to go far in ending a long history of general degradation of women. As the national democratic revolution advances, the women's liberation movement is certain to accumulate strength through resolute and militant struggle.

When the national democratic revolution is completed and the socialist revolution begins, conditions for equality of the sexes shall be created by the large-scale implementation of agricultural cooperation and by the great strides of industrialization. With their full participation in politics and revolution, the women will have all the opportunities to do away with the noxious notion that women are clinging vines. No one shall be allowed by policy to persist in such a notion. Certainly women will no longer be regarded as mere social vases, social toys or child-bearing gadgets.

Throughout the period of the socialist revolution, the women will still have to struggle for the completion of their liberation. But then the basic conditions for total victory shall be there and the odds shall be against those who wish to suppress or restrict their rights.

Long live the women's liberation movement!

Long live MAKIBAKA!

Long live the national democratic revolution!

Long live the Filipino women!

Long live the Filipino people!



# Appendices



## Index of Acronyms

ACP—armed city partisans

APEC—Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

CALABARZON—Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon; a development plan that aims to transform the five provinces into industrial zones

CARP—Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program

CPP—Communist Party of the Philippines

CLOA—Certificate of Land Ownership Award

CPML—Code of Muslim Personal Laws

GATT/WTO—General Agreement for Trade and Tariffs/World Trade Organization

IMF/WB—International Monetary Fund/World Bank

INK—Iglesia Ni Kristo

MAI—Multilateral Agreement on Investments

MNC—multinational corporation

MNLF Moro National Liberation Front

NAFTA—North American Free Trade Agreement

NGO—non-governmental organization

OECD—Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development

OWWA—Overseas Workers Welfare Administration

POEA—Philippine Overseas Employment Administration

RIC—Regional Industrial Center

SAP—Structural Adjustment Program

WISAP—Women's International Solidarity Affair

## Glossary

*Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation*—APEC is a grouping of 18 Pacific Rim countries who are working to impose free trade on the region. The countries involved are Canada, the United States, China, the Philippines, Mexico, Chile, Brunei, Malaysia, Japan, Taiwan, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia, South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, and Hong Kong.

*Basic alliance*—The alliance of the working class and peasantry serving as the foundation of the Philippine revolution or specifically that of the national united front.

*Bourgeois feminism*—This position takes the stand of the petty bourgeoisie; it elevates the men-women contradiction as the principal contradiction in society and in the process diverts attention and energy from imperialism as the main problem of the whole people; and upholds piecemeal reforms (i.e., women's rights) as the ultimate solution to women's oppression.

*Bureaucrat capitalism*—The use of public office in the Philippines to accumulate private assets in capital and land.

*Christian democrats*—In the Philippines, these are politicians who use the Catholic Church and the name of God to serve their personal interests as well as the class interests of the big bourgeoisie and landlord class.

*Coalitionism*—The tendency to relinquish one's political independence and initiative to that of the broad-based coalition dominated bourgeois elements.

*Colonialism*—Foreign domination to extract wealth from another nation through sheer plunder as well as through taxation, trading monopolies and the like, as in the case of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines.

*Commodification*—The exploitative treatment and reduction of women into mere sex objects or sexual commodities.

*Comprador-big bourgeoisie*—The highest stratum of the Philippine bourgeoisie which is mercantile rather than industrial in character; it is the stratum serving as chief trading and financial agent of foreign monopolies.

*Contractualization*—Related to globalization and flexibilization (see definitions below); often used in reference to labor; policy of making workers work for short periods at a time (only for several months or years), however long dictated by contracts signed with their employers. Work is thus temporary and is terminated upon the fulfillment of the contract. Workers needing more work are then required to seek additional contract.

*Democratic centralism*—Principal organizational principle of the Communist Party, which means democracy under centralized leadership and centralized leadership on the basis of democracy; and the superior authority of higher organs over lower organs and that of the majority over the minority.

*Deregulation*—Related to globalization (see definition below); often used in reference to trade; policy instituted through trade and investment agreements such as GATT; refers to the lowering or eliminating of trade and investment barriers.

*Export-oriented economy*—Term used by the World Bank to refer to Philippine dependence on raw material exports as well as on re-exports such as garments and semiconductors.

*Fascist dictatorship (of Marcos)*—The autocratic rule of Marcos based on the determination to uphold the class interests of the big bourgeois and landlord class through blatant use of the coercive apparatuses of the state.

*Feudalism*—Wealth and power based on the private ownership of landed estates, the exaction of rent or tribute, and the practice of usury.

*Flexibilization*—Related to globalization (see definition below); often used in reference to labor; policy of making labor “flexible,” particularly in Third World countries such as the Philippines, that is shifting employment from full-time to part-time, contractual (see contractualization) or temporary employment. The economic logic behind labor flexibilization is that it is an optimal condition for multinational corporations seeking to invest in the Third World as it provides them with wide margins of profit while workers are left in a precarious condition.

*GATTA/WTO General Agreement for Trade and Tariffs/World Trade Organization*—GATT was established in 1947 and has 120 member countries. It is a series of international negotiations or rounds which attempt to lower

## The Women's Emancipation Movement in the Philippines

barriers to trade and investment through lowering or eliminating tariffs. The WTO was formed in the 1995 GATT Uruguay Round to speed up free trade.

*Globalization*, also known as “*imperialist globalization*”—Refers to the increasing economic integration of world economies through multilateral formations and institutions such as GATT/WTO, APEC, NAFTA, etc., for the purpose of implementing free trade policies. It is understood as imperialist globalization because it benefits dominant economies such as the United States and Japan (who indeed are vying for economic leadership in these formations and institutions).

*Hacienda system*—Landed estates owned by usually absentee landlords who leased out tracts of land to tenants, who were, and still are, treated no better than serfs.

*Huk*—The Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon (Hukbalahap) or “People’s Army Against Japan” formed in 1942 by the CPP to fight the Japanese invaders: renamed Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan (HMB) or “People’s Liberation Army” in 1950.

*International Monetary Fund/World Bank*—The IMF/WB regulates the monetary aspects of world trade and have the ability to impose Structural Adjustment Programs on Third World countries that seek loans.

*Katipunan*—The revolutionary organization founded by Andres Bonifacio, which led the Philippine revolution starting on August 23, 1896 against Spanish colonialism.

*Land under tax declaration*—A condition under which land is used and in effect owned by the person who pays taxes on it but does not have formal title of ownership.

*“Left” opportunism*—Any erroneous policy of attempting to seize political power in a short period of time purely through military means notwithstanding the inadequacy of the military force itself and of its political support.

*Liberalization, related to globalization (see definition above)*—Like deregulation, often used in reference to trade; policy instituted through trade and

investment agreements such as GATT; refers to the lowering or eliminating of trade and investment barriers.

*Marginalized*—This refers to those most exploited and oppressed classes within the international capitalist system. Namely, it is the working and poor peoples of society who are impacted directly by the economic policies of tools like APEC, which seek to extract more surplus profit out of workers.

*Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought (MLMZT)*—System of ideas and principles that explain the law of motion of society, and the tasks required to liberate the working class and the people from oppression and exploitation; from studying society and engaging in revolutionary struggle. Karl Marx, in collaboration with Friedrich Engels, formulated this ideology, enriched by subsequent great communist leaders such as Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong. It is the guiding ideology of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP); it is also called the “proletarian ideology” (the system of ideas that clarifies the historic role and tasks of the working class).

*Mass work*—Political and organizational work among the masses in accordance with their rights, interests, and demands.

*Militant*—This refers to activists and movements who are deeply committed to the struggle against imperialist globalization—and who concretize this commitment by maintaining a strong, and oppositional stand against its various tools, like APEC.

*Militarism*—The dominance of military over civil authority, including the purely military viewpoint and concrete manifestations of this tendency.

*Modern revisionism*—The practice of paying lip-service to revolutionary aims and ideals while abandoning the same interests in favor of narrow opportunist ends.

*Monopoly-capitalism*—The dominance of monopolies in a capitalist economy, the merging of bank and industrial capital, the export of surplus capital and surplus commodities, international combinations of monopolies and the constant struggle of capitalist powers for captive markets, fields of investment and sources of raw materials.

## The Women's Emancipation Movement in the Philippines

*Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI)*—The MAI is a new economic agreement being negotiated at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The MAI is designed to make it easier for corporate investors and multinational corporations to move assets—whether money or production facilities—across international borders. The MAI would take the investment of the NAFTA, amplify these provisions and apply them worldwide.

*National security ideology*—The set of ideas picturing repressive regimes under a military junta or a fascist dictatorship as being more efficient and economical than governments respecting bourgeois democratic processes.

*National united front*—The combination of patriotic and progressive classes like the working class, peasantry, urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie against the US and such local exploiting classes as the comprador-big bourgeoisie and landlord class.

*New-democratic revolution*—The theory and practice of the Philippine revolution as bourgeois-democratic but led by the working class through the CPP, with the perspective of proceeding to socialist revolution.

*North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)*—The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was signed in 1989 between the United States and Canada for the purpose of imposing free trade. NAFTA was established in 1993 and extended the FTA to include Mexico. It is currently being expanded to include Chile and other countries in South America and the Caribbean.

*OCWs*—Overseas Contract Workers (in the Philippines); workers recruited through government, private or illegal agencies to work on contract in countries throughout the Middle East, Southeast Asia, East Asia, Africa, and Europe. OCWs are often low-wage workers working in the construction and the service industries. They are amongst the most vulnerable of Filipino workers as there are few laws in host countries and the Philippines guaranteeing their protections.

*Old democratic revolution (in the Philippines)*—The 1896 anti-colonial revolution led by the newly risen Filipino bourgeoisie and inspired by liberal-bourgeois ideology.

*Old merger party*—The party resulting from the merger of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the Socialist Party of the Philippines (SPP) in 1938.

*Organs of political power*—The committees of people’s self-government established by the Philippine revolutionary forces in the villages and at higher levels.

*Pambansang Kaisahan ng mga Magbubukid (PKM) or “National Unity of Peasants”*—The national peasant association formed by the old merger party during the ‘40s and the ‘50s.

*People’s democratic state*—The type of state that the Philippine revolutionary movement strives to set up encompassing all patriotic and progressive classes under the leadership of the working class.

*Petty-bourgeoisie*—Artisans, intellectuals, civil servants, students, etc.

*Privatization, related to globalization (see definition above)*—Refers to governmental reform as prescribed by multilateral formations and institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF); privatization entails the opening up of public services such as education, health care, utilities and the like to competition amongst private investors who then take control of those services. The economic logic of privatization is that the private sector or the market can more efficiently run these services because the government is seen as inefficient. Often this means that services are not offered for services sake but are run for a profit with the rich and the privileged benefiting the most.

*Proletarian internationalism*—The principle of propagating the unity of the workers of the world and of their parties in the struggle against capitalism and imperialism and realizing the historic mission of building socialism and, further on, communism.

*Proletarian revolution*—A revolution led by the working class party and involving the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the working class.

*Rectification*—The process of criticizing and correcting ideological, political and organizational mistakes committed by the Party in waging revolution.

## The Women's Emancipation Movement in the Philippines

*Reformism*—The system of thought and the practice of opposing revolutionary actions, glossing over the gravity of social ills and advocating reforms solely within the framework of the oppressive and exploitative state.

*Semi-colonialism*—Indirect colonial rule by a foreign power through unequal treaties, agreements, and arrangements, although the subordinate state enjoys formal independence.

*Semi-feudalism*—An agrarian and pre-industrial economy dominated by the mercantile big bourgeoisie and the landlord class within the global framework of monopoly-capitalism.

*Subjectivism*—The outlook and process of making judgments on the basis of an individual's one-sided, narrow and fragmentary knowledge of the facts.













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| <p>27. <i>The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky</i><br/>V. I. Lenin</p> <p>28. <i>Marxism and the National and Colonial Question</i><br/>Joseph Stalin</p> <p>29. <i>“Left-wing” Communism, an Infantile Disorder</i><br/>V. I. Lenin</p> <p>30. <i>The Poverty of Philosophy</i><br/>Karl Marx</p> <p>31. <i>The Mass Strike</i><br/>Rosa Luxemburg</p> <p>32. <i>Revolution and Counterrevolution in Germany</i><br/>Frederick Engels</p> <p>33. <i>Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR &amp; Commentaries</i><br/>Joseph Stalin &amp; Mao Zedong</p> <p>34. <i>The Labor Movement in Japan</i><br/>Sen Katayama</p> <p>35. <i>On Education</i><br/>N. K. Krupskaya</p> <p>36. <i>Falsificators of History</i><br/>Joseph Stalin</p> <p>37. <i>Woman and Socialism</i><br/>August Bebel</p> | <p>38. <i>The German Ideology</i><br/>Karl Marx</p> <p>39. <i>The Condition of the Working Class in England</i><br/>Frederick Engels</p> <p>40. <i>The Right of Nations to Self-Determination</i><br/>V. I. Lenin</p> <p>41. <i>Materialism and Empirio-Criticism</i><br/>V.I. Lenin</p> <p>42. <i>The Holy Family</i><br/>Karl Marx &amp; Frederick Engels</p> <p>43. <i>The Class Struggles in France</i><br/>Karl Marx</p> <p>44. <i>One Step Forward, Two Steps Back</i><br/>V. I. Lenin</p> <p>45. <i>History of the CPSU(B) Short Course</i><br/>Joseph Stalin</p> <p>46. <i>Ireland and the Irish Question</i><br/>Karl Marx &amp; Frederick Engels</p> <p>47. <i>On Communist Education</i><br/>M. I. Kalinin</p> <p>48. <i>The Colonial Policy of British Imperialism</i><br/>Ralph Fox</p> |
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### **Collection “Tales From the Front”**

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| <p>1. <i>Prison Diaries and Letters</i><br/>Felix Dzerzhinsky</p> <p>2. <i>Warriors, Poets, Friends</i><br/>Joven Obrero</p> <p>3. <i>Bright Clouds</i><br/>Hao Ran</p> <p>4. <i>Wall of Bronze</i><br/>Liu Qing</p> | <p>5. <i>The First Time in History</i><br/>Anna Louise Strong</p> <p>6. <i>Hundred Day War</i><br/>William Hinton</p> <p>7. <i>New Women in New China</i></p> |
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