



Confronting Sexual Exploitation

**Campaign Against
Sex Tourism and
Trafficking in
Filipino Women**

**Exposure/Study Tour
to the Philippines
June 19–July 4, 1995**

**Report of the
Participants from
Australia and
Aotearoa/N.Z.**

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The remaining unattributed graphics are from *Clipart vol.1 no.1*, a compilation featuring the works of seven feminist Filipina artists, published free of copyright by Isis International, Manila, 1995.

Foreword to the second printing

A SECOND print run is a grand opportunity to correct the typos in the original manuscript and move a few graphics around. But there's more to this second printing than mere error correction.

Following the Foreword an executive summary has been written by Melba de Guzman-Marginson and after the Introduction there is now a piece on how we can respond to the issues raised in this Report. As well, Kathleen Maltzahn relates a short description of the Metro Manila exposure, and Sheila Jeffreys has contributed an article on the debate between "those who believe that prostitution is a form of work that women freely choose and those who consider prostitution a form of patriarchal abuse of women." There is also an additional appendix listing the graphic artists' works we have reproduced.

We have been very encouraged by the interest and concern that has been expressed in the four months since this report was first released in July 1996 in Brisbane.

— E.D. & D.H. (Editors)

Foreword to Forward:

A few words from the Editors

It took passion, limited resources and a lot of chasing to produce this report. The desire to compile most, if not all, the activities of the Study Tour after a year is a self-inflicted challenge. Ten hours of tape recorded speeches, discussions and reports were transcribed, comprehended and edited to a readable form. Tour participants already busy with other matters, personal or otherwise, were constantly reminded about their articles, the timeline, and for their comments. It is interesting to note the kind of responses we got — some were prompt, some were excited, while a few could not be bothered. Of the three, it was the last we dreaded.

Often, political sensibility dictates that a report/documentation be published promptly after an activity or campaign. One year later could hardly be described as prompt, but it was always definitely our intention to produce at least the Australian/Aotearoan component, albeit late, and in the last two months of production its volume grew by 40 percent. Bearing in mind the hard work of the tour's organisers both in the Philippines and Australia, it would have been a shame if the documentation was relegated to sheets of butcher's paper yellowing with age or forgotten unlabelled diskettes.

Despite its rather informal prose and reader-friendly layout, the Report attempts to re-capture the many relevant discussions and opinions that would be difficult to recall had we not decided to tape-record as many sessions as possible. Transcribing the tapes is time consuming but nonetheless, invaluable. It is a delight to listen to all these tapes, (especially through good headphones), not only to re-confirm what you thought you had heard, but also to reminisce the atmosphere — the *merienda*, the noisy air-conditioning, the restrained chatting at the back of the room, the microphone feedback and more.

Equally interesting to listen to is the dialogue with the Angeles City officials, an excerpt of which is printed in the Report. In our recollection, the meeting was very civil and courteous considering the straightforward questions thrown by the participants about prostitution and foreign investments in the entertainment industry. The hospitality of the Mayor's parlour had its formality.

In the evening we became unwanted guests and were eventually thrown out from a flimsy third-rate hotel. A trip to the local police the next day to file a formal complaint against Gary Griffin does not appear as a separate piece but is mentioned in Cally's article in passing. To compensate for the lack of photos of the Philippine police force's antiquity, we included instead for your amusement a copy of the sworn statement, archaically typewritten at Balibago Precinct.

Whatever happened to our complaint is anybody's guess. The day the group left Angeles was the same day we last heard of it. Apparently there was an initial investigation. Since we haven't heard from the police up to now, we may as well assume that business is still flourishing for Gary and his mates.

The hospitality of NKAC and WEDPRO, our hosts in Angeles City, is in our hearts but not on our tapes. The meetings with women who work in the bars and on the streets could not be taped. So, sisters, we would urge you to put pen to paper or fingers to keyboards and record your experience in preparation for

'The Report Part Two'. And before we forget, let us note the men who took part in our exposures, attended the dialogues, and helped in its preparation. They were not many, but they were there.

The publicity that the campaign generated was remarkable. Not long after we arrived in Australia, tour participants from New South Wales held a press conference headed by Meredith; Melba flew to Canberra to discuss the campaign with parliamentarians; while Brisbane and Adelaide began reporting back to media, community and women's groups. We knew that our Philippine counterparts were doing the same as we heard Cecilia being interviewed by ABC Radio National.

Another arena of the tour that we failed to record on tape was our dialogue with officials of the Australian Embassy in Makati. For some reason the atmosphere inside the room was that of restraint, if not indifference and, come to think of it, the Ambassador was not even there! Overall the meeting was civil.

It is with great regret that transcripts of Sheila Jeffreys' fora do not appear here. Had they been recorded and lent to us to be transcribed, we would surely be making many people happy. Spare your disappointment though because Sheila has written many books and will write more. While we were still in Manila, there was talk going around that due to public demand, Sheila was again invited to come to Manila to lecture. If the visit was realised would someone tell us what happened?

After reading the preceding paragraphs you may remain suspicious that there are still missing pieces to the Study Tour puzzle. We are going to reveal to you what might have transpired during the times in question with our two-person editorial team: a) the tape batteries went flat; b) switching tapes was unintentionally neglected; c) taping was forgone altogether; d) Dee sped off to the toilet to relieve her stomach upset; e) Emere took another quick shower; or f) you probably did not reply to our letter!

However, all is not lost, the Philippine Secretariat has their own set of tapes (with their particular problems) and part two or the full report can be published if funding can be secured. There are also tapes of the dialogues and interviews recorded by Richie of SBS and Sarah of the Australian Centre for Investigative Journalism, but copyright of their material is held by their respective organisations.

In retrospect, the study tour opened many doors of discovery and discourse. The healthy attitude of both Filipina and non-Filipina participants on the issue of prostitution is commendable. This is not to say that there are no disagreements though. The airing of varying opinions throughout the conference is an indication of how sex workers are seen by feminists coming from different perspectives and cultures. At the very least, we hoped to contribute to the debate by publishing the insights we gained, the illusions we shed, the personal relationships and concluding statements we came to.

For the meantime, let us present to you 'The Report' (Part One). We hope you find it to be comprehensible, straightforward and unassuming. Read on and be reminded of what else we can do to make every society a better place for all women regardless of race, colour, class, caste, profession, culture, religion, age, education, ability or sexual orientation.

Emere Distor and Dee Hunt

Acknowledgments

The Union Co-operative Society for sponsoring the Brisbane Coordinator ♦ Senator John Woodley's office for publicity, administrative assistance and support in the pre-tour period ♦ The Australian Study Tour Coordinators for sustaining and extending the campaign ♦ The Philippine Secretariat for their preparation and superb organising ♦ The staff of Horeb House of PEC for their kindness and patience ♦ Organisations and individuals who accompanied us on our city and provincial tours ♦ General contributors to this Report ♦ Max Hunt for being our computing techno-drone ♦ Elva Albacite for her drawings and culinary sustenance ♦ Individuals and organisations who helped to keep up our finances and morale ♦ The women in the Philippines who shared a part of their lives with us.

Executive Summary



THIS is a report on the Study Tour to the Philippines conducted by 15 Australian and New Zealander women from June 19 to July 4, 1995.

The Study Tour was held to investigate Australian involvement in the sex tourism industry in the Philippines and the phenomenal bride trade. As it turned out, this objective was not difficult to achieve.

This Report contains background about the Study Tour's purpose and prospects from two perspectives: that of the Australian and the Philippine organisers and participants.

The Dialogue Statement gives a comprehensive but concise analysis, position and recommendations put together by the participants of the 3-day dialogue that was held after the exposure tours in Metro Manila and in the provinces of Bicol, La Union and Mindoro.

The summary description of Metro Manila prostitution argues that prostitution and trafficking may come in different forms and foci, customers may vary too, but one thing is constant – "women and children... are being bartered for and bought, and it is sex industrialists who benefit."

The section on ways to respond to this Report lists a number of actions Australians can do to address the issue of prostitution and trafficking of Filipino women and children.

In the keynote address of the Australian organiser, the Study Tour was described as a solidarity initiative which resulted from years of advocacy and organising around issues relevant to Filipino women in Australia. In particular, the links between sex tourism and the bride trade, migration and prostitution or in a broader sense, sexual exploitation, poverty and migration, and others.

The Philippine keynote speaker provided an initial framework for the Dialogue participants. She clarified that the global issue behind sex tourism, trafficking and prostitution is sexual exploitation, where sex has become a "protected merchandise" internationally. She raised the need to interrogate the business side of the sex tours industry and the way governments treat women.

The plenary speeches introduced the issues of Filipino women in Australia and argued that the types of exchanges that occurred between Australians and Filipinos created the sex tours industry and other business enterprises that are associated with it. Australian and international laws that are intended to protect the victims of sexual exploitation, trafficking and prostitution were discussed and gaps were identified. An important human rights issue was raised – men's right to marry and found a family vs women's right to be free from violence and exploitation.

The open fora demonstrated a thorough and healthy analysis of the issues raised by the keynote and plenary speakers. There was a good exchange of ideas on the role of governments and their split level policies, the laws that govern them, their enforcement or lack of enforcement of these laws, and how they enforce these laws. There was frank discussion of the factors that make prostitution acceptable in countries like the Philippines where the focus of law is on the prostituted women, while owners, pimps, and procurers in the sex tours industry are not considered criminals and could escape unpunished.

It was asserted that prostitution can be best explained by looking at ideological, attitudinal and patriarchal systems that operate in society.

Poverty as the major factor in trafficking and prostitution was examined; instead power imbalance was identified, describing the situation of a power imbalance where men try to control women. However, there was agreement that poverty is the bottom line; but it does not explain the complexity of the issue. Other reasons were identified why women go into prostitution: because they have been victims of rape, incest, sexual assault, domestic violence, lack of awareness, and inter-generational prostitution where the 'profession' was inherited from their mothers or another family member.

The workshops' discussions were geared towards arriving at common definitions and understanding of the contentious issues.

Prostitution had also been defined within the context of the legal age of consent. Child and adult prostitution were identified as having a similar mode of operation, but with more far-reaching effects upon children. There was agreement that the issue of consent and informed choice does not exist because both child and adult are exploited.

There was strong consensus that prostitution should be seen as a social and global issue. As a global phenomenon, prostitution is forced. If prostitution were viewed only as being a matter of choice, then it becomes a personal issue.

Prostitution was rejected as a legitimate form of work because it deals with exploitation of women and children. One workshop group provided a Filipino definition of work which gave a different dimension to the argument. There was recognition, however, of the need to decriminalise prostitution and provide women with the services and support they need.

There was consensus on prostitution as a violation of human rights and its negative impact on women in society.

The discussions in the Tourism workshop established that the ideology behind sex tourism is economic because tourism is an important source of foreign exchange and employment. Its merchandise is sex. Specifically, several factors were identified that makes sex tourism thrive in the Philippines.

The link between migration and prostitution was demonstrated from the discussion of the forms of migration and the networks and operations employed by unscrupulous men who beat the system in their bid to acquire sexual and domestic slaves.

The workshop on Racism and Multiculturalism expounded on the fact that Filipino women are stereotyped in Australia both by non-Filipinos (especially by the Anglo-Celtics) and Filipinos. The Workshop also recognised the irresponsible attitude of some media people who are very effective in exaggerating stories about Filipino women in Australia.

The documentation of the Panel Discussion with representatives from Philippine agencies and the Australian Embassy provided an extensive insight into the different and common views held by non-government and government people. Backed by experience and well-thought out analysis of the issues, non-government participants strongly put to the representatives of the Philippine and Australian governments the need for affirmative actions. The Belgium government's active work on establishing a bilateral agreement with the Philippine government on the issue of trafficking was cited as a good example to follow.

The Report also contains several articles and literary works from some of the participants. The appendices provide more background material, a list of press coverage that shows the success of the project in attracting media attention and response from the public, and a list of reading materials and useful addresses for those who wish to study the issues further.

Melba de Guzman-Marginson

National Coordinator of the Study Tour and CPCA.

21 October 1996.



Introduction

Strengthening Solidarity With Filipino Women Against Sexual Exploitation

EVERY year, tens of thousands of Australian men pack their bags and set off to explore the sex tourism scene in the Philippines. They've heard their mates talk about what a great time they had there, they've seen the glossy brochures with a waiting woman on every beach, they've read the reports and watched the movies that say Filipino women are ready just for them, and they decide that they'd better check out the place for themselves.

In 1995, fifteen Australian and New Zealander women decided to do the same. Like the men, they'd listened to stories, read the travel ads and newspapers, and watched the movies. But they had a different picture.

The stories they'd heard were told by women who had married these sex tourists, and had come to Australia with their new husbands or fiancés to be insulted, imprisoned, assaulted, raped. Other stories were told not by the women themselves but their friends and families: stories of the 24 women and children who have been killed or have "disappeared" since 1980. The movies they had seen were ones like *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*, where Filipinas were depicted as cheap little users, prostitutes who were taking decent Australian

men for a ride. The advertisements were both the glossy Philippine Airlines ads that display submissive, servile women and the smutty columns of the (now thankfully defunct) *Truth* newspaper in Melbourne and its equivalents in other states, that print inch after inch selling Filipino women as wives here in Australia.

And there were stories from the Philippines end as well. Where the men talked of “helping out” a poverty stricken country like the Philippines by bringing in foreign capital and taking the women “away from it all”. Women’s organisations were broadcasting stories from the women themselves that said the opposite. Women in Angeles, Olongapo, Manila and other sex tourism centres talked of the violence they experienced. In addition to the violence of poverty that prostitution did not deliver them from, they talked of being routinely humiliated, beaten and raped. Sometimes it was by police officers and military. Sometimes bar owners and managers. Often by their customers. Australian, German, Japanese, Filipino: the nationality made little difference. And there were silences too, occasionally punctuated by tales of humiliation that so often accompanied sex and that couldn’t be freely shared: sexual acts that they felt to be demeaning and unsafe, or being photographed and filmed without their consent or at times even without their knowledge. They talked too of the effects on their bodies of the constant drinking and drugs that the bars and brothels impose. They talked of being mothers trying to survive with little money and constant worry. They talked of being young woman without the skills and support they needed to survive this violence and oppression. They described lives and circumstances that clashed absolutely with the projections of sex tourists.

So we decided that Australian women should see for themselves. Acting on behalf of the Centre for Philippine Concerns–Australia, we contacted our sister organisations in the Philippines and they agreed to join us in this project. With the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women acting as secretariat, they put in months of work, brought together a coordinating group, and then set about creating a programme that showed the broadest range of prostitution available. They talked to the women in areas they were presently working in, and set up dialogues and exposures. Where they didn’t have contacts, in resort islands or more remote areas, they went to investigate, making long bus and boat trips over the weekends and arriving back for work on Monday. They contacted Philippine government agencies and the Australian Embassy. They set up discussions with Australian ex-patriots living in the sex tourism centres. They arranged for other Philippine non-government organisations to join a conference–cum–dialogue to educate them as well.

Meanwhile, in Australia, CPCA branches continued to encourage women to join the tour, and called on organisations here to become sponsors. As in the Philippines, they were invariably working as volunteers with few resources and a huge workload. But in June 1995, everything came together and the study tour began.

The Philippines has a long history of study tours, exposures, and human rights fact-finding missions. During the terrible years of the Marcos dictatorship, and on into the Aquino administration, these tours were often one of the few tools available to let people outside the country know what was happening. They enabled people to see with their own eyes the reality of the situation, and then to broadcast it in their country of origin. This Study Tour played the same role. In doing so, it contributed to the ongoing redefinition and rethinking of what solidarity means to us today. It asserted that “women’s issues” are not side issues, unimportant to a people’s struggle for liberation and autonomy, but, like the environment and other supposedly “soft” issues, integral to political and cultural struggles.

As well as helping us broaden our understanding of how we can do solidarity in the post-dictatorship, post-bases scenario, the Study Tour also made a significant contribution to our continual thinking and rethinking about prostitution. Prostitution is in many ways an underground industry. Few people know how it really operates, or what the consequences are for the women involved. The Study Tour allowed women from Australia to change that, to

find out what their male compatriots were doing in the Philippines, and how Filipinos felt about that. It allowed them to bring that information home, to continue to challenge the propaganda that sex tourism is fine, that it does no damage, or that it just isn't a big enough issue to worry about.

As you will see from the following report, the sex tourism industry matters. It is big, it is wealthy, and it is damaging. It thrives on the poverty of the Philippines, and on the racism and sexism that exist in Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines. It exposes women and girls to violence and humiliation, and leaves them in it, day after day, year after year, until it has no further use for them. It paints a picture of the Philippines as a nation of available, submissive women, who can be fucked, beaten, married, discarded, divorced, killed. The sex tourism industry matters, and many women are saying it must stop. This report lets us see why, taking us beyond static figures or strange fictions to the real stories.

It shows us the lived experience of Filipino women in prostitution and the role of Australian men, governments, sex industrialists and others in strengthening prostitution. It talks of Australian women's reactions to these: how it feels to sit in a bar and watch your clothed compatriots ogling and fondling near-naked women; to be confronted by a New Zealand hotel owner abusing you as trouble makers; to see how quickly the sex tourism syndicates could find out about your trip to the Philippines and make it almost impossible for you to find a bed for the night. It also makes connections between prostitution everywhere. While the focus of the tour was on relations between the Philippines and Australia, it talks about prostitution generally. Within this report are several incisive discussions of what prostitution is really about, and what it means for all women, whether in prostitution or not, whether Filipino, Australian, New Zealander or not. And it talks about responses, what Australian, New Zealand and Filipino women are doing about this situation, and what they want other people to do. It goes beyond describing the situation, to proposing concrete, achievable steps for change.

And this is the strength and purpose of this report. It is about changing the situation. If people read it, think "what a shame", and put it down again, it will mean nothing. This report is a tool. It gives us ways of thinking through the issues of prostitution and sex tourism and responding. It suggests political action that can be taken, changes that we need in policy and legislation, campaigns that can be initiated. We hope that we read it and use it, and get others to read it. And in doing so, we are saying "NO to the selling of women's bodies, NO to servitude and slavery, NO to our battery, rape and murder". We are strengthening new solidarity; imagining into being relations between nations and individuals that are based on respect for real, strong, whole women, not on their consumption.

Kathleen Maltzahn, Women's Action Supporting Filipinas & SPAN

Melba de Guzman-Marginson, National Coordinator, Centre for Philippine Concerns-Australia



Photo: CATW-P



Photo: CATW-P

How We Can Respond to the Issues Raised in this Report

WHILE sometimes the problem of sex tours, trafficking and prostitution seems so big that things will never change, lobbying, advocacy and education do work. Some examples of changes because of lobbying are:

- the decision of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission to investigate the deaths and disappearances of Filipinas in Australia;
- the passing of legislation allowing Australian nationals overseas to be prosecuted if they are sexually abusing minors, including thorough prostitution;
- AusAID's decision to fund BUKAL, an organisation working with women in street prostitution, in the wake of CAST calls for more aid to women's groups doing organising and education work with women in prostitution.

Of course, while all these developments are encouraging, a lot more needs to be done. Everything helps, from telling your friends about the situation, to launching a huge campaign. The following ideas are a few starting suggestions. Try them, and then see what else you can think of.

- ✓ Write to the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Australian Embassy in Manila, and your local MP calling for the implementation of recommendations listed in the DIALOGUE STATEMENT on page 9 of this report. Send copies of your letters to CPCA.
- ✓ Encourage your friends to read this report and ask your local library, school, university, etc. to stock it. Get a copy of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's report *Violence Against Filipino Women* and respond to it.
- ✓ Write to or ring newspapers or program producers when you see Filipinas or the Philippines depicted in ways that add to negative stereotypes.
- ✓ Contact CPCA in your state and ask about joining or forming groups to campaign about the issue of sex tours, and related issues such as deaths and disappearances of Filipino women.
- ✓ Subscribe to informative publications such as ISIS International's *Women in Action* and CATW's *COALITION Asia-Pacific Report* in the Philippines or SPAN's *KASAMA* in Australia.
- ✓ Raise money or give donations to groups in the Philippines working with women and children in prostitution, such as WEDPRO, SINAG, BUKAL, NKAC, ECPAT or CATW.
- ✓ Organise a meeting and a speaker from the Philippines to talk about prostitution, sex tourism and trafficking, or inform CPCA in Australia or PSNA in Aotearoa if you would like to be part of future initiatives to bring a speaker out.



- ✓ Find out if there is an organisation of Filipino women in your area, and see what ways you can work with them.
- ✓ Explore the possibility of getting together a group to go to the Philippines for an exposure tour. (You will need to find out if groups in the Philippines have the resources to be part of such as initiative and, as this is a lot of work for the Philippine hosts, you must allow a long lead up time.)
- ✓ Keep in touch. The final appendix to this Report lists addresses and contact numbers of many of the organisations referred to in this text. (BUKAL may be contacted via CATW-Philippines.)



Australian–Philippine Dialogue: Confronting Sexual Exploitation

DIALOGUE STATEMENT

We, 58 Filipinos and Australians from various organizations, women's centers, government agencies, the academe and media, participants of the *Australian–Philippine Dialogue: Confronting Sexual Exploitation* conducted a study tour from June 19–July 4, 1995 to examine the involvement of Australian nationals in sex trafficking and prostitution of Filipino women and children.

We note with grave concern:

- the alarming trend of Australian men's involvement in sex tourism, trafficking of women and prostitution through package tours, introduction agencies and the operation of bars, hotels and resorts throughout the Philippines;
- the operation of syndicated networks, on an international scale which enable Australian operators to exploit Filipino women and children. These networks also act to protect their activities from expose;
- that these activities are a clear violation of human rights under international laws such as the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, *The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*, *The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, *The Convention on the Rights of the Child* which the Australian and Philippine Governments have signed and ratified;
- the practice of foreigners to circumvent Philippine nationalization law prohibiting foreign ownership and management of businesses such as bars, hotels, and resorts. We noted Australian nationals using their Filipino wives or live-in partners or business partners as fronts for their operations. For instance in Angeles City two thirds of all bars and hotels are owned by Australian nationals;
- the promotion of Filipino women and children in leaflets, brochures, calendars, catalogues as sex commodities when advertising travel destinations in the Philippines;
- the inadequacy of information for Australians, that acts of paedophilia committed overseas are punishable by law in Australia. We saw that a large number of women are under 18 and adult women have started as prostituted children;
- the clear and blatant violation of Philippine labor laws by entertainment establishments, e.g. the non-payment of legally mandated wage and the absence of protection from various forms of hazards and other benefits;
- the involvement of New Zealand nationals engaging in the above activities and contraventions and often in conjunction with Australians or with the use of Australian resources.

We recommend:

that the Australian and Philippine Governments enter into agreements to facilitate the investigation and extradition of Australians involved in the prostitution of women and children in the Philippines.

We recommend further to the Australian Government:

1. that the Australian Government request the Sex Discrimination Commission to conduct an inquiry into the involvement of Australian men in the sex industry specifically in the following areas:
 - a. ownership and operation of establishments suspected of trafficking and prostitution,
 - b. working conditions of women and children employed in those establishments,

- c. the violation of human rights of Filipino women and children by Australian nationals, such as freedom from sexual abuse, violence and exploitation;
2. that likewise an investigation be conducted regarding the circumvention of Philippine nationalization laws governing land ownership and operation of businesses by Australian nationals. This practice facilitates sex tourism and the trafficking and prostitution of women;
3. that the Australian Government put more resources into the investigation and conviction of Australians in the Philippines under the paedophilia legislation. In particular, that charges be laid against Australians organizing paedophilia prostitution and networks in the Philippines;
4. that the Australian and Philippine Governments be asked to require information and to issue warnings against the practice of sex tourism and paedophilia, on international airline flights, at points of departure and travel agencies. These practices dehumanize women and children in the Philippines;
5. that the Australian Government be asked to increase and rechannel aid to NGOs in the Philippines that provide support to efforts that will prevent the exploitation of women and children in the sex industry and provide assistance to those who have been sexually exploited, e.g. alternative livelihood programs;
6. that the Australian Government review the Privacy legislation to allow prospective Filipino spouses to be provided with information on their sponsor regarding any previous conviction for violent behaviour, criminal conviction, mental status and identical health checks;
7. that the Australian Government collect data on previous sponsorships and, in cooperation with the Philippine Government, make this information available to prospective fiancées or spouses in their own language. This information should be maintained on a centralized database at all immigration points in recognition that sponsors may seek partners from different countries. Current mechanisms used by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs to collect such information are insufficient because they rely on the sponsors' honesty and their information is not cross-checked;
8. that the provision of information about support services in Australia continue after the Filipino spouse or fiancée has migrated to Australia. This is often the time when such information is most needed.

Likewise we recommend to the Philippine Government:

1. that the Department of Tourism and local governments, in consultation with concerned NGOs, study the social costs of its tourism strategies, in particular as they result in the sexual exploitation of women and children, and cease their aggressive promotion of tourism until preventive and protective measures can be put in place;
2. that the Department of Trade and Industry examine the ownership and operations of "entertainment" establishments that often are fronts for prostitution activities;
3. that the Department of Labor and Employment investigate the violations of labor laws and regulations concerning personnel of these establishments such as waitresses, receptionists, "public relations officers", gogo dancers, singers, and the like;
4. that the Supreme Court declare as unconstitutional the Vagrancy Law that is used to arrest women suspected of prostitution;
5. that Article 202.5 of the Revised Penal Code be repealed in the interest of the decriminalization of women in prostitution; that criminal sanctions be imposed on the clientele of prostitution;
6. that the Commission on Human Rights conduct an inquiry into the violations of human rights of women and children sexually exploited in prostitution, and establish complaints procedures and mechanisms;
7. that RA 7610 or the Special Protection for Children Against Exploitation, Abuse and Discrimination be strictly implemented.

Approved in Plenary Session: July 3, 1995

Prostitution in Metro Manila

June 20, 1995 — Our Exposure Begins

FIVE minutes from the Philippines' Congress are a string of small bars that operate as kiosks during the day. At the end of the legislators' sessions, government cars stream past the sprawling slum area, leaving Fairview for the more comfortable feel of home. As night comes, men gather in the makeshift buildings, many in singlets and thongs. They are labourers, tricycle drivers, the unemployed. The floor of the small rooms are rough concrete, or bare dirt. The toilets stink. Beer is twelve pesos fifty centavos.

If you follow the legislators, not a few will eventually end up in Lexus, the newest, plushiest 'entertainment' complex in town. Both the country's vice-president and Quezon City's mayor attended the opening ceremony, and here the nation's elite pays thousands of pesos to enjoy the luxurious surrounds.

Up the road on Quezon Avenue, men pull to the side of the road in brand new cars, taxis, jeeps. Groups of drunk young men in borrowed vehicles jeer and joke, and police in civilian jeeps go round and round and round the strip.

Men croon favourite love songs in Ermita's bars, and in Quiapo's sleazy section, the owner of a cinema celebrates his birthday. If not, it would have been open for any men in search of a live sex show.

These are the prostitution venues of Metropolitan Manila. The men come from every class, every age, every nationality. And they all come to enjoy women's bodies; in strip shows, in street prostitution, in massage parlours and saunas, as women sing with them, dink with them, serve them, smile at them, stroke them and have sex with them.

Prostitution and the trade in women's bodies is big business in Metro Manila, and on June 20 members of the Campaign Against Sex Tourism saw for themselves the extent of the industry. For the organisers, the difficulty was not that we couldn't find enough to 'expose' the women to, but rather how to select from the wide variety of places that could be visited.

These are just a few forms and foci of prostitution in Manila:

- *akyat barko*, or, literally in English, "climbing up to the boat", where women pull up alongside ocean-going ships in Manila Bay;
 - street prostitution where women can be paid thousands of pesos, or fifty;
 - bar prostitution, where at times scores of women stand on stage, in bikinis or naked, often bored and humiliated, usually drugged, and wait for men to select them, buy them a drink, and maybe take them to a motel;
 - massage parlours, where men view women through a one-way mirror for selection based on the number pinned to the woman's chest.
 - *casas*, where women are usually incarcerated, have no set working hours, and are rarely paid;
 - discos, where foreign men pick up children;
- and many, many more.

The forms change, the customers vary, but one thing is constant. It is women and children who are being bartered for and bought, and it is sex industrialists who benefit.

by Kathleen Maltzahn

Extracts from dialogue with local officials of Angeles City

June 22, 1995 — Venue: the Mayor's Parlour

Excerpt of the Angeles City official introduction: We would like to inform you that Angeles City now is among the five cleanest and greenest cities in the country. Of course Puerto Princesa is the other and Olongapo City despite the Pinatubo eruption. We would also like to inform you gladly that Angeles City rose from the ashes of Pinatubo in less than a year under the administration of the present mayor now, Edgardo Pamintuan. Fortunately he was re-elected into office last May election.

Question: You said the city is successful and progressive. Does it mean you have a very low unemployment or are you getting more revenue from businesses?

AC Official: When we say "progressive city", that is in terms of revenue. Presently we are now on the 500 million (pesos) target of revenue. The other thing is that we have a lower unemployment rate. Thirdly, we have the highest educational attainment rate in the region.

Q: What is the unemployment rate?

AC Official: Actually we don't have the exact figure. During the time when we had the bases, unemployment was considerably lower, but we were surprised that it improved even after the bases. The recorded income was double after the bases were pulled out.

Q: Where did this income come from?

AC Official: From business taxes, revenues, real estates and the industries.

Q: Correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe there is a great deal of overseas investors here. Can you tell me your guidelines and policies for overseas investment? Also, do you have a monitoring body for these investors?

AC Official: They are being monitored by the Department of Labor. The re-opening of the bases now will produce employment. We have a good plan for the bases, especially the President's Philippines 2000 concept. The Clark Air Base now is the future site of an international airport. The NAIA will serve as a secondary airport and the Clark field will house the cargo facilities outside of Metro Manila. Exactly today, the Clark Development Corporation is accepting more offers from foreign investors in terms of industries and services. The Japanese Government I believe has won the bidding for the installation and construction of the bullet train and we are now in the process of developing a plan for phase two of the expressway. And all major activities are now concentrated inside the base of course with the blessing of the national leadership.

Q: How will people benefit from this development?

AC Official: If Clark Air Base will be developed, then our problem concerning unemployment will be lessened. The economic activities of the residents of Angeles will rise because of the development inside Clark, not only Angeles City but also the neighbouring municipalities.

Q: Do you know the number of Australians visiting and living in Angeles?

AC Official: They come and go. The Australian visitors in Metro Manila usually visit the city twice or three times a week so therefore we don't have the exact figure. It is difficult to know the number of Australians living in Angeles because we don't have the data coming from the Bureau of Immigration. But we are now in the process of collating all these data because we are preparing for the coming of more businessmen in the city, foreigners likewise.

Q: Is there any ordinance regarding entertainment establishments?

AC Official: Foreigners cannot own or manage business here. Those foreigners who are engaging in business have to form a corporation which is 60 per cent owned by Filipinos. The foreigner cannot own and operate. There is no way he can do business because we will never give him the permit.

Q: How do you monitor whether or not there are foreign businessmen operating? How do you make sure that it is not happening?

AC Official: They are applying for permits but they are using Filipinos or Filipinas as a dummy to manage their business.

Q: So you allow foreign businessmen using dummies?

AC Official: No. We do not allow. It is just that when they apply for business permits, the name appearing is that of a Filipino national.

Q: So there is a loophole in your ordinance.

AC Official: Well, I guess that loophole is all over.

Q: Is there any way you can visit the establishment and see who is managing it, or do you just leave it as a loophole and say there is nothing that can be done?

AC Official: We will be assigning inspectors and investigators. But the problem would be that those dummies will not reveal the real ownership.

Q: May I ask what kind of measures do you have to control prostitution in your city?

AC Official: Actually our law enforcers are running after this but we cannot totally remove prostitution here in Angeles City. And, of course, even in Rome there is prostitution and in every part of the world. According to the Mayor, those night clubs in Balibago and other places in Angeles, will be transformed into restaurants and eateries. We are talking to those owners and explaining to them that prostitution is illegal and it is not good in any municipality.

Q: But that doesn't sound a very efficient plan though. What I am wondering is whether part of your plan for the city is to down scale the amount of prostitution and actually put up another industry and change the balance of what is going on in the town. Is that important in the plan for the city?

Susan Pineda: I am actually the current officer in charge of the Women's Centre in Angeles City. I just want to echo the plan of the Mayor about the prostitution here. The council has a plan to make an ordinance declaring the entertainment area as "unwholesome entertainment industry". Any business establishment in the area that doesn't fall under the wholesome definition of the ordinance will be subjected to the revocation of their license. That ordinance will be made soon.

Q: What is the definition of "wholesome" in this ordinance?

Susan: We would like to project the area like Shinjuku in Japan, with entertainment more of computers and technology, fun games for children and adults. Bold shows will certainly not be included so as to limit that kind of entertainment we have in the city. Before Mt Pinatubo's eruption, the number of registered entertainers was around 10,000, and immediately after the eruption it increased to 13,000, partly because of the closure of the red light district areas in Manila and Olongapo.

Q: What will happen to the women now?

Susan: In the Women's Centre we are having an intervention on the alternative aspects. We will be setting up a women's centre in the Balibago area and, in partnership with some NGOs, we will start to organise with the entertainers. Part of the office that will be put up in Balibago will be an office for the Angeles City Managers and Entertainers Organisation.

Q: How much government funding is allocated for women?

Susan: So far there is no certain percentage of the annual income budget which is allocated for women. I will be passing an ordinance this July where there will be an automatic allocation of one per cent from the annual budget for women's welfare and services. Also, I'll be passing an ordinance prohibiting the payment of bar fine in restaurants or in any so-called 'entertainment' businesses in the Balibago area. The mayor is very receptive of these ordinances.

Q: Do you think you will have the support of other officials in your Government?

Susan: I think so. The last time we had a meeting with all the newly elected councillors they said they will support me. So far I haven't heard of any objection.

Q: Do you have any ideas for alternative livelihood for these entertainers?

Susan: Actually we are on an experimental basis. We have a partnership with WEDPRO and ten women from the entertainment industry wherein we will be giving them training in food processing and others. From there we will be experimenting on how we can give a thorough alternative livelihood program for women. We already have resourced some funds from the local Mt Pinatubo Commission.

AC Official: You see we have one big problem with regards to the prevention of AIDS. Here in the city we don't have any control over the foreigners. We cannot ask the foreigners to submit themselves to AIDS test. Only the Filipinos and the Filipina entertainers are submitted to testing.

Susan: I was actually proposing an ordinance, an automatic AIDS test for foreigners who reside here for at least a year, but I think it is against a law. They cannot be subjected to local ordinances.

Q: When you want to clean up the bars and make bar fines illegal, how do you monitor that? Would that be checked by the police?

Susan Pineda: Yes, we can have on the spot checks. But of course this can still be perpetrated and negotiated under the table. We are not actually planning to close these establishments, we just want to regulate them.

AC Official: Definitely they'll be denying that they are bar fining in their establishments. It is not only our problem, it is a nationwide problem when it comes to entertainers.

Q: Only women are lobbying against these establishments. Isn't it about time men did the same thing as well?

AC Official: When you go out of the door you will see a poster regarding AIDS, regarding prostitution. One way or the other, that is making men informed about this problem. So far there is no male lobby group.

Q: Do you have the power to deport foreigners who have AIDS, or those who commit crime and violence against the women?

AC Official: No. Only the courts can do that. Although we can arrest foreigners who violate the law.

Q: Is it completely legal for a man to use a woman in prostitution?

AC Official: Well, as long as there is no complaint.

Q: So how do you understand prostitution then?

AC Official: A man or a woman engage in the selling of sex in exchange of monetary consideration.

Q: So if a man touched a woman, it is not prostitution?

AC Official: It is different from prostitution. It is only sexual harassment because there is no monetary consideration involved.

Q: So prostitution is only sexual intercourse?

AC Official: Yes!

Q: What is the penalty for prostitution? Who would be prosecuted, the man or the woman?

AC Official: That is for the court to decide.

Q: In your law enforcement activities, do you focus on the customers or the women?

AC Official: Both!

Q: Don't you want to focus on the men?

AC Official: Prostitution law only applies to women, sexual harassment applies to men.

Sign in Angeles City motel room

ATTENTION

- DO NOT SMOKE IN BED TO AVOID FIRE
- DO NOT THROW WASTES IN THE TOILET BOWL

FOR LADIES DO NOT RUB MAKE-UP ON THE WALL
USE TISSUE PAPER

CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO GODLINESS

- PLS. TURN OFF THE AIR-CON BEFORE LEAVING
- YOUR LADY ESCORT IS NOT ALLOWED TO STAY IN YOUR ROOM,
YOU TAKE HER WITH YOU WHEN YOU LEAVE THE ROOM
- KEEP YOUR VALUABLES IN THE LOBBY OF HOTEL FOR SAFE KEEPING

Australia / New Zealand / Philippines Dialogue: Confronting Sexual Exploitation

July 1–3, 1995, Philippine Episcopal Church Center, Quezon City

July 1, 1995 — During Day One of the Dialogue —

Selected Presentations from Australian & Aotearoan Participants

Keynote Address: Melba de Guzman–Marginson,
National Coordinator, Centre for Philippine Concerns–Australia

ON behalf of my sisters from Australia, let me greet you g'day! and thank you for the warm welcome. This three day dialogue is a culmination of a number of activities which we undertook as part of the exposure tour aimed at investigating Australian involvement in the sex tourism industry in the Philippines and looking at the larger issue of trafficking in Filipino women. There are 15 Australian participants in this tour, and 8 of us are of Filipino background. The big number of Filipino–Australian participants is an indication of the strength of Filipino organising work in Australia. As well, it shows the potential of this study tour as a tool for building solidarity bridges and connections between Australians and Filipino people.

Of course, this is not the first time Australians and Filipinos have worked together on issues. We remember during the dark years of Marcos rule, Australians were very active in supporting the Filipino peoples' struggle. The Aquino years saw a steady decline of Australian involvement in solidarity work in the Philippines. Marcos was gone and so were the US Bases. However, the quality of life for the Filipinos had not changed. In fact, it has gone worse. Some social issues that were viewed as peripheral and secondary before have now become so important. Perhaps they are not fundamental for some other groups and sectors working for a change in the society, but nonetheless so widespread and impacting on the large segment of Philippine population.

One such issue is prostitution and other forms of trafficking of Filipino women which is the object of our study tour. Aside from being a solidarity initiative, this study tour is an offshoot of years of campaign, advocacy and organising work of Filipino women in Australia. You must have heard issues like 'Filipina brides', serial sponsorship, domestic violence, marital murders and other violence committed against Filipino women in Australia. Our work on these issues has prompted us to look at the role of sex tourism in the phenomenal migration of Filipinos to Australia and other countries.

The Centre for Philippine Concerns–Australia initiated the formation of a Network Against Sex Tourism in 1992 in Melbourne. Although this was based in Melbourne, the network has attracted interest and support from women's groups and individuals across Australia. The network did a letter writing campaign to around 1,000 Filipino women whom we found listed in a pamphlet called *Australian Singles Bulletin*. We got quite a lot of responses mostly thanking us for having written to them and telling them what possible



Photo: CATW-P

problems they might have had. We also did some investigation into the introduction agencies. We had to use Australian men to penetrate the agencies, but all of them failed, unfortunately they [the agencies] are very "sanitised". We also did some investigation into the packaged tours and we got some Australian men fronting as members of footy teams. Again, we only got bits and pieces of information. As a result of this work, we were able to raise the issue to the Australian media and Rosemary West who is a senior reporter for *The Age* came out with a big article ("Bars and Sex: the Australian male on tour") way back in 1992. The man she interviewed for her article said the travel agent told him the following: "It is easier to go to Bangkok. If you want a wife go to Manila, if you want a woman go to Bangkok."

However, the issue was ignored by the Australian Government perhaps because the victims of sex tourism are women. When the paedophile issue came out a year later, all the branches of the Federal Government responded, and in a year's time the child prostitution legislation bill was passed. So this will show you where the priority of the Australian Federal Government is placed. The failure of this initial attempt of ours, a public exposure of the issue, did not discourage us. In December last year, CPCA met with several women's groups here in the Philippines to plan for a study tour that would involve Australian women and men. This project was the implementation of one of the major recommendations that came out in our conference in Melbourne last year on the issue of *Stopping Violence Against Filipino Women*.

As one of the Australian organisers, I endeavoured to encourage as many politicians as I could to attend the study tour. Senator Margaret Reynolds, who is the chair of the Australian Federal Government's Women's Caucus in the Senate was originally going to join the study tour but because of Parliament sitting at this time, she had to send her apology. In her letter to CPCA, she asked us to convey her best wishes to all of you and promised that she will assist in coordinating the follow up action to be taken as a result of our deliberations. In fact, what she told us before we left was that we are going to the Parliament House to talk to the Federal Parliamentarians about this issue and share with them our findings. But luckily for us, a member of the legislative council of New South Wales, Dr Meredith Burgmann, has been able to come. She will address our conference this morning. And a young lawyer, whom I met when she was still at the University of Melbourne, is also with us today. Undoubtedly one of the growing number of feminist lawyers in the bureaucracy, Sabina Lauber now works with the Australian Law Reform Commission and will give you some inspiring perspectives on women's equality before the law in Australia.

In specific terms we wish to have answers to a number of issues such as the prostitution and trafficking of Filipino women, the link between tourism and prostitution, the networks and syndicates that facilitate the massive sale of Filipino women through sex tours, the impact of sex tourism and prostitution to the local community and more specifically to women, the link between migration and prostitution and the larger issue of racism and neo-colonialism, which is undoubtedly the root cause of the oppression of Filipino women in this era of globalisation of economies.

The past twelve days have opened our eyes to the enormous task our Filipina sisters here have to undertake. Some of our questions have been answered but we need this three-day dialogue with you to clarify, reaffirm, and to contradict even the conclusions which we might have too hastily come up with in the past twelve days. This means, our task as Australian and Filipina feminists in the next three days, is truly challenging. Many people find sexual exploitation and its various forms and issues difficult to confront. Societies have been successfully constructed by men to suit their sexual pleasures such that women are made to believe they are there for men's taking. The forms of sexual exploitation that we want to focus on today are prostitution and trafficking of women. So, sisters, Filipinas, your Australian sisters are here with you today to learn from you and to share, and likewise contribute to the attainment of the goals of today's feminist dialogue.

Keynote Address: Aurora “Oyie” Javate De Dios,

Chair, Asia-Pacific Board of the International Coalition Against Trafficking in Women; Commissioner, National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women; Country Representative, Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

I understand that the group has been travelling all over the country to observe at close range the problem of sex tourism and prostitution. By now I'm sure that you not only have a better appreciation of the issues but also the difficulties and obstacles in looking for strategies and solutions. It is not an easy problem, it is not a very pleasant issue and it is certainly a problem that not one country, or many countries can solve overnight. Your first hand experience of being treated as unwanted guests in a "respectable" hotel [see article in this report entitled *Sex Tourism & Trafficking—Study Tour Ejected from Angeles Hotel*] perhaps has given you an idea of how protective and close knit the whole enterprise of sex tourism is in this country, and, for that matter, everywhere else where sex is a well regarded and protected merchandise. It should be

quite clear to all of us by now that as long as we address the fringes of the problem and spend our time having small projects helping prostituted women, without addressing the fundamental issue of the business side of the industry, the structural problems that abet as well as exacerbate the problem, women's advocates and women's work in the area of prostitution will be tolerated. As soon as you raise the fundamental issue and expose the structural links and threaten the business, you should be ready for anything that will happen. Harassment of activists is SOP [standard operating procedure] in most prostitution joints because they are a nuisance to business as usual.

I should perhaps tell you at this point about my own experience as an academic. As we in the Philippines had the Military Bases issue, when they were around, it came to me as a political issue. But not until I was in Korea a couple of years ago did I realise how life threatening this issue can be, even for someone who is just looking at it from an academic point of view. We were brought to this rather "hidden" but "open" prostitution joint which stretched for about half a kilometre in Seoul, Korea. In that long stretch of show windows, there were about two thousand well dressed, in a fantasy-like way, young Korean women. We were specifically ordered by our guide from the Maryknoll sisters not to bring any cameras. As we were moving along the stretch of prostitution joints, a colleague of mine from Nepal apparently took photographs behind my back. The flash came out. And at that point, all the pimps were alerted to what we were really intending to do and we were ordered to run out onto the street. As we ran, all the pimps and madams chased us and surrounded us. For something like twenty minutes they shouted and cursed us in a language I can't understand but I knew they were very angry, I knew they wanted to kill us, I knew they wanted to get our bags from us. At that time I was just so amazed how this kind of tour can really be fatal for some. About two years ago after I visited Antwerp, the prostitution district where Filipinas were also trafficked for prostitution, my friends, a husband and wife team of journalists went back to a place where another group of Filipinas were trafficked for prostitution, again in Antwerp. The two of them thought this is going to be a big story and therefore wanted to take some pictures at night. As soon as the bouncers took notice of them, they came in droves and beat Hubert resulting in a number of broken ribs and a hospital stay for a month.

Let me just say therefore to people who have tried to project prostitution as a glamorous job, I would like to say that this is no ordinary work. It is work that has been



Photo: CATW-P

characterised and maintained by violence. Violence to others who intrude, and violence to women who try to get out, and violence to women who stay. Let me now just introduce to you why Filipinas have taken on this problem and have taken this as a political issue. When the idea of an exchange program between the Philippines and Australian activists was first brought to us, all the organisations who later constituted the Philippine Organising Committee (POC), were very enthusiastic. Sex trafficking in the Philippines is a new phenomenon that has emerged only in the last two decades. And this phenomenon shows no sign of abating but has, in fact, increased in the last five years. Only efforts such as this and on occasions when you are physically here to demonstrate that you, as Australians, are reaching out and concerned about this problem, is this issue ever projected in the local media and in the international news. The examples of many campaigns in the past, such as the anti-Japanese sex tours in the early 70s, as well as against the prostitution in the American Military Bases, show that these initiatives are very useful. They educate the public and raise their consciousness about an issue which would otherwise remain unquestioned. Many of us here have our own stories to tell on how we got interested and how we eventually got involved in confronting the issue of sexual exploitation. For many of us in KALAYAAN, our political work on the Bases and our own search for feminist analysis and our hands on experience in researching the problems and alternative solutions for the women in Angeles and Subic, brought us face to face with the human dimension of this enormous problem. Others, like the Women's Legal Bureau, became engaged in the issue in the course of their legal defence of women's human rights and of prostituted women who are often arrested for vagrancy and for the flimsiest reasons that are often given to women who are arrested for prostitution. Service groups, like the Women's Crisis Centre, are also familiar with the traumatic effects upon women whose lives have been trapped in this business men call "entertainment". WEDPRO and BUKLOD, SINAG and KANLUNGAN, who live and work with marginalised prostituted women and migrant women, who are also victimised in prostitution, are trying to create a friendly and accepting space for women where they can think, talk and plan about other options in life. The network we call Coalition for Trafficking Against Women (CATW) of Asia-Pacific has been trying to organise in the last two years as a regional network that addresses this problem across the region in an active, systematic and sustained way. So your visit as well as this dialogue, I think is strategically important for all of us, especially in the Coalition as it concretises the kind of solidarity and the kind of bilateral cooperation amongst sisters that is needed in order to seriously confront this problem.

Many of us have come together after having undergone a process of consciousness-raising that led us to move as one in confronting sexual exploitation. Some of us who have had an opportunity to attend conferences realised early on that there exists a strong lobby for the legitimisation and glamourisation of what we always considered as a system oppressive and exploitative to women. Increasingly we heard voices, we read studies and books that value this kind of work as enriching and empowering to women. But as we came close to home, we heard voices that told of different stories. We heard of the lives and looked at the lives of prostituted women as the sole means of survival. Considering the depths of poverty in the Philippines, which by now you realise as you have visited many parts of the country, it is not hard to explain that prostitution seemingly is an accepted way to survive among many Filipinas. But poverty alone, we know does not explain away the persistence of sexual exploitation in high income countries where it emerged in the most industrialised form. Go to the big European countries, to the big cities of Australia, to New York, and you'll find that prostitution is there in another form and in a more industrialised way. Poverty does not explain why the geography of prostitution knows no bounds, no moral boundary and parameters. With the emerging popularity of child prostitution and inter-generational sex, we have come together not only to understand, study and analyse but to also act together to forge ever widening circles of unity and support with women in prostitution and other women's support groups in trying to grapple with this multi-national, syndicated global crisis

that has come to our attention as feminists. In this age of cyber-porn, which is the term used by *TIME* magazine on its cover, that is dangerously socialising the next generation to a culture of prostitution and violence against women, the variety and forms of prostitution are as varied and as creative as they are dehumanising. This is what makes sexual exploitation embodied in the system of prostitution, pornography, sex tourism, bride trading and other forms of abuse and violence as a human rights issue for all of us, men and women.

In the CATW, we have tried to discuss what binds us together and what makes us want to continue to work in this area of feminism. First of all, sexual exploitation, a practice and system that dehumanises women, when the women's bodily integrity is bought and sold or otherwise made an object of abuse and commodification, is to many of us a language that breaks the silence about many inter-connecting issues of feminism. It deals with violence against women, sexual harassment, sex tourism and rape, as well as the issue of prostitution, which to many is a non-issue – even among feminists. The groups that are here now, many of whom have joined the Coalition, persisted in confronting the issue and realised that the political infrastructure for colonial domination by the American Bases may go, but both the ideology and the infrastructure for women's sexual exploitation and commodification has remained and has become even stronger.

What we have is a global crisis that has been silenced and rendered invisible by many clients, pimps, the tourism industry, recruitment agents and the state apparatus through which an elaborate web of business interests have conspired to keep what is essentially an open secret. My friend Bhutti gave an interesting paper in Korea that talks about the linguistic manipulation of what prostitution really means. Terms such as "guest relations officer", "entertainment", "cultural dancers" have all been introduced in the last so many years to describe and to blur the reality that is prostitution. Media and technology are two areas that promise to bring us into the next century on the information super highway for many men and women. But we know in our hearts that women in this area will continue to be entrapped instead on the cyberporn highway that will immortalise the degraded image of women.

The other thing that I would like to talk to you about is not only the silencing of the open secret that is prostitution but also the silencing of women's groups and amongst women's groups. It is evident even in the most strategic and important UN documents that we have. One French researcher observed that the language of the United Nations has progressively evaded the language that was used in the forward looking strategies on women that referred to prostitution as sickly prostitution. In the latter UN documents you will find the word "forced prostitution", "child prostitution", "adult prostitution" all of which are intended, again to blur the reality, the one visible and global reality, that is prostitution. Second, I think it is important that we assert and articulate the positions of the Philippine groups. We believe that the core of the dehumanisation of women is her own alienation from her body and her bodily and human integrity by systems that reduce her to a "thing". [...tape runs out. Ed.]

As long as we make a split level analysis, child/adult, forced/voluntary, East/West, we will never get to the bottom of the core concept that dehumanised women. Forced sexual exploitation across borders makes it an international human rights concern. Unless and until we address sexual exploitation in all its forms wherever and whenever it occurs, with tenacity and determination, we will forever be deluded into thinking that the problems of the West are theirs alone to tackle and our problems and issues in the Philippines are ours alone to tackle as well. This issue, as many of our experiences in the past have shown, requires both micro and macro strategies, multi-level intervention in the area of legal advocacy, parliamentary advocacy, human rights advocacy, social and health benefits advocacy. This dialogue is a promising step towards our continuing search for the many unanswered questions that we still have. By no means do we claim that we have all the answers, but we have seen enough. You have been here two weeks and I know you have seen enough to encourage all of us to go on and fight on. I hope that this will not be the last important dialogue, I look forward to

even more activities and more visits by our sisters from Australia and correspondingly our sisters from the Philippines visiting Australia sometime in the future. I would like to close by saying that one of the things that inspired us to go on and fight on with this issue are the women in the Philippines whom we have embraced and have become part of our lives since the closing of the military bases. Many of them tell us that not one of them dreamt of becoming a prostitute. I think that none of us, not one woman who claims they have the choice, dreamt of being in her present situation. So I call upon everyone in this room, and in our respective circles in Australia and here in the Philippines, to essentially dream and vision the world without prostitution, without sexual exploitation. And as in the past we said, DARE TO STRUGGLE, DARE TO WIN!

Plenary Presentations:

Filipino Women and Other South Women in Australia

Emere Distor and Dee Hunt, Centre for Philippine Concerns—Australia, Brisbane Branch

Emere: Filipino immigration to Australia is historically summarised into three main stages. In the early years of this century, 689 Filipinos, mostly males, were registered in the Australian Census. By the end of the first quarter, Filipino communities were dispersed in areas around northern Australia particularly in the areas of Broome in Western Australia, Darwin in the Northern Territory and Thursday Island off northern Queensland. These areas were the pearl shelling centres of Australia during the period I mentioned.

The introduction of the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, however, affected the arrival and deportation of Filipinos and many migrant groups and so by 1947, the Australian Census recorded only 141 Filipinos which was less than a quarter of the numbers counted in 1901. Two decades after the war, Filipinos began to once again settle in Australia and these included some professionals and former Colombo Plan students. By 1966, the numbers of Philippine-born persons in Australia increased to 984, and by the late 1960s, for the first time, to more than 1000.

The late 1960s represented a new trend of migration of Filipinos. Apart from those who entered Australia under the skilled migration category, a considerable number of Filipino women were granted entry to take up marital relationship with an Australian resident. In 1991, the Philippine-born in Australia are estimated to be around 74,000. In terms of gender distribution there was a substantially higher proportion of females (65.2 per cent) than males (34.8 per cent).

In recent years, the Filipino community has been one of the fastest growing non-English speaking background (NESB) communities in Australia and its most distinguishing characteristic is its gender imbalance which features such a high female to male ratio. States and territories where proportions of females are greatest: in Tasmania at 82.8 per cent, Queensland at 75.8 per cent, and Western Australia at 74.3 per cent. Although it is very tempting for many women's groups to link the gender imbalance to abuses and discrimination committed against Filipino women in Australia, I would prefer not to forcibly connect the two, but rather to separately discuss the issues and problems that are very relevant to Filipino women in Australia.

Photo: CATW-P



I assume you are all aware that introduction agencies have been banned in the Philippines since 1990. This legislation, however, did not, and cannot stop Australia-based agencies offering Filipino women to Australian men like merchandise in catalogues. In southeast Queensland alone, we know of three major introduction agencies owned by Australians. When CPCA-Brisbane publicised the Study Tour in *The Sunday Mail*, a man named Mr Herbert Dickmann wrote to the editor expressing his opposition to the article and even denying the existence of violence in Filipino-Australian marriages as well as the existence of introduction agencies in Australia.

Unknown to Mr Dickmann, our Centre had already received from a very reliable source, information exposing his identity and activities. The violent reaction of Mr Dickmann to the article was not at all surprising because he happens to be the owner of an agency called Filipina Princess Introductions based in Toowoomba. His denial in his letter that no women can be sold like merchandise is a big lie, as our Centre got hold of his agency's catalogues indicating the women's vital statistics, hobby, age, education and the kind of men the women are looking for. As much as I would want to expound on Mr Dickmann's lies, I should not forget to mention to you another like-minded man named Ken Morgan who wrote and published *War of the Sexes*, a book instructing men on how to find "happiness" by meeting a Filipina, the cost of which, according to Ken Morgan, "is the same as a lousy second-hand car."



Another hot issue that Filipino women face in Australia is the issue of serial sponsorship. Serial sponsorship is a process wherein a man sponsors a series of women from over exploited countries like the Philippines. Although serial sponsorship, according to Immigration Minister Nick Bolkus, is a sensitive issue, to stop the men from having three or four marriages is, and I quote, "a social engineering at its worst."

There is no law in Australia that can stop men from marrying whoever and however many times. It is not like a softball game where after three strikes, you're out. But the main issue being raised here is the alarming link of serial sponsorship to violence and abuse. Since sponsored women are mostly from NESB countries, the main barrier when they reach out for help is language, and added to that obstacle is the unfamiliarity with their legal entitlements.

A report looking at the issues and problems in serial sponsorship has nine recommendations for the Immigration Department to adopt. Unfortunately, two important recommendations were turned down, these are: 1) Disclosure by sponsors of abuse and assault record and history of domestic violence protection orders issued against them, and 2) Payment of bond by serial sponsors of concern to support women in case they experience domestic violence within the two year waiting period. Among the reasons which the Government gave for turning them down are: the complexity of legal and privacy considerations, and the right of Australian citizens to marry the partner of their choice.

The most alarming and traumatic incidents being experienced by the Filipino community is the deaths and disappearances of Filipino women and children in Australia. In 1980, 1 Filipina was drowned and since 1987 17 women and 4 children were murdered. Most of those suspected, accused and convicted were either the women's partner, ex-partner or de-facto, all of whom are non-Filipinos. One of the most publicised and recent case of violent death occurred in Brisbane. Filipino groups in Brisbane were outraged over the conviction of a policeman who strangled his pregnant Filipino wife and dumped her body in a ditch in February 1994.

Paul Young, a Queensland policeman was only convicted of manslaughter after telling the court that he had an "out of body" experience during the time of the killing. Young insisted that he did not remember strangling his wife, Elma, although he did recall the incident as being "like watching a movie" and "looking over his shoulder" while she was being hurt and he could do nothing about it. Another revolting aspect of the trial was the obvious weakness of the proceedings to establish the history of domestic violence experienced by Elma since her marriage with Young in 1982.

Another problem that we are encountering is the portrayal of Filipino women by the Australian media. In Australia to be a Filipina is to be stereotyped as someone who is married to a man old enough to be her father. Although we are glad that there are many responsible journalists who are aware of this malicious notion, there are still some who would be glad to bend and exaggerate facts to serve their own interests in the name of freedom of expression. Last year, a film called *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* was one classic example how Filipino women's image can be maligned.

The movie *Priscilla* has formidable strengths and weaknesses. As a piece converging on the side of the homosexual, it is commendable. It shows the complexities of the most misunderstood sexual preference and attempts to pursue the question and fears of trying to break free from all the social ridicule specifically thrown at drag queens. In its technical aspect, the movie is a showcase of wild imagination expressed in outrageous and flamboyant frock and costume.

Unfortunately, as the movie tries to thresh out the human drama of its protagonists, its portrayal of another of society's casualties, the Filipino "mail order bride", resurfaced with all the trimmings of a malicious stereotyping. There are scenes where the characters of Cynthia, the foul-mouthed, gold-digging, sex-starved Filipina, was right away identified as a villain, while her Australian husband was hailed as a naive, honest, caring, mature sort — to coordinate with his romantic interlude involving the ageing drag queen played by British actor, Terence Stamp.

A day after the release of CPCA's attack on *Priscilla*, its producer, Al Clark, rejected the criticism by saying that *Priscilla* is a comedy-musical and not a documentary. CPCA was not at all pleased, nor are the Government discrimination watchdogs. Although it is true that there was never a mention that Cynthia is a Filipina, all indications of her nationality were there including the crispy curses. As if adding insult to injury, Cynthia was caricaturised by including an implied but explicit scene where she performs, using her genitals, a ping-pong ball routine to please all the hot-blooded males inside a bar.

Although I agree that *Priscilla* is a good attempt to shake off society's homophobia by portraying the human side of the trio — Mitzi, Felicia and Bernadette — its producer and writer should be reminded that Filipino women are as persistent to throw off the stereotyping which this society forcibly attaches to them.

We seem to be running out of time so may I introduce you to Dee to continue on with our report.

Dee: In addition to the situationer of Filipino women in Australia that Emere has just given to you, we have also brought with us copies of *Kasama* the newsletter of SPAN (Solidarity Philippines Australia Network). As well, we have here a video called *Ang Pilipina*. This video was only just launched in May this year. It is the production of a Filipino-Australian group called Kabalikat and an Australian group called Street Arts. Both are based in Brisbane. The video is about the lives and plights of Filipino women living in cross-cultural marriages in and around Brisbane and the Lockyer Valley. Kabalikat has sent this copy of the video as their input into this conference.

On the situationer of South women in Australia — first I must pose this question — who do we mean when we speak of South women? By this term we do not mean all those who have migrated to Australia because other than the indigenous peoples, everyone else is a migrant or descendants of migrants. In fact, the indigenous people say that the Australian racist targeting of the Vietnamese as so-called 'Boat People' is ridiculous because for them we are all Boat People.

So by South women do we mean those who have migrated from the 'Third World'? Well, even that term has lost both its economic and political relevance in international dialogue because of the shifting world economy and the only recent recognition of the existence of the indigenous 'Fourth World'. And by 'South' I do not mean only women of non-English speaking background. Even this term is not accepted by all because some communities, Filipinos for instance, are from multi-lingual backgrounds that include English. So, for the want of a better term, by 'South' I mean women in Australia who are not descended from the numerically and culturally dominant Anglo/Celts.

The situations we have described are not specific to the Filipino community in Australia. We have found these conditions are suffered, in varying degrees, by many of the South communities.

In fact, since the dismantling of the USSR and the war in eastern Europe, some Australian introduction agencies are now targeting women from Russia and Yugoslavia. Thai women too have been victims of serial sponsorship. The Latino, or Spanish-speaking communities, have also begun to monitor the incidence of spousal homicide in their communities. Women from Fiji and Samoa have told us that they are also addressing the prevalence of domestic violence.

The issues of concern we have identified as being commonly experienced by women of non-Anglo-Celtic background in Australia include:

- non-recognition of overseas qualifications,
- insufficient funding of translation services,
- unequal access to legal services,
- isolation and lack of services in rural areas,
- education, cultural, and age differences between partners in cross-cultural marriage,
- fear of deportation,
- suppression of the use of language other than English in the home,
- Australian prejudice about accent, and
- lack of continuity in ethnic record keeping across the different states of Australia.

Photo: CATW-P



I am happy to tell you that South women in Australia are vigorously pursuing their agendas to level the Australian playing field and Filipino women will not be diverted from taking their place in this struggle abroad just as we have never shied away from our struggle at home. Thank you for listening to us and I bring you the greetings of all those women who were not able to find the money or the time to be here. They want you to know that their spirits are here and they are awaiting our reports when we return to Australia.

Pertinent Australian Laws and Other International Instruments on Inter-Cultural Marriages, Migration, and Prostitution

Sabina Lauber, Australian Law Reform Commission

It is important that we have come together for a study tour and conference such as this one. Australia and the Philippines have had a close affinity for some time. Our geographical proximity has led to significant economic ties. Political and cultural exchanges between our countries have led to a greater understanding of our varying cultures, and influenced the development of our own cultures. The Philippines is a popular tourist destination for Australians. Most significant though has been the exchange in people between our nations. A large number of Filipino people now call Australia home, while many Australians have re-settled to the Philippines.

These exchanges have made a valuable contribution to cultural awareness and understanding between Asia-Pacific nations. And we hope that such valued exchanges continue between our nations. However, some of these exchanges have an ugly side which have come about due to the inequitable international social order; that is, the contrast in economic and social conditions in the Philippines and Australia. The exchanges I refer to here are those that have occurred due to an entire industry based on the trafficking of women. This industry is based on the supply of economically disadvantaged women from the Philippines, and the demand of sexual services and domestic labour by Australian men. As a result, the following exchanges occur between our countries:

- Australian businessmen setting up bars and organising sex tours in the Philippines for Australian men,
- Mail order brides,
- sponsored women brought to Australia for the sole purpose of obtaining free sexual services and domestic helpers.

This industry has led to a very high number of Filipino women migrating to Australia. Genders of overseas born spouses tend to be evenly divided except that Australians sponsor five times more women from the Philippines than men.¹ Many come as sponsored wives and fiancées to Australian men. Some of these marriages have been very successful. However, those that are unsuccessful have left some disturbing legacies:

- Since 1980 there have been 27 recorded deaths, disappearances and suicides of Filipino women and children in Australia. I say recorded because these are instances that we have



Photo: CATW-P

¹ Sue Zelinka, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Keynote address at Conference on Stopping Violence against Filipino Women, Melbourne 6-7 October 1994.

been told of. No comprehensive figures for death rates by ethnicity groups are collected in Australia. Based on the figures we do have, Filipino women are 5.6 times more likely to be the victim of spousal homicide than women in the general Australian population.²

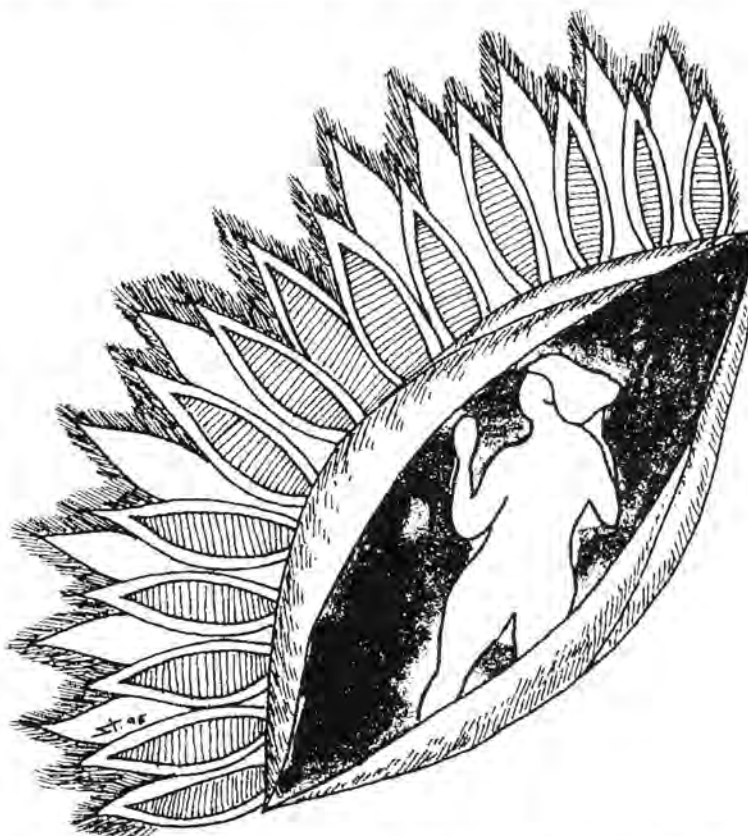
- A high rate incidence of domestic violence, which refers to violence against women by a male partner in a relationship, is known to occur in some Australian–Filipino marriages. Exact figures are again, not known.
- Images of Filipino women that are promoted in Australia are often negative and contribute to an environment that discourages these women from asserting their legal and human rights.
- Newly sponsored Filipinas often lack access to and knowledge of legal and community services in Australia. Where they do use such services, concern has been raised about sexism and racism prevalent in law enforcement agencies.
- Several cases of serial sponsorship have come to light, where an Australian man sponsors a series of spouses or fiancées to Australia, and where the relationships are often characterised by violence.

These are not a series of isolated and circumstantial incidences, but a systematic social phenomenon based on the structural imbalance of power between men and women. This imbalance reduces some women to economic and emotional dependency.

I am here to speak to you as an Australian lawyer about international and Australian laws affecting Filipino women in these situations. As you are aware, I work with the Australian Law Reform Commission, a federal law reform organisation which investigates issues directed by the Australian Government requiring reform. In 1994 the Commission investigated the position of women before the law in Australia in its Report on Equality.³ This made a detailed examination of the position of migrant women and the problems they encounter, particularly problems encountered by Filipino women who come to Australia. Throughout this talk I will be referring to the findings of the Commission and evidence gathered during this investigation.

For those of you not familiar with the operation of the Australian legal system, the Commission is an independent statutory authority. It and similar bodies that investigate issues of law reform, generally produce comprehensive reports and recommendations which are given to the Attorney General and Parliament. Parliament then decides whether or not these recommendations should become law.

I will speak to you first about international laws governing trafficking and other violence against women. I will then speak to you about Australian laws governing specific areas that affect Filipino women:



² Id.

³ ALRC Report no 69 Part I Equality Before the Law: Justice for Women (ALRC 69(1)), Part II Equality Before the Law: Women's Equality (ALRC 69(2)) ALRC Sydney 1994.

- Domestic Violence;
- Homicide;
- Serial Sponsorship; and briefly
- Sex Tourism and trafficking generally

In each of these areas I will discuss current laws, problems with these laws, recent reforms and what still needs to be done.

International Laws that protect women:

There are several international conventions and other instruments that protect women. Australia and the Philippines have signed and ratified the major instruments that do so, including the ones that I will discuss today. As parties to these instruments they are bound to comply with the obligations in them, which may include making these obligations into domestic law. Unfortunately international law is difficult to enforce and although some action may already have been taken, more is required.

One of the most important of these instruments is the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. Article 6 imposes obligations on States to take measures to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of the prostitution of women. The CEDAW monitoring committee stated that "in addition to established forms of trafficking, there are new forms of sexual exploitation such as sex tourism, the recruitment of domestic labour from developing countries to work in developed countries and organised marriages between women from developing countries and foreign nationals."⁴ They also noted that these practices put women at special risk of violence and abuse. States who are parties to this convention are required to regularly report to the monitoring committee on their progress in meeting their obligations. These reports are a valuable information source for women's pressure groups.

The *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, although not binding, represents a clear expression of the intention of States to act against all types of violence against women. That document defines violence to include trafficking in women and forced prostitution, as well as physical and psychological violence.⁵ This Declaration calls on States to use due diligence to investigate and punish acts of violence against women.⁶

Article 8 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* prohibits slavery, servitude and forced labour. This can be interpreted to include trafficking and prostitution forced by social and economic circumstances. Because Australia and the Philippines have accepted the *First Optional Protocol* under this Covenant, individuals in those countries may bring complaints of violation of their rights to the International Human Rights Committee. Various Australians have already taken complaints to Geneva under the First Optional Protocol, and forced the Australian Government to make changes to domestic laws to uphold particular human rights.⁷

The *Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination* imposes an obligation on signatory States to guarantee the right of all individuals, regardless of race, colour, national or ethnic origin to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of the right to security of the person and protection by the State against violence and bodily harm. This Convention has been made law in Australia in the Race Discrimination Act and is overseen by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

These instruments clearly indicate that Australia and the Philippines have an obligation under international law to protect Filipino women from trafficking, forced prostitution and

⁴ CEDAW monitoring Committee, General recommendation no 19, 1992.

⁵ Article 2.

⁶ Article 4.

⁷ For example, see *Toonen v Australia* (1994) 1 PLPR 50 (the Tasmanian gay rights case).

other forms of violence, physical or psychological, within their own nations. I will now move to discuss how Australia has fulfilled these obligations in its domestic laws and practices.

Australian Laws affecting Filipino Women:

Australia has a relatively comprehensive set of laws dealing with violence against women. However, it is evident that they fail to prevent some of the difficulties and tragedies faced by many Filipino women who come to Australia. The reasons for this failure vary — in some areas it is not the law but the way it is enforced, or lack of information about its existence. In other areas, the law itself is inadequate.

a) Domestic Violence Laws

Violence is not confined to physical violence but includes emotional, social and economic abuse. For example, in terms of domestic violence, a man may limit the woman's freedom of movement, constrain her contact with friends and family, limit her access to money and subject her to verbal criticism. This extended definition is consistent with definitions of violence in the international instruments discussed above.

Domestic violence is a problem throughout the Australian community. However, it is a particular problem for migrant women who tend to be confronted with barriers of language, lack of knowledge of the legal system, unfamiliarity with Australian culture and often lack of a community to support them through the economic and social hardship of separation.⁸ Some of the submissions made to the Commission during its investigation into the equality of women demonstrate the range of violence being suffered by some Filipino women in Australia:

I was still shy, easily frightened and a bit naive when I arrived here. For example, when I ask him to teach me how to use the washing machine, he would get angry with me. He would shout at me, 'You're stupid, you don't know anything what to do.' If only it was just words; he would complement this with violence. He struck me often on the head with his heavy hands ... If I ask him to repeat or explain to me some words, he would scream and slap me on the neck again. He also repeatedly called me a liar...

*When it came to lovemaking, he would force me to perform obscene acts he saw on video. He treated me like a plaything or an animal... If I didn't agree, he would hit me ... I lived those days with the fear that he might kill me. I tried everything to placate him. The one thing constant was fear.*⁹



⁸ ALRC 69(1), 10.18.

⁹ Illawarra Legal Centre Submission 284.

The following account of a Filipina's life with her Australian husband is taken from a recent magazine article on serial sponsorship:

For two days and two nights Tess lay on the bathroom floor, wrapped only in towels, still bleeding heavily. From time to time she screamed and slept, thinking of the tiny miscarried foetus on the tiles. Occasionally, when her husband needed to use the bathroom, he unlocked the door and dragged her to the laundry, where he locked the door again.... She was forbidden to raise the blinds in the house, forbidden to go outside, forbidden to use the telephone, forbidden to write to her family, forbidden to wear sweaters or anything long — only shorts and T-shirts. When it was time to eat, she was forbidden to sit at the table. Her husband made her sit on the floor in the corner, where she ate biscuits and coffee three times a day. This was all the food she was allowed. The food she cooked for her husband was for him only.... He burnt her crucifix, her college diploma. He used to tie her to the bed if she refused to have sex with him.¹⁰

Various laws protect women from violence that constitutes physical abuse, threats of physical abuse to the woman or a family member, property damage or threats of property damage. Perpetrators can be charged under the criminal law, or the victim can obtain a Court order to prevent the perpetrator from coming within a certain proximity of the woman. However, these sanctions are often insufficient. Many Filipino women brought to Australia live in isolated districts and have little contact with people other than their sponsor. They lack knowledge of the legal and social system in Australia. Further, women on temporary residence visas believe they will be sent back to the Philippines unless they marry their sponsor, so they remain in violent relationships for fear of being sent home. Where women have taken out such Court orders, the police and the courts have been criticised for not dealing with the situation in an appropriate and sensitive manner, or not enforcing such orders properly.¹¹

Some provisions have been made to protect women in such situations. A two year period of temporary residence is available for people who entered Australia:

- on a temporary basis and then changed their status on the basis of marriage or a de facto relationship;
- or a sponsored fiancée who later married and lodged an application to stay permanently. In these situations, if the partner is subjected to violence during the two year period, they may still obtain permanent residency even though the relationship has broken down.

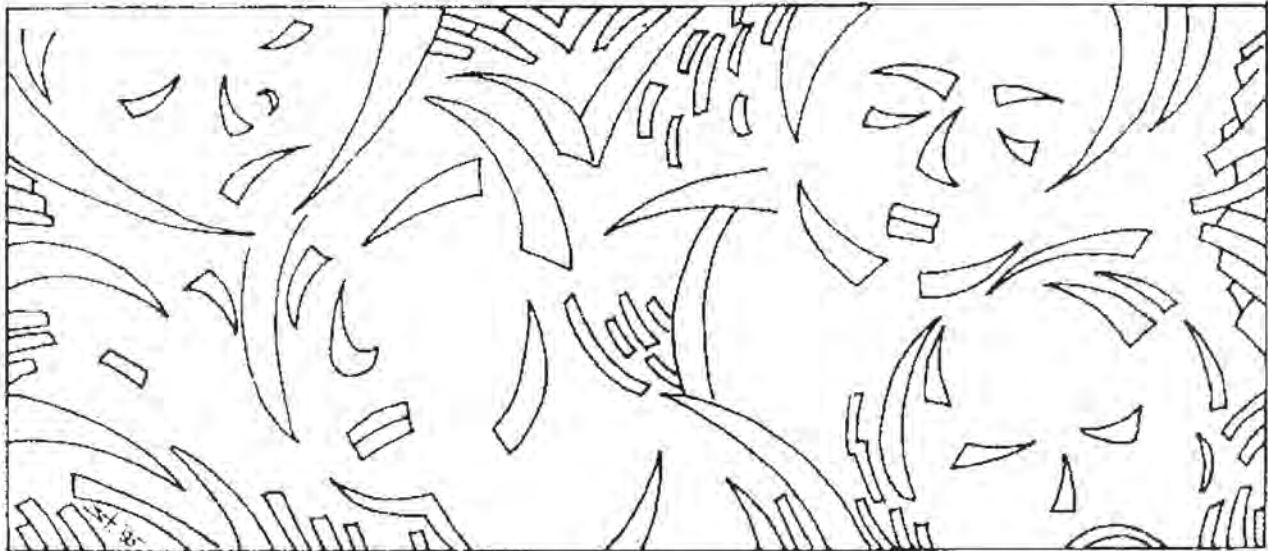
This special application is unfortunately not available to women in situations of domestic violence before they have lodged an application for residency. To apply for residency, the relationship must be 'genuine and continuing'. When domestic violence has occurred, the relationship will not be considered to be so. In response, the Commission recommended that domestic violence provisions be extended to women in such situations.¹² The Government has not yet responded to this recommendation.

Until recently, a Court order was needed to show that domestic violence had occurred during the two years of temporary residence. The Commission's investigations found that getting these orders was problematic. There was evidence of racism and sexism in the Courts and amongst the police and lawyers who were unaware of the special needs of migrant women. The Commission recommended that applications for permanent residency by temporary entrants who are subjected to domestic violence should be able to rely on evidence other than Court orders to prove the violence had occurred. This recommendation was

¹⁰ Nikki Barrowclough 'The shameful story of Australia's serial husbands' *Good Weekend* May 6 1995.

¹¹ See ALRC Interim Report no 67 *Equality Before the Law: Women's Access to the Legal System* (ALRC 67) ALRC Sydney 1994, 2.9-2.15, 2.29-2.31.

¹² ALRC 69(1) Recommendation 10.4.



accepted and implemented to allow the DIEA to take evidence from people such as welfare workers, medical practitioners, managers of women's refuges. What is still needed however, is for the definition of 'domestic violence' for the purpose of these applications to be extended to include a situation where a woman flees the relationship because of fears for her children.¹³

Many other things need to be done. We must continue to tell society that domestic violence is a crime, and punishments must reflect this. Women must be informed on how to access the legal system and the protection it offers. Special effort must be made with women in rural areas who tend to be extremely isolated and doubly vulnerable. Important also is training for those in law enforcement and community service agencies about the special needs of immigrant women in domestic violence situations.

The Australian Government recently issued what it called its 'Justice Statement'¹⁴. This outlined various reforms to the legal system that the Government intends to introduce in the near future. Part of the Justice Statement includes a National Women's Justice Strategy which includes:

- establishing a national network of women's legal centres,
- the development of legal information resources on issues relevant to women, including violence against women, to be available in many languages,
- providing family support services to address violence in family relationships
- the education of judges and lawyers on gender awareness, and
- special strategies for women of non-English speaking backgrounds.

Hopefully these initiatives will improve the situation currently facing many Filipino women in Australia.

b) Homicide

The unfortunate, but inevitable result for some women in violent relationships with Australian men, is death. As I mentioned earlier, Filipino women in Australia are 5.6 times more likely to be the victim of spousal homicide than women in the general Australian population. Not included in this figure is the high number of 'suicides', 'disappearances' and murders for which no-one has been convicted. This raises considerable concern about the

¹³ ALRC 69(1) Recommendation 10.3.

¹⁴ Attorney-General's Department (Cth) *The Justice Statement* Canberra May 1995.

administration of our criminal justice processes. Complaints have been made about the way that some of the investigations into the murder of Filipino women have been conducted. These include:

- a failure to provide interpreters for Filipino women, who may have known the victim, at trials or coronial inquests;
- a failure to appreciate the sensitivity that Filipino women giving evidence may have to authority and that this sensitivity may intimidate them into remaining silent; and
- overt racism towards the victim and other Filipino women by members of the law enforcement agencies.

Members of the Centre for Philippine Concerns Australia have been particularly concerned about Australian men found innocent of the murder of their Filipino spouse or fiancée, who very quickly returned to the Philippines to find another spouse or fiancée.

The murders, deaths and disappearances of Filipino women are currently being investigated by the Australian Institute of Criminology with the support of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. We hope to have their findings and recommendations early next year.

c) Serial Sponsorship

There are a number of definitions of 'serial sponsorship'. The term is defined in the *Iredale Report* as the situation in which a sponsor repeatedly sponsors either spouses or fiancés and those relationships are characterised by violence.¹⁵ Other commentators prefer a broader definition of repeat sponsorship that recognises that any relationship that breaks down may be considered abusive.¹⁶

The Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs does not keep statistics on the number of sponsorships by individuals, so it is difficult to get an accurate picture of the extent of this practice. However, reports and submissions to the Commission suggest that repeat sponsorship is not uncommon. The *Iredale Report* (which used the narrow definition of serial sponsorship) identified 110 repeat sponsors, of whom 53 had sponsored on two occasions and 57 had sponsored at least three partners. The maximum number of women sponsored by any one person in that study was seven. Eighty of those repeat sponsors were known to have subjected their partners to violence.¹⁷

Significantly different checks are conducted on the sponsor and the applicant for immigration. The applicant spouse or fiancée is subject to extensive checks on her health, background and character to ensure she is not a public health risk or security risk. However, the sponsor is subject to limited checks. He merely has to show that he is legally free to marry, has the capacity to support a spouse or fiancée and that the relationship is genuine.

A woman applicant for immigration must be able to make a free and informed choice about entering into a marriage or engagement. She needs to be provided with information about the man she intends to marry and who is to sponsor her to Australia. In particular she should have information about whether he has sponsored in previous relationships and whether there is a history of violence in those or other relationships that he has conducted. The provision of this information also accords with Australia's international obligations to stop abuse and exploitation of women.

This information is currently not available to applicants because of privacy considerations. The right to privacy is a recognised human right¹⁸ and is given protection

¹⁵ R Iredale, J Innes & S Castles *Serial Sponsorship: Immigration policy and human rights* Centre for Multicultural Studies, University of Wollongong 1992, p 5.

¹⁶ E Evatt 'Serial Sponsorship and abuse of Filipino women in Australia' in Ethnic Affairs Commission NSW *Serial Sponsorship: Perspective for Policy Options* EAC Sydney 1992, 9.

¹⁷ *Iredale Report*, 29.

¹⁸ ICCPR art 17.

under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth). In its report, the Commission considered that in regard to serial sponsorship, there are good grounds for holding that the woman's right to safety and personal integrity should outweigh the man's right to privacy about his history of violence. Currently this balance is weighed in favour of the abuser.

In response to this, the Commission made various recommendations:

- that data on previous sponsorships by an individual be collected and available to all posts from a centralised database in recognition that sponsors may seek other partners from different countries. At present there is no cross-checking.¹⁹
- that information be collected about any record of violence of a sponsor who has previously sponsored another spouse or fiancé. This would include information on any orders or convictions for offences of personal violence.²⁰
- where a prospective sponsor's record shows past violence or previous sponsorships, that this information be given to the applicant in an individual interview.²¹

Late last year the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs introduced new measures to make it harder for serial sponsors to operate. Computer records will now be kept of the names of sponsors who have sponsored before. Databases have been set up in Manila, Bangkok, Suva and Damascus, with plans to link them up in the future. Also, a new section on sponsorship application forms, asks the sponsor to provide information on previous sponsorships and why the relationships failed. This form is then given to the applicant spouse or fiancée to read, which is fine if she can read English. While this is heading in the right direction, it does not go far enough. There are no mechanisms to check whether the information given is true or not — it is too easy to lie. In one documented case, a man who had previously sponsored two women from the Philippines changed his name by deed poll to evade questions when looking for his next Filipina.²²

I note that particular effort has been made by the DIEA and the Philippines government to provide counselling and information for all persons intending to emigrate as spouses or fiancées to Australia. For example, the new video produced by the DIEA to show prospective spouses and fiancées deals with the issues of violence against women quite well. However, counselling needs to be provided individually to applicants rather than in groups and needs to continue after migration, which is usually the time that information is most required.²³

d) Sex Tourism and Trafficking

Finally I'd like to say a few words about sex tourism and trafficking.

Little has been done to regulate sex tourism. The feminisation of poverty has made it a global problem, where the demand from members of wealthy countries feeds on the poverty of some women in countries like the Philippines to expand the area of sex tourism and trafficking. We cannot outlaw sex tourism, but we can try to ensure that the women involved are empowered with information and assistance wherever and whenever possible.

Interestingly, many western countries have started to introduce laws to enable them to prosecute offenders from their own countries who go overseas to commit crimes against children. In Australia, the Child Sex Tourism legislation makes it an offence for Australians to take part in child sex, or to profit from its organisation. So far there have been no prosecutions under this law.

It is important for Australia to be aware of the exploitation of women who may be trafficked into Australia. We must do more to monitor this situation and to identify and prosecute

¹⁹ ALRC 69(1) Recommendation 10.5.

²⁰ ALRC 69(1) Recommendation 10.6.

²¹ ALRC 69(1) Recommendation 10.7.

²² Barrowclough *ibid* 51

²³ ALRC 69(1) Recommendation 10.9.

the organisers of such rackets. Most of my discussion today has been about protecting the victims. Actively pursuing the masterminds of these human rights abuses is just as important.

Conclusion:

The right to marry and found a family is an important human right recognised in international law.²⁴ However, equally important is a woman's right to be free from violence and exploitation. This right is well enshrined in international law and attempts are being made to ensure that it is enforced under Australian law. As I have pointed out, more can be done. However, at the end of the day, it is education and access to information, such as through conferences like this one, that are vital to ensuring that this right is enforced. The empowerment of women through information and the ability to make informed choices is one of the keys to dealing with this problem. There is only so much that Australia can do on its own. Australia needs the co-operation and assistance of the Philippines Government and its people to stop the exploitation of Filipino women through sex tourism and trafficking.

To ultimately solve this problem, it is necessary to consider the underlying causes of these problems, which go back to the poverty and level of economic development in the Philippines, and the impact of restructuring on its economy and individuals. A comprehensive, long-term solution will only be found when Filipinas can find employment and a decent living standard in their own country. By being here today we are contributing to the understanding of these complexities and hopefully will take them back to our Governments and encourage them to facilitate and support the necessary changes.

OPEN FORUM



Cecilia: I just want to say that even if Australia is in the First World, it is in the South. I think what is interesting for us in your presentation, particularly Sabina's with all the legal aspects how North or South, Third World or First, women's condition is basically the same. The violence, the battering happens everywhere. That is why meetings like this are good to see how universal our problems are. I have two questions regarding the law and regarding the issues of prostitution and trafficking. Why is it relatively easy to get legislation and to get government action on children's issues? Australia, Germany and Belgium are the three countries I know that have legislation on trafficking in children, paedophilia. It seems to always move people when it is children, but when it is adult, there isn't the same concern. And when is a woman adult? In some countries a sixteen year old is considered an adult, in some countries she is considered as a child. Why do you think it is that we cannot get the same level of concern, action and official response when we are talking of women? Why is it always assumed that the underlying problem in the issues we are talking about, is poverty? Is it because Filipino women are poor and vulnerable? The men going on sex tours are not poor, the ones paying for brides are not poor, the ones setting up businesses, bars and brothels are not poor. I don't see that it is a question of poverty.

²⁴ ICCPR art 23(2); UDHR art 16(1).

Sabina: On why legislation is so easily passed regarding the protection of children and not the protection of women, I think it basically comes down to sexism, really. I think that people assume that children aren't capable of making informed decisions and therefore need to be looked after and need to have very rigid structures to control them and to control other people, and whether this is true or not, is another debate itself. Whereas people tend to ignore the fact that women are often subjected to structural oppression and structural imbalance and need legal and structural assistance to get out of that. Really it is up to us to make the people with the power, the legislators, aware of that issue as well.



In regard to the second question, I guess that is something that I would like to see more information about and I'm hoping to get more feedback from you who have lived here and perhaps know a bit more about that. I guess I'm under the impression that women in a poverty situation, whether they are from the First World, the Second World, Third World, North or South, are often in the situation of power imbalance to people who are not in a situation of poverty. Often it tends to be the men who are not in the situation of poverty, and women who are in the situation of poverty. Perhaps that is a key to why issues like forced prostitution are linked with poverty. I don't think that it is a geographic thing, though.

Oyie: I think that I touched a little bit on why it is very dangerous for us to be dichotomising issues into a split level analysis, especially when it comes to the analysis of prostitution, when we tolerate some forms of prostitution and say in some areas that it is okay. The thing that it is so unacceptable and so revolting about child prostitution is that, it doesn't discriminate any more, girl/child, boy/child, or three years old or up to about nine years old. It seems that this phenomenon is fast spreading to a point where people are asking: "Are we so blasé as to allow this to happen to our children, the next generation?" I think the main question that is *not* being asked is: Why has prostitution become so acceptable at all in the first place? Why is it that there are several levels of tolerance? And why are there levels of acceptability, whether it is forced or voluntary? It is, I think, that kind of split-level analysis and concepts that blur the underlying core issue of dehumanisation of people, of persons, of women and children and men. So we do not see where the satiation point will stop because there is none, because dehumanisation will just go on and on even with the emergence of cyberporn which is now really challenging our very idea of progress.

On the second question of poverty, I think that there is no denying that poverty is the one issue that drives women to do all sorts of things, not the least going to prostitution. And in the Philippines it is the bottom line, it is the catch basin for women who failed to get decent employment, who are relegated to low paying, low skilled jobs. And it is the case in many other developing countries. But it does not alone explain the complexity and the many layers of the reality that we see today in sex tourism, in women going to entertainment, in women going to prostitution. I suggest that we look as well at the ideological, attitudinal and patriarchal systems that have invaded our consciousness, that have invaded our airwaves and our television, and the kind of models that we see in media that have glamourised, that have softened, that have sugar coated what is essentially prostitution. So this is what I meant, the level of acceptability makes us want to look only at the worst possible scenario and look at the simple conclusion that this is because of poverty, and that when poverty is done away with, then it will stop. That was our thinking, as well, when we said that when communism and socialism finally wins, then all this class division will stop, and it has not. It has even caused and generated a new era of industrialised prostitution, even in so called communist and socialist countries. We've seen that now in Eastern Europe and nothing has changed in as

far as women's prostitution is concerned. Structures and regimes will change but one thing that will remain the same, and will even worsen, is the way women have been treated, looked upon and dehumanised in the system of prostitution.

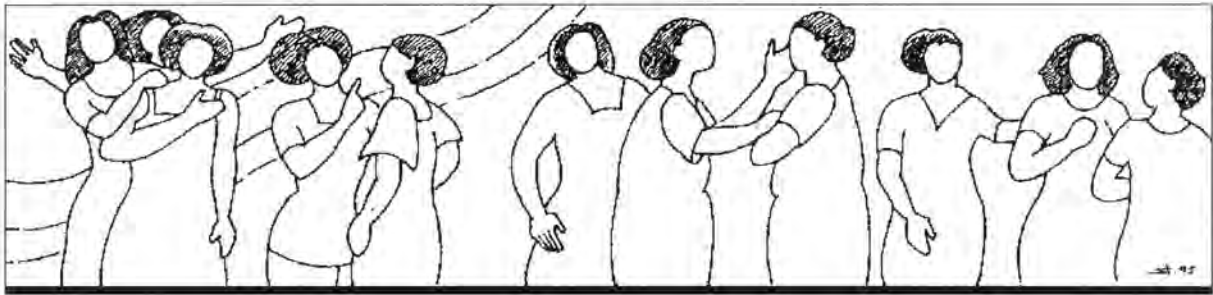
Melba: Our exposures have really opened our eyes to the reality that poverty is not the only answer as to why women go into prostitution. Most of the prostituted women whom we have interviewed, talked about their past experiences, why they got into prostitution, and 80 to 90 per cent of them have had experiences of rape, incest, sexual assault, domestic violence, and what we call inter-generational prostitution because their mothers were in prostitution before and so they just inherited the profession. Then on top of that is the lack of education. We were opened to the reality that the self-worth of these women was basically nil. "I'm nothing", that is what they say. This just reaffirms what Oyie was saying, that we have to now look at the complexities of the Filipino woman's experience, the attitude of the society and over all the patriarchal system. As activists in the 70s it was always the formula for us, why are the people this and that? — because of poverty! It is not only that, and we will be bringing this perspective to Australia when we get back.

Aida: I just want to go back a little bit to this child/woman prostitution issue. In the Philippines I have noticed that when we talk of child prostitution there is an assumption these are the kids you see in the streets. They might be doing full time, seasonal, part-time prostitution on the side, with or without the knowledge of the parent. In Angeles City, the growing number of women prostitutes are children, they are not adults as in 20s, 30s. I think the difficulty is when we speak of prostitution in the bars, we are speaking of adult women, but they are not. They look older because of the make-up. For us who work in the field this thing about "they are children and vulnerable and those are adult and have more sense", is just not true. When they are more at ease with you, they would really tell you the truth about their age and you'll find that a lot of them are barely in their teens. Because this is a debate coming from our Western sisters unfortunately. They divide — if they're adults, it is okay, if they're children they're not — it just isn't true. Both are subjected to the same kind of exploitation and the same oppressive mechanism, so I really don't know if the dialogue can address it. We who work with the women find this classification absurd. And to say that only child prostitutes are those used by paedophiles, is also absurd.

Angela: Do you think it is a question of power, as to how much money we earn or what we do?



Photo: CATW-P



Oyie: Overwhelmingly, everywhere and every way, men profit by women's bodies. And that is the basic thing that we should remember. The power imbalance between a child and adult is so obvious and that is why we are so revolted by it. But when a woman, who is presumably mature enough to make decisions for herself, deals with a man then we say they are even and therefore we should not interfere. But what we are missing here is the way in which women have been marginalised, have been left with no option at all, and how women think of themselves as being without any worth or self esteem when they experience sexual abuse. Sexual abuse and violence are very rampant across classes and across cultures and countries. Secondly because of the power relationship in terms of employment, in terms of their political status and positioning, and in terms, as well, of how advanced countries deal with under-developed economies like the Philippines. For all those reasons it is a profoundly male dominated, male managed industry that is victimising and dehumanising women. So I think the power structure we are talking about is a power game where men try to control women. We have to refine that analysis in particular situations and specific context like prostitution because you will get lost if the people say: it is my choice, I consented to it. Saying that you consent to something that is obviously an abusive relationship where you are not on an even keel with whoever you are dealing with, misses the entire socio-economic context and the process within which that person has arrived at the point where she herself consents to her abuse. I think we should all look at the social-psychological factors as well.

Debbie: Oyie, you said something about the bases — that when the bases went, it did not eliminate prostitution, in fact it increased. Another thing that you said was that prostitution was regarded as a non-issue and probably is still regarded as a non-issue amongst Filipinas.

Oyie: I did mention prostitution as a non-issue because it is a non-issue to many political groups, to many human rights groups especially if we look at the human rights dimension of this problem. As I mentioned, it is the biggest open secret which no one wants to acknowledge as a human rights problem because there is a big, big well-oiled lobby to make it invisible and acceptable. It is an issue for the women's groups here in the Philippines, but I think that for many, it is not one of their priorities. Given the fact that groups here are very small and without funding, I can understand this limitation. But as you can see, we have decided among a small circle of women's organisations to tackle this in a very sustained way because at the core of our feminist struggle is prostitution. It is marginalisation, it is a paid work, it is reproductive work, it is violence against women, and as long as we do not touch the institution of prostitution, we are not touching the core of our feminist struggle. Because that is where men's power is well entrenched, well protected and well disguised. So I think we cannot interrogate everything else, critique everything else and yet leave out prostitution which is the most obvious institution of female subordination. As far as the Government's complicity in the prostitution of women is concerned, I think that all states and governments with no exception, and this includes the Philippines as well, have split level policies on prostitution. On the one hand there is the moralistic prohibitionist policy of not wanting prostitution to be present — but on the other hand, tolerating it. Last year we conducted a policy study of prostitution in the Philippines and one of the things we did was to send survey questions to all the municipalities and cities in the Philippines, about 70 of them. Some of them replied,

some of them did not, but we got a good 30 per cent reply. And believe you me, all the cities and all the localities and the municipalities have all got ordinances on health check-ups and regulations on the bars — which to me is rather an explicit admission that there is prostitution on the local level. As far as labor export policy is concerned, and this pertains to the entertainers, in my research the trend towards the increase of entertainers from 5,000 in the early 80s to around 60,000 by 1995, which I think is an under estimation—there may be an additional 40,000 more undocumented and illegal workers, which is a phenomenon that is unique to Japan. Again I would like to call your attention to the big industry that has made it possible for this industry to be officially tolerated. I went to Shinjuku and went to the bars. In Japan, by law, entertainers are supposed to earn as much as US\$1,000—1,500 but ordinarily they would earn something like US\$700 to around 100. These bar owners and syndicates led by the Yakuza have consolidated their power in Japan and in the Philippines where they have front officers and front managers. But there is no way you can campaign or lobby against it with any degree of success because it will never get to first base in Congress because many congressmen and law makers, in fact, have interests in these trades. Not to mention small traders and Filipino partners who have benefited from this business. So, it is a well-oiled structural industry. The other complication is, even if we ask for a ban today, the women in the entertainment industry would be against it. During the Maricris Sioson case, when the NGOs and the Government were in dialogue, the women protested and they had this banner where they said, “NO TO BAN, YES TO JAPAN!” So we are talking here of a very complicated fact and complicated set of realities. One, is that you have an industry that has profited immensely from comparatively low-paid Filipina entertainers because they are paid a third of what a Japanese prostitute would be paid. Second, again this is attitudinal—the patriarchal tyranny of the family where the women are pushed to go in order to earn for the family, and where the women find themselves justifying the situation, rationalising their prostitution because it is for the family. We have a web of cultural and familial attitudes that are perhaps unique to Filipinas. But, of course, if there are apparatus that facilitates this trade that happens on such a massive scale, we can make the government and the state accountable for the fact that it does facilitate, it does become the avenue and the machinery for this exchange and, in fact, it can stop it.

Lynne: I am an Australian working here with Isis International and with the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women. To Meredith I would first like to say that to me it is remarkable to have a parliamentarian take some time to come here on this issue. It is very important to us that you have done this. On the legal line, has any Australian been prosecuted in Australia for trafficking? Could you say a little bit about the international conventions Australia has signed signifying we are against trafficking, but nothing has happened, and why is that?

Sabina: Some of the international conventions have tried to define trafficking in terms of prostitution, violence against women and those sorts of things. You can argue that people have been prosecuted for trafficking under those very broad definitions. Trafficking per se, I guess in terms of shipping women around as ‘mail order brides’, and things like that, is not illegal, so prosecutions haven’t happened there. I think it depends on how you define trafficking and other competing rights like the right to marry, the right to privacy and things like that — and balancing rights. So really it is up to everyone here to make noise and say, “Hang on, this is trafficking and you are obliged to prosecute under international law, and why aren’t you doing it?” It hasn’t happened but it should happen.

Chat: In addition to what Sabina said, the action of the Government is to deport the women. If there is any conviction, it is actually in the area of illegal employment of women because they’re not legal and they don’t have work permits. That is how it is looked at in Australia.

Jorgette: When we did the tour in the districts of Manila and the provincial areas, there are two things that are of great concern. We found out that there are many bars and other establishments owned by Australians who are catering to Australian consumers and part of

the business is the services of the women. So I came to the conclusion that here are women who are sold as goods and there are different ways and levels of doing it. There is bar fine where they can have the women for a longer period. But what makes it difficult is that no one can do anything about that in terms of the law, and in terms of monitoring and legalising that kind of business operation in the country.

Sabina: From the legal point of view, Australians can legally open businesses in the Philippines and make investments in the Philippines. The way that they use that money is a matter for the Filipino Government. I know that the Australian Government regulates foreign investments in Australia. If Australians are going overseas and violating the human rights of nationals of other states, the Australian Government has an international obligation to stop that happening and Australia has signed a treaty to that effect. So, again it is a matter of lobbying the Australian Government. With regards to the violations on prostitution, I just don't know if many of you are aware of the prostitution regulations in Australia. I can only speak for Victoria and New South Wales which have very detailed legal structures that regulate prostitution and try to protect women who work as sex workers. There are problems with those laws at the moment but they are a lot better than what they were before. So that is another avenue that these women in this industry can refer to that protect them from their work. I know that there may be opposition to that here, but that is another venue.

Raq: We failed to bring out the topic of pornography and we know that there is strong connection. I observe that even feminists have shied away on the issue of prostitution. Here in our country, we have left this issue in the past mostly to religious groups. Therefore, the feminist groups have had a hard time bringing out this issue as a crucial and major feminist issue and if we do not look at it as a gender, class and race issue and use this analysis to correct the impression that we are just looking at one aspect of the problem, then I think that the work we are trying to do would be so piece-meal. My question is, in Australia, is your law differentiating forced prostitution and voluntary prostitution? Is there differentiation too between child and adult prostitution?

Sabina: The laws regulating prostitution in Australia don't specifically differentiate forced prostitution from voluntary prostitution. I think what it aims to do is to recognise that prostitution is never entirely voluntary. They set up structures to protect women in all sorts of situations, but it doesn't make a distinction in that way. But it does make a distinction between child prostitution and adult prostitution. Working as a sex worker below a certain age is illegal and there are serious criminal ramifications for that, and the police do come down fairly hard on it. Other than that there is no differentiation.

Meredith: Sabina is right that the emphasis of the women's movement in Australia is getting legislation that best protects the conditions of women working in the sex industry. We've always taken the position that we won't get into the continual debate about whether prostitution should exist or not, but always put real pressure on Government about how to get the safest and best conditions for these women who are already in the sex industry.

Melba: Because prostitution is legal in Australia, most of the laws are focused on regulating and improving the conditions of women within the industry. We as organisers found it really difficult to get the Prostitutes Collective in Victoria to support our study tour.

What we can probably do when we come back is to have a dialogue with them, because even if they have a different line on the work from us, because we are trying to address forced prostitution in the Philippines, at least we can have some relationship. They are a very large group and in terms of experiences in this field they can be a very good support for us. But really I felt sad that we didn't get their support.



Photo: CATW-P



Photo: CATW-P

Lucille Rhonda, Commission on Filipinos Overseas: There were concerns when we were in Australia four years ago and one of them was the attention given by the media to the Filipino women in Australia which adds to the problem. There was a magazine stating that if you want to get a perfect sexual partner, get a Filipina for a wife. With regards to the issue of serial sponsorship, we asked NGO groups and the Immigration Department in Australia to add requirements to the sponsors petition, e.g. police clearance, HIV clearance, so we could warn or give the information to our clients who are bound for these countries. But unfortunately there is so much concern about the individual's privacy. We may also need a list of men who have sponsored many women to establish a database of prospective serial sponsors.

Melba: Because of the pressure from Filipino women in Australia, the Immigration Department just released a new Filipina-Australian marriage video. We have copies with us. The Australian Government, specifically the Immigration Department, has come out with a campaign of information and counselling education around the issues that confront Filipino women in Australia. That is where a group like ours can present activities that can be funded by the Government. So far that is the immediate result we got from our campaign against serial sponsorship, but we will continue on.



Photo: CATW-P

Evalyn G. Ursua, Deputy Executive Director, Women's Legal Bureau Inc: I will make a few important points related to prostitution. Prostitution is still a criminal act. A prostitute is defined as a woman who habitually engages in sexual intercourse for money or for profit. Technically women only are considered as prostitutes in the Philippines, although there are many men who are in the same industry, doing the same thing. This is not to say that we only want the law to include men in the definition of prostitution, but also the owners of brothels, bars and places to be criminalised under the Philippine law. So, the focus of the law is on the prostituted women. In as much as it is difficult to prosecute women under the law on prostitution, the authorities usually use the laws on vagrancy to arrest women and prosecute them. The women who are caught roaming in the streets are arrested on the grounds of vagrancy which is defined in the Philippines as any act committed by a person who, without apparent means of subsistence, loitered

or roamed in public or semi-public places. So, anyone can be arrested on the basis of this law. Also in the Philippines, there has been an effort to close bars but usually the women bear the brunt of the action of the authorities. The owners of these bars are not prosecuted, so the main actors of prostitution in the Philippines are not considered criminals — the owners, the procurers, or customers are not criminals. Also the proliferation of foreign owned bars in the Philippines is tolerated by authorities although under the Philippine law, foreigners are not supposed to own or operate bars, restaurants, and resorts. But it is common knowledge that most of these bars are foreign owned. This constitutes a violation of our law that only Filipinos are supposed to own bars and resorts under our nationalisation law. But this is being tolerated because foreigners usually use dummies to maintain ownership and operations of the bars — so they continue their activities with impunity. We had in 1990 the mail-order-bride law passed. The law was passed mainly because of the abuses committed

against Filipino brides. But then again, this only led to the perpetrators going underground and they still continue with their activities despite the existence of the mail-order-bride law. There is actually no budget given to the authorities who enforce the law. We have laws prohibiting sex trafficking in children. In 1991 a law was passed specifically strengthening the criminalisation of exploitation of children as one of the acts penalised under that law — I refer to RA 67610, but the problem again is enforcement. We know that the authorities are very much involved in the trafficking of children. Trafficking of women is not penalised as trafficking in women, it is penalised as white slave trade or illegal recruitment under our labor law. Again, while there are laws that can be applied, there is not serious enforcement of these laws even if the women report their exploitation.

OPEN FORUM

Cally: Can you please explain to me the difference between the laws on trafficking and white slavery trade?

Evalyn: We have no law on trafficking in women. We have a provision of law that penalises the trafficking of children, and that means persons below 18 years of age. But there is no law specifically penalising the trafficking in women. White slave trade usually applies to the recruitment of adult women in particular (because it cannot be applied to men) for purposes of prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation.

Melba: Can you suggest any type of lobbying to review the nationalisation law?

Evalyn: One solution can be to organise a group which will monitor the violation of nationalisation laws and for this group to initiate the filing of complaints. Unless there is a group which will do that, I don't think that the Government will enforce our laws on that issue. The prosecution should be initiated by the Department of Justice, but they are very occupied by some other things.

WORKSHOPS:

In the afternoon there were two workshop sessions:

Prostitution: The World's Oldest Exploitation of Women — attendance for this workshop was so large it divided into 5 groups,

Tourism — 2 groups.

The next day, again in the afternoon session, two simultaneous workshops were held:

Migration and Prostitution.

Multiculturalism and Racism: Tensions for Women in Australian Society.

Read on as we go to the workshops...



Extracts from Workshop Reports

Workshop title — Prostitution: The World's Oldest Exploitation of Women

Group 5 reported:

Debbie: We addressed the questions: 1) Is child prostitution different from adult prostitution? There were a number of variables that were considered in the discussion, one of which is the issue of consent. I said that it is not important in the sense that both adult and child are exploited in this context. And then there were other variables that were mentioned such as the index of suffering, the harm on the child. This is a difficult one to consider because we simply speculated, to some extent, how much suffering one actually incurs. This is again a subjective thing. I am just discussing the areas of difficulties in the beginning while we were exploring the issue. The other, is the notion of informed choice. From an adult's point of view, it is perceived that one has reached a certain level of maturity and can make a choice. But from a child's point of view, the notion of informed choice does not exist. Another is the difference from the point of view of the exploiters in abusing a child and abusing an adult, in terms of the question of gravity. In the end, the focus is on the exploitative system. Whether it is a child or an adult, it is exploitation despite the factors we have mentioned.

2) Should prostitution be recognised as a legitimate form of work? The inevitability of prostitution, that it exists anywhere around the world and so one could consider then to reduce the exploitation of women by way of looking at the benefits (e.g. if prostitution is regulated, women could access the health and legal systems; employers can be taken to court by employees not treated fairly.) In the Philippine context it was pointed out that once prostitution is accepted as work, it would be easier to abuse people. The issue of regulating prostitution is not an easy one to tackle it in the Philippines. Once it is accepted as work, we'll just throw away the argument that it is exploitative. So there seems to be differences in opinion in terms of the context of prostitution and the society where prostitution occurs. But in the Philippine context there is a consensus that no way could we see it as something you could legitimise. In the Philippine context it is much more complex. Our reaction is that the Australian experience is simply an exercise in cleaning up. It is like having a clean supply of women for men.

3) What is the impact of the prostitution system for women in general? The point that was raised is that it is a clear violation of human rights. There is still a desire for women to preserve something of their personhood. Once a woman is a victim of sexual violation it affects everyone. There is a saying in Filipino that it is like a slap in the face. A man in our group said that it is a natural urge for a man to overpower women, which he said is probably a product of cultural conditioning. In the same breath he said that is it not right and it is exploitative of women.



Photo: CATW-P

Group 4 reported:

Bing: We started our discussion by first defining what prostitution means to us. We started with the basic definition which is sexual services for money or for profit. But somebody in our group pointed out that this legal definition has a certain weakness. That weakness is based on the assumption that prostitution is something women enter into voluntarily. So we already identified, particularly in the cases of Southern women, that coercion is always an element present in prostitution. And this coercion can be non-material or material coercion. In some cases there are women who are bodily kidnapped and forced into prostitution. But there have also been cases of women who decided to stay in the trade because they honestly believe that they had already lost their self worth and society would not accept them again into its fold. This is actually a manifestation of a non-material coercive factor which works against women and forces them into prostitution. Prostitution as a trade needs a social environment and this environment makes women vulnerable to it. We identified poverty but we also identified the prevailing graft and corruption in a social environment where we find prostitution. Prostitution becomes a social phenomenon when, even if it is deemed as illegal, there is still the presence of tolerance and acceptance. To a certain extent there is legitimisation of certain components of the trade. Like here in the Philippines, women who register themselves as entertainers are forced to submit themselves to tests for sexually transmitted diseases and HIV to keep a clean bill of health so that they can make their services available to clients. There are gender roles for women and there is a patriarchal system which forces women into prostitution. Women are commodified as sex objects whose services could be bought. It is a patriarchal system that defines women's role as such and which therefore makes women vulnerable to prostitution. There are a host of factors involved in the whole process of prostitution— those who buy services and those who ensure that those services are readily available.

Should prostitution be considered as a form of work? There was a consensus in our group that any trade which deals in the exploitation of women should not be considered as a form of work. There was a consensus that this could never be a legitimate form of work although it is true that for some women it is their source of livelihood.

Is prostitution a violation of women's human rights? Yes, there was a consensus that prostitution is a violation of women's human rights. But a point raised in our group is that for some organised women, prostitution is not really deemed as a legitimate social occupation, but there is a need to decriminalise prostitution and give women the services and all the necessary support measures they need, e.g. drug rehabilitation, police protection, union rights. Somebody also raised a scenario that this would be a very painful debate in the women's movement concerning this question. It is true that there are women's groups that consider prostitution as a legitimate form of work. But as far as our group is concerned there was a consensus that it shouldn't be the case, nonetheless we considered that particular variable.

Is child prostitution different from adult prostitution? Well, the major point raised in our group is that in terms of mode of operation, prostitution which victimises children and prostitution which victimises adults are basically the same. But the effect on the victims are different. For children caught in prostitution, the effects may be far reaching and may actually stay with them for the rest of their lives. It is something they will find harder to escape from.

What is the impact of prostitution on women in general? There was a consensus that prostitution has a very negative impact on women in general. It legitimises the view that women's sexual services are for sale. It labels women as composed of 'good' women and 'bad' women, and men will have to find out who are the 'good' women and the 'bad' women. It makes women vulnerable to sexual harassment and other forms of sexual crimes. This is something that dehumanises women. It is something that diminishes the value of women in the human society.

Group 3 reported:

Angela: We talked at length about what we perceived prostitution to be and we came up with: anything where somebody has to do something through coercion, where the power differentiation is such that one does not have any choice at all, is prostitution. We came to the decision that there is no such thing as choice, that people are going to prostitution for very many reasons, but if there was really a choice, they would not have chosen it. If people have other means of getting money, other means of having a life, they wouldn't choose that.



Photo: CATW-P

Is child prostitution different from adult prostitution? Given that neither children nor adults have the choice, there isn't a difference as such, but the difference is because children are more vulnerable than adults. But the thing is, neither have any choice really.

Should prostitution be recognised as a legitimate form of work? We said "No". Because it is not really a form of work but a form of getting finances for what you're doing.

What is the effect of prostitution in general? It is divisive between women. Who are the 'good' women and 'bad' women?

Should prostitution be considered as a legitimate socio-economic system? No. The problem is that though it is legitimated by the Government, on the other hand it isn't. There is no such thing as prostitution, yet it is tolerated by the Government, legitimated by the use of other words. We also want to turn the question around: Is prostitution just a question of women or is it men? Why is it that it is always women that are prosecuted. Again it is a question of power. For instance, a woman gets picked up by police for vagrancy because she doesn't have enough money, but the man has money so he doesn't get picked up. The woman is powerless, is poor.

Is prostitution a violation of women's human rights? Even in the case of a dancing girl doing bar fine, she is popular because she is asked to do bar fine. Often she feels good because she is considered or deemed desirable but at the same time she feels sad because it is not a good thing to get into.

Emere: Some of the conversation in our group was in Tagalog so perhaps some arguments and points were missed by Angela. Anyway, the first part of our discussion was the clarification of the definition of prostitution. One argument which came from Angela is that prostitution is not only contained in bars, brothels or etc., but also in marriage. Where there is power imbalance, there is prostitution. It is when a woman gives in against her will. The definition of prostitution also depends on the culture and the society you are into. One point that Dee gave was that if we are going to expand the definition of prostitution, as in including marriage as prostitution, we will be losing our mass base in Australia. Fifty per cent of our mass base in Australia are married to Australian men. So for God's sake let us not expand the definition of prostitution in marriage just yet. There is also another definition that came out, a traditional one — women being a commodity.

Is child prostitution different from adult prostitution? Aida mentioned the case of a 6 year-old prostitute in Manila. When Aida interviewed her, she was already afflicted with an STD. The blurring of child and adult prostitution comes to the picture because the problems experienced by both child and adult prostitutes are almost the same. But there is of course one thing very clear between child and adult prostitution, that is, according to Evalyn, child sex workers are more vulnerable than adults. And of course there is the age factor in defining what is a child and what is an adult prostitute.

Should prostitution be recognised as a legitimate form of work? I don't think that we reached a consensus. There are two arguments that came out. Some are actually forced to work in the industry because of poverty. But some of you may not agree with that because it demystifies poverty as the main reason why women enter prostitution. Another argument is that many women who are working in the industry are classified as entertainers, bar attendants and other euphemisms, but understandably, to cover up the real nature of the work they're into.

Group 2 reported:

Jorgette: From the beginning, Cecille suggested that we have an objective discussion. Could we assess prostitution using the guide questions? It was difficult to discuss what prostitution is all about. Child prostitution versus adult prostitution, what's the difference? In New Zealand apparently, the new age of consent for sexual engagement is 16 years old and in Australia heterosexually it is 16 years and homosexually it is 18 years. In our discussion we thought, what is the difference in the harm of prostitution to child and adult? We think it is the same with both, except that there are difficulties in terms of the law especially with the exploitation of children where the law shows greater sympathy to children involved in prostitution. In child prostitution there is psychological and physiological damage and child prostitution is always seen as abuse. There are cases in the Philippines where the child's parents themselves know of their children's activities. In Australia it is a bit different because there is always this element of secrecy to it. Prostitution is about power relations. It is rife, it is about 'mail-order-brides', it is about trafficking. Prostitution is about a man owning a woman as a property.



Photo: CATW-P

Should prostitution be promoted? Our group answered "No". There were two arguments that followed that discussion. One argument is that the woman always has a say or a choice in prostitution but I think that is a simplistic view of what prostitution is. Another view is that even though women appear to like and enjoy prostitution it does not necessarily mean that they are really inside it. Often when they are caught by the police and interviewed they seemed to not care at all, but many are tired of this cycle.

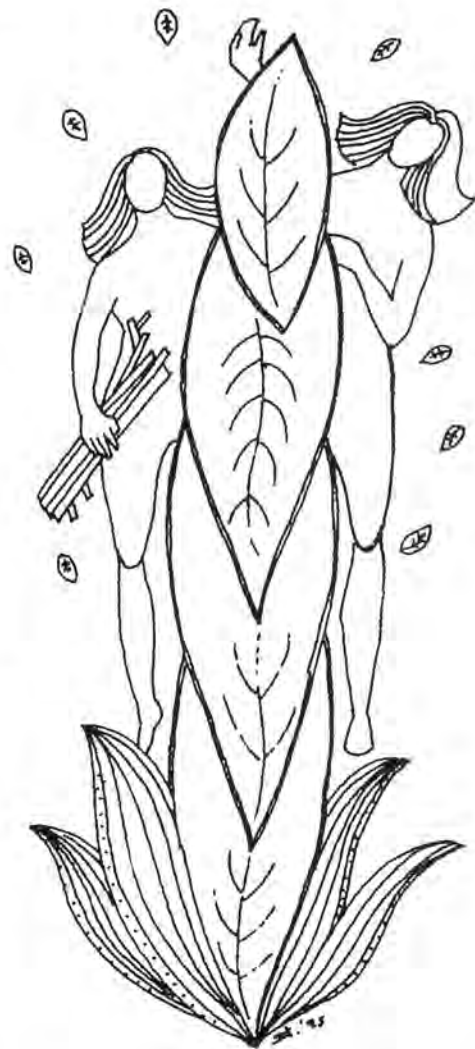
We had a lengthy discussion on the impact of prostitution to women in general. Men buy the services of sex workers in the Philippines because they are cheap. Unlike in Australia, where there is a market force that prohibits some men to buy the same services they can get cheaper from the Philippines. In Australia the legalisation of prostitution in a few states did not make any difference to the number of women involved in prostitution. If it is legal in the Philippines would it make any difference? Some in our group said it will.

What does prostitution have to do with sex? Prostitution distorts and also reinforces power relations and violence. Is prostitution a violation of the human rights? It is a violation particularly for children because of the question of consent, and most of all it is exploitative. If prostitution is only viewed as a choice, it becomes a personal issue and that is not helpful. Prostitution should be seen as a social and global issue.

Group 1 reported:

Raq: We would like to say that this group was composed of all Filipinos so we have a slightly different presentation and we became very excited about the discussion to the point that we came up with a formulation. So we came out with something a little bit different in terms of presentation answering very briefly the three questions. This will be presented by Bessi. And Maria will be giving us a different concept of how to deal with this issue — she will present a Filipino view of what work and life means to us and how this connects with the issue of prostitution. Melba, the only woman from Australia in our workshop group, will give us a brief summary of all the discussion.

Bessi: With regards to the number one question, is child prostitution different from adult prostitution?, we came up with the conclusion that there is no difference between the two since 70 to 80 per cent of adults came from child prostitution. Most child prostitutes graduate into adult prostitutes. With regards to the issue whether adult prostitutes have greater choice to continue with prostitution, we believe that neither adult nor child has much choice whether they will continue or not in prostitution. With regards to the third question, the impact of prostitution on women is that it is a violation of human rights and therefore loses the self esteem of every woman. The society thinks of women as a commodity. In the Philippine society there are two paintings of women — Madonna the good woman and Magdalena the one who gives herself to men.



Maria: We decided as a group to reflect on the Pilipino word for "work". We say, *Hanapbuhay*. *Naghahanap ako ng buhay*. I am searching for life. So, when we say this word, *hanapbuhay*, Filipinos speak of their poetic indigenous roots. And when we say we work, we mean we search for life, we sustain life, we affirm life, we create life. So within this consciousness, how can we say that prostitution is work? In our visual expression here (graphic drawn by workshop participants to illustrate their point), we speak of our word, *hanapbuhay*, as the search of the inner being and the outer being. Therefore work in itself is a journey toward wholeness, towards integration of the inner and the outer search. When we work, we speak of our interconnectedness as human beings. We relate with other human beings, we relate with the family, with the society, we relate with the whole earth and human community. So how can we speak of prostitution as work when it violates life, when it is a life-threatening work, when it is a violation of human rights? Definitely there's no choice, there's no freedom in prostitution.



Photo: CATW-P

Melba: I want to tell you what we went through in terms of trying to articulate a Filipina theoretical explanation for why prostitution is not work. In the discussion of child and adult prostitution, there is a very thin line between the two. But Raquel introduced the concept of prostitution as a continuum of violence. We argued a little bit about that but we eventually came up with a unanimous decision that whether you are a child or an adult the degree of violence is the same. We also looked at the impact to the community. We are saying that the whole community, for example in Sabang, a village in Puerto Galera, has been really affected. So we are saying that there is already the culture of prostitution. And then our group refocussed on the definition of prostitution as an institution. Why do men need access to sexual services of women? Why do they have to be initiated to sexuality through prostitutes? And here we went into the acceptability of prostitution, that we ourselves as women, as Filipino women, should be self-critical and ask why it is that we tolerate our brothers, our fathers, our cousins, our uncles, etc., at one time in their lives or probably until now, using prostitutes. So this is again a challenge for all of us in terms of our relationships with local men. That is one of the shocking things we discovered as Australian participants, local men are one of the biggest buyers of prostitution here. Again, prostitution is the ultimate disempowerment of women, and here we entered again into a debate. One participant said our vagina is the centre of our sacredness and the continuity of our lives, and if that is penetrated you become disempowered. But on the other hand, another said, does it have to be vaginal penetration in order to feel disempowered? And again we unanimously agreed that any violation of one's body is already rape, sexual assault and prostitution.

On the impact of prostitution, because a lot of the participants in our group came from NGOs working with prostituted women, it came out very emphatically that all women are affected because we are now all seen as prostitutes. And this view came from the women who are working with sex workers in Quezon Blvd. They cited that when they ply the street, they themselves were mistaken to be prostitutes. And on the issue of where did the concept of prostitution as choice come from? From my point of view as someone living in Australia, I would like to personally interrogate the trade union movement in Australia and find out. It is

obvious that the trade unions are male dominated and male constructed, and it is possible that it is from there that the idea (of legalisation) came about.

OPEN FORUM:

Oyie: This morning Raq mentioned pornography as a factor in prostitution and other questions were raised about where certain perspectives and points of view are coming from, like the idea that women actually choose and enjoy and experience prostitution as empowering. I think when we examine prostitution now as opposed to prostitution, say, 50 years or a hundred years ago, you will not find such an articulation. The difference is that now prostitution has become not only a global industry but it has also become a multi-billion dollar industry, and it has also become a part of mainstream media. In the US for instance, it is estimated that over 12 billion dollars more, compared to Hollywood, is generated by this industry that capitalises on women's bodies. In Japan, the sex industry, the sauna industry, the entertainment industry all combined is estimated to be worth around 40 billion dollars. So think of all those mind-boggling dollar signs and you can guess where that argument is coming from.

Aida: I think the reporting has been a two-faced kind of thing because somebody has got to mention the process and the dynamics in the group. There was a lot of debate in a sense because the composition is very dynamic. In our group we had lawyers, we had ex-bar women, we had NGO workers, as well as Australian sisters. And for you who may want to discuss marriage as a form of prostitution I can point you exactly who to speak to, but certainly that should be reflected in the report. There was almost a point where we wanted to expand the definition of prostitution to engage the group in a deeper discussion about the commodification of women and the husband-wife relationship.

Dee: I think to an extent some of our dialogues have sought easy ways out particularly on the question of where this idea of choice comes from. And I have felt somewhat in the reports that the answer is too quickly reached — "from the West". And that takes away my personal responsibility for the situation, as a Filipina. We can go back to our history and many historians have commented upon the use by friars of our women for prostitution. But even before that colonial period, the patriarchy that is the source of this attitude toward women could have only grown strong in fertile soil, and that fertile soil is our indigenous soil. Recently at a forum we attended in Coffs Harbour a very, very pertinent point was made by a Filipina when she said, "If we really want to stop this introduction business, we must ourselves stop selling our sisters. It is our responsibility as well."

Cecilia: Most of the reports were that we have agreed on all the salient points. I think it is also important to capture what we disagreed on, because those are the points we have to turn over in our minds and argue with each other and with ourselves. I think that is the way to advance our thinking. When we put this down, I just don't know in what form, because all those arguments for many of us are new thoughts. I'm sure there are many complexities that are lost, so let us try to capture the differences and questions.



July 2, 1995 — During Day Two of the Dialogue —

CALVARY OF WOMEN IN PROSTITUTION

A characteristic that is very much in the psyche of many Filipinos is the "God will help us syndrome". This syndrome is not only common among ordinary Juan de la Cruzes but in every aspect of Filipino socio-cultural makeup. Held close to the heart, this phenomenon becomes a coping mechanism in the face of many risky undertakings, prostitution included. As a reflection of the nation's religious character, the four participants presented a short play in the morning of Day Two.

This is the Calvary of all prostituted women oppressed and exploited by machineries the world over. (kubing/clapstick)

Tres Marias: For all women prostituted by Australian introduction and travel agencies which facilitated Magdalena's suffering in the Philippines...

Response: Have mercy upon them and empower them

Tres Marias: For all women forced into prostitution in this country because of the complicity of the Philippine Government like Judas who traded Jesus for 30 pieces of silver in exchange for millions of dollars...

Response: Have mercy upon them and restore their self-esteem



Photo: CATW-P

Tres Marias: For all women abused by police and military in order to protect the owners of bars, brothels, clubs and resorts...

Response: Have mercy upon them, give them justice and decriminalise their activities

Tres Marias: For all women forced to take drugs and alcohol, paid a pittance by owners of prostitution establishments...

Response: Have mercy upon them and give them life and dignity

Tres Marias: For all women victims blamed by the church and its rhetoric but no substantive action for the women...

Response: Have mercy upon them for they are all not sinners

Tres Marias: For all women used by Mamasan for profit, as a result, women have to suffer all forms of abuse...

Response: Have mercy upon them and give them enough strength to fight their oppression

Tres Marias: For all women abused by their male clients, foreigners and locals alike...

Response: Have mercy upon them and liberate them from this oppressive system

Tres Marias: For the families of women who tolerate if not encourage the prostitution of their children...

Response: Have mercy upon them and enlighten their minds, find adequate means of livelihood and live life with dignity

Tres Marias: For the courageous and committed women (and men), individually and in groups supporting and assisting in the upliftment of prostituted women, despite all odds...

Response: Give them more strength and resources to continue doing their work towards the goal of making this country free from all forms of sexual exploitation.



All Photos this page: CATW-P

... in the afternoon Extracts from Workshop Reports continued ...

Workshop title — Tourism

Photo: CATW-P

Group A reported:

Cally: Our objective was to critically examine different forms, motivation and ideology in tourism. We started off by asking: What is tourism? It wasn't that easy to decide what it was, but we came up with lots of good ideas. One idea was that it is a system with tourists and entertainers and the entertainers facilitate whatever is the purpose of the travellers. Another form of tourism is the cultural form of tourism where the tourists come from another country to see the different sites, look at the landscapes, the monuments. This has difficulty because you have limited contact with the people.

Tourism is also a form of hospitality when you can meet the people, experience their culture and sometimes make the important connection that tourists are guests to the country and so they should respect the sovereignty within that culture. But in sex tourism this doesn't seem to be the case. And someone else thought that the original idea of tourism is that hospitality is being exploited because of the cultural exchange and who has the power in that exchange. As a global system of tourism, poor people can't be tourists but the rich can be, so there is a very unequal exchange operating in an unequal system throughout the world, in international tourism and domestic tourism as well.

Another idea is that tourism fulfils a basic human need for rest and recreation. That has become a political issue because it is a big business and also with its association to the military bases. There has been a huge growth in global tourism, of the number of tourists, tourists' expenditures and tourism's service industry (9 per cent of the GNP worldwide comes from tourism). So it is seen as being an important source of foreign exchange and employment, but it doesn't seem to be helping people at the local level, which is an important issue that we all need to address.

So the first question we tried to answer was: What do the Australian tourists get from their tourism experience in the Philippines? What is the ideology or the mechanisms behind this that prepare the ground for their experience? Probably it depends on the motivation of tourists but generally tourists interrupt the daily life. They live in another life, they live in another climate, they can abandon the rules that usually constrain them in their own country — which is a very important issue in sex tourism. They (tourists) can behave in different ways. There is a degree of freedom in that sense and perhaps just a degree of constraint. Because of the different rates of exchange, tourists can also bargain hunt. Like myself coming from New Zealand, I can get lovely little colourful purses to take as gifts back home and they're really cheap because I come here with American dollars. So tourists can bargain hunt for all sorts of things — including sex. Tourism also fulfils a consumer desire for the exotic, the exotic as commodified. And one point of view is that tourism fulfils the need for consumerism, not for rest and recreation. We decided then that R&R is a luxury, not anybody can afford R&R. Tourism can also fulfil fantasies for people whether to escape from their



worries, from their political problems, from their own countries, from their wives, from feminists, from industrialism, from the rat race. So there are all sorts of reasons why people would wish to tour.

Our group talked about how sex tourism is advertised all around the world and in the Philippines. One reason is the five Ss (Sun, Sea, Shore, Sex and San Miguel beer). Also, the exotic element and the affordability. The luxury side is also portrayed (entertainment establishments being modern, fancy but comparatively cheaper). We thought that sex is the central focus of how tourism is packaged. Sex tourism seems to be packaged in the context of adventure holidays, scuba-diving, swimming, snorkelling, etc. The thing about white male Australians coming here to the Philippines is that their status is elevated for just being who they are, and they are not challenged as they would be in their own country, within their own families, and within their own relationships. In a foreign country you can escape your own responsibilities because you don't have people constantly monitoring your behaviour. Tourism is also connected with Government vision like the Philippines 2000, and the Government is now viewed as the biggest pimp. The *Department of Tourism Policy Thrusts for 1994-1995* doesn't seem to be discerning about who comes in or what kind of tourism comes here, and especially what the social cost will be.

The second question that we looked at was: What's the difference between Australian tourism in the Philippines and Japanese tourism to Australia and New Zealand? Generally, we decided, there wasn't a hell of a lot of difference actually because Japan is in a pretty good position to come here at the moment and there are lots of Japanese men and women visiting Australia and New Zealand. There's a lot of Japanese businessmen and a lot of land being bought in New Zealand and Australia. Someone made a really interesting point that the sex industry targeted the tourism industry in order to facilitate its global expansion. And then we talked about the relationship of drug trafficking and sex trafficking. It might be so because sex trafficking and drug trafficking use the same underground routes to move their products. We also thought that the connection was that drugs were used quite extensively to control the prostitutes themselves. Another comment made about Japanese tourists to Australia was that before, the majority of Japanese tourists seemed to be single and unaccompanied males which is indicative of what is going on.

The third and final question was: What is the impact of the encounter with 'the other' on the local population? Clearly there is a cultural impact, environmental impact, social impact, gender impact, class impact and lots of impacts. And using tourism as a quick way to develop is simplistic and a mistake because not enough consideration has been given as to who is really benefiting. Another impact is the imposition of foreign cultural values, the introduction of foreign goods, the maintenance of colonialism.

Group B reported:

????: First we went through the experiences of women who are familiar with the trade or who are working as direct service workers in Olongapo, Angeles and Fairview. They shared their knowledge on the topic, and then we proceeded to answer the questions. We conducted

the session in Tagalog so maybe that explains my hyperactivity. First of all, why is Australian business thriving in Angeles predominantly? We explained this by the fact that Clark closed and then the Australians bought the businesses in Angeles. We explained this by geo-politics. Ninety five to 99 per cent of bars in Angeles are owned by Australians. Second thing, is the proximity to Manila. It is so easy to go from NAIA to Angeles. Third, is the closure of Ermita, the former 'red-light' area, forcing the women to transfer to Angeles and Olongapo. Basically the entertainment is very cheap. Also, the facility of English language. Another factor is the friendly and accommodating culture. Filipinos are very friendly to foreigners. We also have the mechanisms allowing business to thrive. It is so easy to package a tour to the Philippines combined with easy access to transportation.

We say that foreigners can't own bars, but they can always use dummies or their Filipino wives. Because there is the National Economic Development plan, you can invest in a business, for instance in Angeles, because there is a national plan to develop Angeles as a development estate, as an economic zone. There is also the active policy of the Government to encourage retirees to come to the Philippines. We also said that perhaps the recession in Australia is also pushing men to move away from Australia and invest in countries where they would have large profit for their money.

There are different descriptions how prostitution works, apart from working in bars. For instance in Fairview, in the daytime the stalls are carinderias (eatery) and in the evening they are used for prostitution. We also said that local governments support prostitution as a business. For instance in Olongapo, the mayor said there is no prostitution here therefore you cannot really advocate for services for women. Secondly, the local police — it was said that the police own the establishments for prostitution. The general view for women is that they are blamed, they are shamed. There was a story of a mother of Amerasian children trying to access services for scholarship funds for the children. She went through the experience of trying to establish the paternity of her children. The interview questions are very insensitive. In fact the child was interviewed and was asked, "suppose your father gets you, will you go with him?" The impact of prostitution to women that was shared was, "mabuti na ang foreigner kesa Pilipino" (foreign clients are preferred than Filipinos). This explains why women who are in the trade would still want to marry a foreigner because of their negative experience of abuse by Filipinos. They would say, "I've been treated like this by a Filipino so I would risk relating with a foreigner because it might be a different story". Besides if you were a prostitute here and then you marry a foreigner, you could start a new life in a new country. It may be a myth of course. At the same time if you were a prostituted woman, a Filipino man will not take you seriously. Filipino men will take it against you. The other thing is the belief that foreigners are benevolent, and it is seen in the experiences of women who married foreigners in Angeles.



Photo: CATW-P

One note is that even though there are negative experiences of women, the rewarding experiences were recalled more.

Melba: If the report has been quite detailed on prostitution it is because we had the privilege of the presence of some of the women who are in the trade and who really gave to us the attitudes that prevail among them that makes tourism more acceptable and really fertile in the different areas. We say that the Australian tourists come here because of cheap sex, food, housing, hotel and everything. The ideology behind this is definitely economic and the mechanism that prepares the ground is the law that is very kind to foreign investors. Second is that the network or infrastructure for the tourism industry is already set up. Then the language — we really take note of this because the language is one of the reasons according to the women working in the industry themselves. The impact of tourism is from national to personal and the socio-cultural milieu is very fertile for sexual exploitation through tourism. The tourism industry is very highly organised as we've seen in Angeles City hence our development strategy has to address all these. And also we take note of the fact that the police have a very big role in propping up tourism in the area.

Workshop title — Migration and Prostitution

Gunilla: At first we tried to define migration and whether we wanted to talk about in-migration or out-migration. In-migration of Australians coming to the Philippines or out-migration of Filipinos, mainly women, going to Australia. We started with in-migration and tried to examine ex-pats coming here for business or as diplomats, or retirees. The first question: What is the forum or channels that expose women to the risk of prostitution? In the case of Australian men, they expose women to prostitution by opening bars and other entertainment establishments. Someone said that there are approximately 700,000 Filipinas every year going out for work, they are of course the registered ones leaving the country to work abroad. In those countries of destination there are syndicates utilising these legal women for prostitution, pornography. They are vulnerable.

We also talked about 'mail-order-brides' and some of them have become prostitutes. If I am not mistaken in Sweden you have to stick with the marriage for two years otherwise the woman could be deported, so of course in order not to get deported many women stay with these men who may be abusing them or actually using them as prostitutes for other men. Some of them actually became sex slaves because of this 'mail-order-bride' system. There are opinions as to why we are labelling these women as 'mail-order-brides'. Why shouldn't we find another term for them or why not use a term for the men instead? When

we talked of serial sponsorship, we talked of those sponsorships that include violence and abuse, sex slavery and prostitution, and because of the fear of deportation many women endure these men. So, definitely, certain forms of migration can lead to prostitution.

Is the export of women for the entertainment industry abroad always synonymous with prostitution? We discussed this entertainment industry and we reached a consensus that this entertainment industry is made up of men and often it is entertainment for men,



Photo: CATW-P

not an entertainment where you go with your family to have some fun. So in this case, if it is child or woman prostitution, it is entertainment for men. Men have built it and talent is not needed to be an entertainer. But of course here in the Philippines we have to have some training in order to go to Japan. All you have to have is a beautiful face and a beautiful body. Men from the early years are socialised to viewing women as objects. Actually I came to a bar a couple of weeks ago with a friend in Quezon Avenue and we were so surprised to see young boys around 14, sitting there and drinking San Miguel and looking at ladies dancing.

Jorgette: Our group discussed about Filipinos going overseas who in many ways are really vulnerable especially in the entertainment and the 'mail-order-bride' aspects of migration. It is not necessarily that they become prostitutes, but they are highly at risk because of the environment they are exposed to. And in the case of 'mail-order-brides' they are at risk because of the conditions they are exposed to, like the migration law that is changing now in Australia and also because for a lot of the Filipino women whose relationship may not work out within that two year period, they haven't got permanent status in Australia to qualify for social benefits. And most of the time their overseas qualifications are not recognised, so they get into a very desperate situation where they often get involved in jobs in the entertainment industry, or go from one bad relationship to another.

Workshop title — Multiculturalism and Racism: Tensions for Women in Australian Society

Kathleen: We started discussing the background of the history of migration to Australia and the history of its policies. Initially the policy was assimilation, meaning that migrants should become like any other Australian. Later they introduced the policy of integration by trying to assist new migrants to fit in with the main culture. And finally, in the 70s, what emerged is the multiculturalism which was the idea of people being able practice their culture, religion and anything else, so long that they are not against Australian law.

In Australia there are several categories of migration and the main form is family reunion which is where the spouses and fiancés are included. A vast majority of the Filipino migrants came under family reunion scheme with small percentages of skilled workers coming in. One of the things we said is that the Filipino community generally integrates quite well though they may not be as visible as other communities (you cannot find them in communities with high unemployment rate) and that has probably something to do with the fact that a lot of Filipinos are well-educated and also there is always a level of family support. Despite that they said that one of the tensions of the receiving community is that



Photo: CATW-P

there is a level of resistance to migration, particularly Asian migration. There are many people saying that Australia can't sustain the number of migrants coming into the country. Although it is discussed in terms of environment it is basically a racist discussion. We say that the anti-migrant backlash is probably a product of economic recession where, in the last ten years or so, there has been a high rate of unemployment generally. And what people do is create a myth that it is the migrant population, specifically the Asian population, that is taking the jobs. Of the tensions of the receiving communities for Filipinos, one the of the main ones is the non-recognition of qualifications because Australians are generally much more familiar with the English system of education. For a long time they haven't recognised other people's qualifications. And because of that Government policy, where qualifications weren't recognised because of racism generally, often people's experience outside of Australia is not recognised, so well-qualified Filipinos just don't get jobs.

One of the issues, we said, is the tension with Filipino women who are arriving in Australia is that they are stereotyped as 'mail-order-brides', prostitutes, gold-diggers. One of the main images is also of Filipinos as domestic workers. Although there are no OCWs and domestic helpers in Australia like there are in other countries, there seems to be a growing association of Filipino women as cleaners, etc. We discussed tensions, not only tensions within various communities in Australia, but also tensions within the Filipino community. Many Filipino professionals have been coming in with different perspectives, and there is also

a difference in terms of Filipinos being involved in community organisations. The traditional group are being embarrassed in the general Australian community when things like the issue of 'mail-order-brides' is brought up.

For the last question about the benefit of multiculturalism, whether there are positive impacts — the comments were, "it's more fun when there's multiculturalism". Australia was very monotonous, perhaps very boring during the 50s and in some areas basically Anglo-Celtic, and multiculturalism has brought in a diversity and recognition of the various cultures. We also said that Australia is an experiment in multiculturalism that has succeeded. The feeling is that although there is racism, and there are many problems, you can lobby and you can have these addressed. We also said that there is economic benefit for multiculturalism and we said that Australia is moving towards being a Euro-Asian nation by becoming more diverse. In terms of class, the migrant communities tend to be working class and at that level there is less multiculturalism, and to some extent if you look at the bureaucracy, the positions of power are still very much held by white, middle class men.

As there are specific tensions to women, there are also specific tensions to men who feel racism more than women. The people in the group said many migrant men feel more disempowered than migrant women and one of the reasons may be because they are not as used as women to being in the position of subordination.



One of the issues within multiculturalism is the place of Aboriginal people. A lot of Aboriginal people react to the concept of multiculturalism which basically says that all cultures should be alongside with each other happily etc., etc. And they say they are not just an ethnic minority that should co-exist with other communities but they are the original inhabitants of Australia and that should be recognised. So there is a model of reconciliation addressing the issue of the invasion of Australia rather than simply talking about multiculturalism.

Debbie: Aboriginal people as pointed out in our discussion are at the bottom the heap. There is the opposition from the indigenous people to the concept of multiculturalism because they seem to be lumped in with ethnic minorities, whereas they are the original inhabitants and never really reached the position of accepting white settlement. At the moment there is a lot of problems for the Aboriginal community with deaths in custody, access to health, services and so on. It is important to point out that all is not well within the social experiment called multiculturalism.

OPEN FORUM:

Dee: I would like to take up the last point that was made about the situation of indigenous peoples in Australia, and I'm going to be critical because Filipinos bring with them the baggage of our prejudice regarding our own indigenous peoples. We have noted in tours when we have hosted indigenous people from the Philippines such as the Aytas for instance, many Filipinos would say to us, this is the first time they have met an Ayta. "I have come to Australia to meet an Ayta," they say. The exclusion of the indigenous, that ignorance about Filipino indigenous by Filipinos gets brought to Australia and that gets further consolidated by racism in Australia towards Aboriginal and Islander peoples. From my personal experience, the most welcoming people I met in coming to Australia were the indigenous people. The first community that opened their arms not only in hospitality, personally, and also politically. They said, "We can dialogue with Filipinos about the problems we have in common." And we said to them, "That's wonderful, we need your knowledge of how to deal with the white man."

Within CPCA and also the solidarity groups, we have a very good relationship and sharing with Aboriginal people. In Brisbane one member of our solidarity group is an Aboriginal elder and he has sent his greeting to this conference. He has visited the Philippines a number of times. Another thing that I would like to bring out is that Filipino people, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people have a long history that goes back before the white man. We have traded together, we have inter-married, and we know of that history. So I'd like to say to Filipinos migrating to Australia that to understand the situation of the indigenous peoples in Australia is to first understand the indigenous peoples here in our country.

Melba: There are some reports about an Australian who owns bars in La Union. Apparently this Australian is engaged in trafficking, illegal recruitment in particular, and is actually facing charges of illegal recruitment and recruitment of minors. Our group was there during the last hearing. Apparently he illegally recruited three batches of Cebuanas (recruitment from Cebu to La Union). So, there is really trafficking and Australians are very much involved.



Photo: CATW-P



Photo: CATW-P

Jane: There is someone here from La Union who said that the influx of prostitution started when Wallace Air Base was built.

Myrna as translated by Cecilia: The La Union exposurists mostly went to Bawang beach, but she said that there is another area with a greater concentration of bars near the US Wallace Air Base in San Agustin, Puro Point. Their concern in the area has to do with the conversion of the former Wallace Air Base and the north quadrangle. There is a plan to convert this area into an international port. It is now a small port, but as part of the larger plan of the Philippines 2000, it will become an international port. There is also a plan to put up an international airport in the area, and as of now there is already a golf course in Wallace Air Base. So it sounds like it is going

to be both tourism an international business. She said that with this kind of development, you will have the development of prostitution as well. Apparently, there was some resistance on the part of the mayor, but they are saying that it will go ahead anyway.

Cally: Maybe the United States may be willing to offer some form of compensation. This could be a case that can be brought in international fora asking for compensation for women who have been exploited by the presence of the US bases in the Philippines.

Cecilia: That is a long story. In 1983, two women from the BUKLOD Centre in Olongapo, along with Father Shay Cullen, filed a class action suit against the US navy. We actually went to the United States for that. We were asking damages for the women directly but we were also asking for a support package for the children of the women and US servicemen. The case was thrown out from the court of claims, but anyway we gave it a good try. About the compensation, the Bases Conversion Plan should have been a Government scheme that could offer economic possibilities for women in prostitution in those areas but the Government spent a lot of money on this conversion plan which is not just for women but also for many sectors. WEDPRO was just one of the organisations involved in the study which was convened by the head of the University of the Philippines. It was submitted to him, it was approved by then-president Aquino, and then it was put on the shelf and it is gathering dust there and nothing is being done about it.

?????: I would like to make a comment about plans that were put on shelves to gather dust. The important point to make is that nothing happens because there is no budget that is put into good projects and other plans. The implementation of the projects may never happen because the decisions that are made by bureaucrats and other government organisations generally don't favour women who are affected, like the prostitutes.



Photo: CATW-P

July 3, 1995 — During Day Three of the Dialogue —

Panel Discussion with Representatives from Philippine Agencies and the Australian Embassy



Photo: CATW-P

- Aurora Javate De Dios, National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women
- Arlene Celestino, Department of Tourism
- Catherine Paredes-Maceda, Commission on Filipinos Overseas
- Cheryl Hannah, Australian Embassy
- Atty. Ed Ancog, Commission on Human Rights

Catherine Paredes-Maceda, Commission on Filipinos Overseas: The CFO is primarily in charge of promoting the Filipino immigrants. The contract workers would be the concern of POEA, DOLE and OWWA. CFO was created 15 years ago in 1980 by way of Batasang Pambansa Blg. 79. Traditionally its main focus is policy formulation for concerns affecting Filipino immigrants. From 1984 to 86, we saw the need to come up with services that really respond to the need of immigrants particularly the fiancés and spouses of foreign nationals. Technically speaking, women going to Japan would not fall under the responsibility of CFO because they are not immigrants. Yet in 1986, we saw the need to contact every woman who is leaving the country as a fiancée or spouse of a foreign national to undergo a counselling program of the CFO. Due to certain infirmities of the law, which would allow us to carry out this objective, there are certain gaps and constraints that we need to address. And this is the reason why I am happy to have this consultation with you. Mainly we need the support of NGOs in trying to lobby certain legislative proposals in Congress. In 1991, CFO was transferred to the Department of Foreign Affairs as an attached agency (it used to be under the Office of the President). What did that transfer result to? In recent years, CFO has been consulted in developing policies for issues of concern affecting overseas Filipinos in general not just the immigrants, but this is being done more on an informal basis. Still, legally speaking, CFO's primary concern would be the immigrants, particularly the fiancés and spouses of foreign nationals.

Cheryl Hannah, Australian Embassy: I would like to just say a very brief comment this afternoon about the actual function of the Immigration Section of the Australian Embassy here in Manila. The current service of having an Immigration Section located in a foreign embassy is to facilitate the movement of Filipinos to Australia, either as tourists or as migrants. That is the beginning, the middle, and the end of what we do. Each year about 4,000 Filipinos migrate to Australia as members of families. About 2,000 go as spouses or fiancés. No doubt Catherine can say more about the statistics that the CFO keeps, but certainly we know that Australia, in fact, is the fourth most popular destination of Filipinos marrying out of the country. The first, of course, is the United States, followed by Canada then Japan. We can talk in detail about exactly how applications are handled in the Embassy and all sorts of things that we do, but do keep in mind that our clients are the Australian citizens who wish to be reunited with members of their families from the Philippines, or are married, or taking someone from the Philippines to form a family in Australia.

We also handle about 20,000 visitor applications every year and many of those people are, in fact, visiting their Filipino relatives who have previously migrated to Australia. We have taken our responsibility for serving our clients very seriously. We try to provide enough information so that people can actually make informed decisions about what they are doing when they are migrating to Australia. We show a video continuously in the morning, both in English and Tagalog which describes in some detail, based on case studies of people who have married Australians, just what life in Australia would actually turn out to be like. Women who are waiting to be interviewed for their applications, see that video and receive a booklet from us which sets out exactly what is happening. This is a new video launched on the 1st of July which some of you may be familiar with. The new video is focused much more on trying to give people the answers to the sorts of questions that constantly get asked about what life would really be like in Australia.

We see every applicant of the family migration, and so does CFO as Catherine just said. It is better to say that we and CFO work very closely on all of those things. We tried very hard to make sure that CFO is kept up to date with information about Australia, particularly the services they might need once they migrated, like social services, legal services and social security and those kind of issues. It is very difficult to get somebody here in the Philippines, before they migrate, to really understand how difficult life would be for them. And often it is better to get information to them that they may be able to use afterwards. My role as the Chief Migration Officer is to ensure that the work we are doing here in the Philippines fits in with our counterpart in Australia. The work that is done by our Settlement and our Ethnic Affairs Department, and through the wider NGO network, are set up to make sure that people settle well, once they actually migrated. And I can also answer questions on that too because I used to be the Manager of the Settlement and Ethnic Affairs area for the state of Victoria, before I came to this posting.

What I would like to finish up by saying is, we do the best we can to assure ourselves that the Filipino applicant is treated with respect. We try very hard to make sure that we treat her with the respect and dignity that anyone in such a situation should be accorded, whether they are being interviewed in the Philippines or in Australia. My Filipino staff have been trained to work very hard on some of those issues of cross-cultural sensitivities and I will be explicit about this. Often the woman sitting in front of my interviewing officers is having difficulty expressing herself English and would actually need an interpreter. If she's having difficulty asking questions about what would happen if she wanted to bring a child, naturally we would take the time to answer those questions carefully and for that particular case. My embassy, my post is the second busiest migration post for all immigration work globally and part of the reason why we have a fairly high level of resource in the Embassy for immigration is because we do take that extra care with the immigration of Filipinos marrying Australians.

I should say in conclusion that we work in partnership with CFO because the decision to migrate to another country is a very large life decision and has major implications, not only to the person who is a migrant but in relation to their families here in the Philippines and the Australian family that they are marrying into. And it is not possible for an agency to do that work on their own. It does require a lot of assistance and a great degree of cooperation to see that the service's standards, and all the things that we take for granted in Australia, are available to both the Australian citizen who is marrying and to the Filipino who is migrating.

Atty. Ed Ancog, Commission on Human Rights:

The Commission on Human Rights was created as a reaction to the many abuses committed by the Marcos administration. Its main function is to investigate cases of human rights violations, of civil and political rights — meaning abuses by soldiers, abuses by policemen, abuses by insurgents and also by government officials. The CHR has been doing its job since 1988 and it has been able to bring down the cases of human rights violations. And because of this, the commission should now look into other concerns, meaning there are also the so-called cultural, social and economic rights.

I think the reason why we are here is because last February I was sent to head the delegation that went to Sydney and

Canberra where we studied the human rights system in Australia which is very much different from ours. Their concerns are those with disabled people. They have an entirely different system in Australia, mostly concerned on discrimination. Before I came back, some Filipino groups brought attention to Filipino women immigrants who went to Australia and who were killed, and some who mysteriously disappeared, and some who have been abused. Many asked if we can do anything about the problem.

The Commission is also concerned with the rights of women. In fact there is somebody from our office who is attending many fora for women. If our Commission finally decided to make a study about these women, certainly I would be willing to take part in it. There is a plan of CHR to set up a Women's Rights Desk. We already have a desk for children's rights. Even if I would not be directly involved with it, I could definitely give input on these issues. Incidentally there is also the task force that is meeting quite often right now for the protection of women which came after the Flor Contemplacion case. One of the concerns they are tackling now is how to protect the rights of Filipinos who are being abused particularly Filipinos who are going to Australia to marry. I got the impression that a lot of NGOs are already addressing this particular problem now. I keep in my mind all about these and in whatever way I think I can help like bringing the message to the Commission as a concern that they can focus upon now. Now that the insurgency is waning, we can focus now on the rights of women.



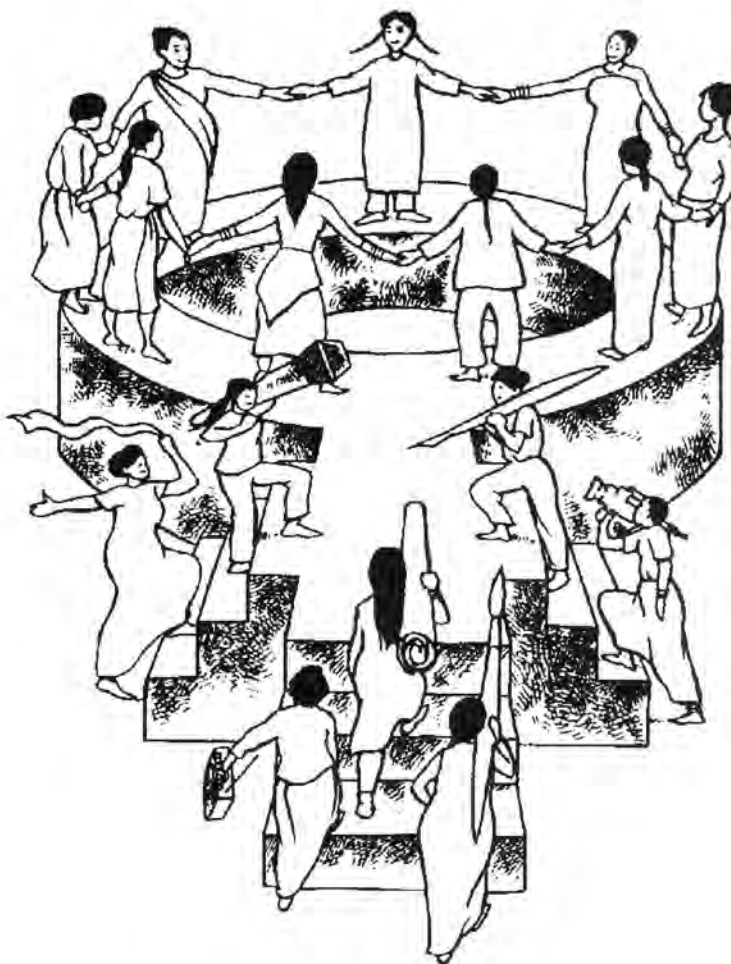
Photo: CATW-P

Cecilia: What you told us about the Centre for the Rights of Children within the Commission on Human Rights is very interesting because for three days now we've been debating why the protection of children, particularly from sexual exploitation, stops when they turn 18 years old and not having corresponding concern for the over 18s. So that's welcome news that you may have a centre for women's rights as well.

I would like to tell the panel, the rest of us already know, but the panel may not know that, the Australian tour participants includes Dr Meredith Burgmann, who is a parliamentarian with the legislative council of New South Wales and Sabina Lauber, a lawyer with the Australian Law Reform Commission. Another tour participant, here in an individual capacity, is Vicky Ponsford from the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs in Australia.

The Study Tour has run as follows: the participants have spent about ten days first looking at the so-called entertainment establishments in Manila, Quezon City and Pasay City. And then they went to Angeles City because there is a concentration of Australian involvement in Angeles City. They had the privilege of being thrown out from a hotel in Angeles because they were seen as trouble makers because of their interest in sexual exploitation of women by their countrymen. The issues that came up are multiple. The question about foreign ownership of the establishments, the operations of these establishments, where often prostitution runs, and the questions about other illegal activities that these establishments carry out, and the questions about gender relationship between foreign nationals and very vulnerable women, and hosts of others.

Aurora "Oyie" Javate De Dios, National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women: The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women is under the President and the Cabinet and we report directly to the President on matters concerning women every quarter. In fact, tomorrow I am going to meet with him and the Cabinet to report our preparation for Beijing. So, I was thinking that because this is such an urgent and current issue, I might pop up the issue at some point of that meeting. In any case, our work as a policy advisory group is to alert the Government on problems of women and to propose recommendations to the legislative body, as well as to the line agencies, as to how we can tackle together the problems of women. The main area of work of the Commission that's been done is to sensitise and train line agencies from department heads down to assistant secretaries. To sensitise them to the issue as well as to keep them aware of the special needs and distinct requirements of women especially at the grassroots level. Line agencies, by law and through our legislation in RA 7912, should be allocating a portion of their department resources to women's projects.



As to the question of trafficking of women, this is a major concern of the Commission. In the Flor Contemplacion issue, we were requested by the Cabinet to become a member of the Gancayco Commission, and together with that Commission, our Executive Director went around getting all the inputs from concerned people, especially the survivors, and the victims of trafficking and abuse of migrant women. And they have been all around in different countries to finally put together a master plan for the Government response to the problem of migrant women.

I can see that the input of the Philippine–Australian group on sexual exploitation and trafficking of women will be such an invaluable information for policy groups like the National Commission on Women because on this basis we can ask the Senate and the Congress to do something about the legislation of these acts that are detrimental to our Filipino women. Apart from that, all the other strategies that we can work on together with the line agencies will have to be fleshed out as soon as we are able to get the full picture of what is the extent, as well as the magnitude of trafficking, that this group has brought to the core of public issue.

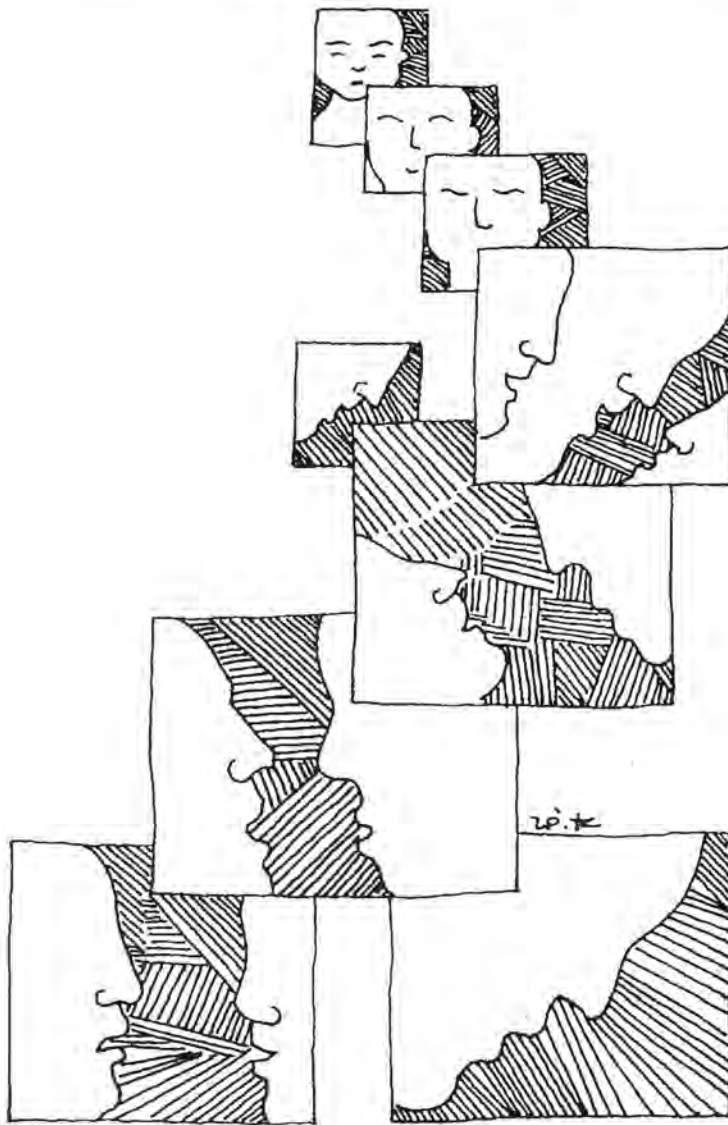
Melba: I would like to direct this question to Arlene Celestino of the Department of Tourism. We are very much concerned with the number of bars and hotels in Angeles City that are managed by Australian nationals but are fronted by the women, the wives of the owners. It seems to us that everyone in the town has accepted that. When you ask them, you know the real owner is the Australian, the wife is just a dummy. Has the Department of Tourism also accepted this? And what measures are you taking to correct this illegal situation?

Arlene Celestino, Department of Tourism: With regards to hotels, they can be owned 100 per cent by foreign equity because under the BOI (Board of Investments), they have opened this industry to foreigners. With regards to the bars, the bars are not under DOT, we do not accredit bars. With the devolution of our regulatory powers, this licensing power has been given to the local government and the accreditation is only optional.

Sabina: My question is directed to Atty. Ancog. I have been quite amazed with the extent of prostituted women and children in the Philippines, something that I wasn't aware of before I came to this country. There is a large number of women and children involved in the industry and a large proportion of Filipino men that seem to be using those services. It involves quite a gross violation of human rights particularly the human rights which the Filipino Government is obliged to protect under international instruments and also under the domestic laws. I don't see these laws actually being reinforced in the Philippines and I'd like to know how the Filipino Government is trying to enforce those human rights and your comments on that.

Ed: Of course we are very much aware of the problem of prostitution. This is a reactive kind of setup. We have heard complaints about the violations of children and against women which is part of our own general mandate under the Constitution. The thing is that there are other agencies of the Government that are in the forefront in the protection of the rights of women and children. Our Children Centre is a new agency, only put up last year. We are concerned about the rights of women, but we are not the ones who go out into the field and find out about the conditions of women. What we do is just be ready whenever there are complaints about abuses against women and children. We investigate these and prosecute these. That is mainly what we do in the Commission on Human Rights.





Debbie: My first question is, have there been prosecutions so far? How are you going to ensure that your organisation will be perceived as having some teeth? What do you hope to achieve in your organisation?

Ed: The Children Centre is more of a co-ordinating body. The ones that do all of the work here are our offices in the regions. What we have here is some kind of a nerve centre. And if there are complaints about human rights violations, we respond and inform our regional offices.

With regards to prosecution, last week I received a letter, a report from our general office in Zamboanga about a 12-and-a-half year-old girl who was abused by her own father. She was abused four times, and when she initially complained, the mother begged her not to pursue the case. The father is the bread winner, and when he goes to prison, there is no way to earn a living for the family. To the credit of the child, she is very courageous. She went to our regional office and said, "I would like to file a complaint". We got her

statement, the case was filed in court, and the father was sentenced to life imprisonment, and on three other occasions he was sentenced to death. We actually cannot say that we have a special concern for children because we act on all kinds of complaints and violations. But if there is something that involves a child, we offer more concern because it involves a lot of agencies. We have to co-ordinate with DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development), we have to make sure that the child is taken away from the parents if the parents are the ones committing the violations.

Emere: I have a question for Arlene Celestino. You mentioned earlier that the investors should comply with the minimum standard before they will finally be given accreditation. Would you like to tell us what are these minimum standard that you require?

Arlene: This minimum standard is with regards to the facilities of the establishments, hotels, which will assure the tourists of comfort and convenience. And some documentary requirements, for example, comprehensive general liability insurance for guests which will cover bodily injury.

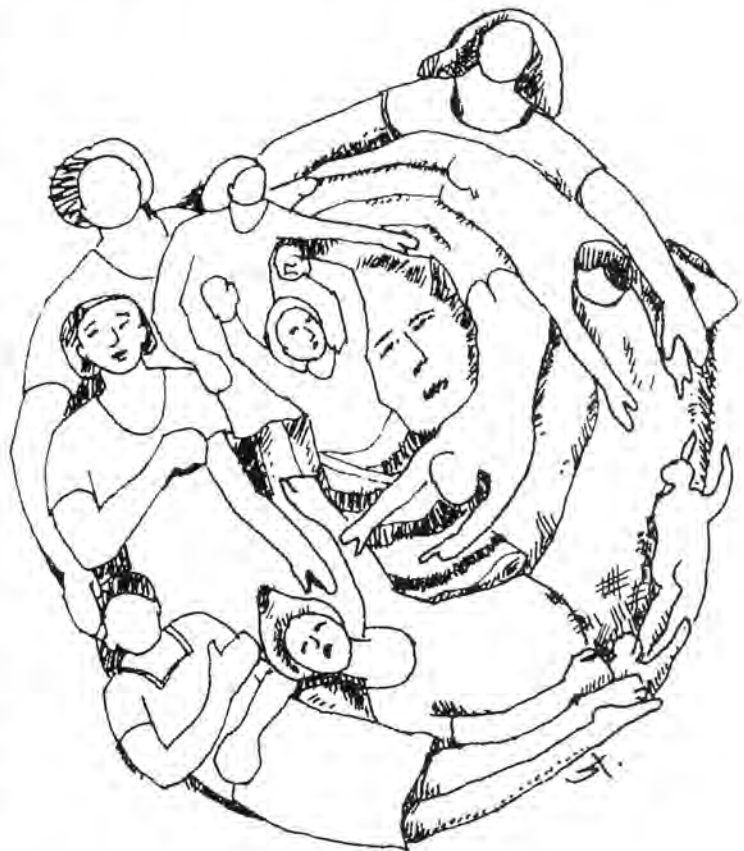
Vicky: I would like to address my question to Aurora. Since I've been in this country I've been really concerned about the position of women and the extent of the exploitation of women and also the extent of prostitution. In some cases it seems to be that women have no choice, this is the option that they go into for survival and I'm just interested to know if the Philippine

Government is taking any action to improve the status of women in this country. What can be done?

Oyie: By law, the National Commission of Women is supposed to monitor the implementation of laws that affect women and, in fact, we can recommend law that will improve the status of women. It is not the sole responsibility of the National Commission of Women, but we do take the lead in trying to show the way as to how the Government can work for the interest of women. We do this basically by training and making sure that government agencies are aware of the special needs and problems of women. And that in their planning of projects, that they not only allocate resources for women but that the programs are geared to sectors of women, especially to the disadvantaged and marginalised women, among whom are the prostituted women.

As far as legislation is concerned, we have had some very modest gains in this and we have a landmark law in old RA 7912, the Women in Nation Building and Development Act. This law makes sure that the principle of equality between men and women is respected in law. It is also in our Constitution, Article 7. Apart from that we also have the anti-sexual harassment law and law for micro-credit for women. Having said that, in terms of legislation, we are still very inadequate. Our rape laws are antiquated and the NGOs have been pressuring the Government. We have been working with the NGOs on these to change these antiquated laws to reflect the complexity of the problems as well as to compel the Government to provide support and services for rape survivors and victims.

As far as prostitution in this country is concerned, nowhere can you deny that poverty by itself is the greatest push factor why women go into this. And because of that we had consulted thoroughly with a lot of sectors, among them NGOs who are now in this room working on those areas, also with government agencies, with the Department of Justice. And the aim of this policy study, which we did for about a year, was to analyse and to try to understand why women go into prostitution and what would be some of the ways in which society, Government and NGOs, and other groups, can help in diminishing, reducing and eventually eradicating prostitution. So we've done the first step, in our policy study. The second thing that we did is to consult the local government to find out if prostitution does exist and to what extent it exists in the different parts of the country. What we have



established is what the NGOs have been saying all along, that prostitution is illegal only on the books, but in reality and in practice it is all over the place. The proof is that most of the municipalities which responded to our questions said that they have ordinances and health checks that are directed to what is referred to as "entertainers", and that is an indirect way of saying that they do have prostitution in their area, although they would not really say that it is prostitution.

So we had gone that second step and we hope that the findings of this group will amplify what we had established in this policy study. This would then give us the needed information and the data to proceed with talking to line agencies like the Department of Tourism as to what strategic directions our tourism is taking. Is it taking trends towards making the women as the come on to tourism, or is it enhancing our tourism by building up our cultural heritage, and so forth and so on.

We are also working closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs. In fact we are training diplomats and consuls to take up issues of women, and short of doing this agency by agency, we recommend to the executive level to take drastic action. I think that we do not have the monopoly of concerns of women, but I think it is a government concern and there is an important imperative to do something really drastic to address the needs of prostituted women — by first of all decriminalising them and taking off all the criminal penalties that are concentrated on women, and to try to look at how men may be held accountable for their actions that victimise women and increasingly a number of children. Thirdly, we will come up with a legislation that will reflect both our intent of criminalising prostitution as a system that oppresses women and that puts them in sexually exploitative situations. And respecting the rights of women, who for reasons they cannot avoid, are still there, and not put them in jail without any support service.

Cecilia: The law that Aurora mentioned, RA 7912, also carries the provision that 10 per cent of foreign aid should be directed to women's projects. Australia is a large aid giver to the Philippines, and as NGOs we're not feeling too much evidence of this provision RA 7912 to be enforced as of now.

Cally: I noticed in your *Department of Tourism Policy Thrusts for 1994–1995* that your plan doesn't seem to be really taking into account the possible negative social impact of encouraging tourism in the Philippines, particularly for women. I wonder if you have a division that deals with the effects of tourism on women since this is a broadly recognised problem? Your plan also includes the establishment of regional training programs for the women in hospitality industry and personnel, I'd like to know what the upgrading of skills are and is it some way of explicitly supporting prostitution?

Arlene: I think that I cannot answer your question because I am not very much aware of that training. Maybe it should be directed to other divisions involved in the training.

Catherine: Of course I am not an authority figure to speak on behalf of DOT, but as far as my agency is concerned, last week, I think, one of our colleagues, Lucille Rhonda attended an inter-agency meeting in the DOT with a host of other agencies, to discuss the trafficking of women and protection for children. In that respect I would like to believe that certain efforts are being undertaken to ensure that the social consequences of the tourism program would be adequately addressed. I believe that after this consultation there should be another series of consultations with NGOs and hopefully the CFO is to get input. While this may not cover immigration issues in general, we know that you have very specific concerns about trafficking



Photo: CATW-P



and violence against women and children which we could share with agency representatives during this consultation. Of course, Oyie here would be in a position to help echo these concerns before the appropriate bodies of government.

Oyie: It seems to me that one of the agencies we have missed out in this consultation is the Department of Local Government which is responsible for giving licenses to bars and other establishments in barrios and barangays. One of the things that we have done in the policy paper on prostitution was to call in the local government and make them accountable for things that are happening at their level. I welcome the suggestion of Catherine. I do hope that we would come to a point where the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, DOT, and the local government, Department of Justice and the prosecutory arm of the Government (the national police, which is the agency we are training at the moment on violence against women) — I hope that these two elements, the local government involvement and accountability, and number two, the accountability of the police and prosecutory agencies of the Government, will be put together.

Sarah: I just want to reiterate what Cally here said towards the DOT. I believe you are not aware of the issue of training but I want to bring out again the social impact of tourism and if there has been any study on it whatsoever, which I'm sure must be under your jurisdiction. And also, if the study has been done, what have the findings been?

Arlene: Actually last week we held a round table discussion on child prostitution and this was in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare. In the discussion we invited those who are in the tourism establishments to attend, as well as other government offices. The objective is to formulate a specific plan to operationalise each agency's commitment to curb child prostitution or minimise child prostitution.

Jorgette: This question is relevant to the issues we have discussed in this study tour and hopefully will address the stereotyped image of Filipino women in Australia — that Filipino women are 'mail-order-brides' and bar girls. My question is: how come the responsibility of orientation for cross-cultural marriage is only imposed on Filipino women and not on Australian men marrying Filipino women?

Catherine: Again, the CFO instituted a guidance and counselling program about 5 to 6 years ago not because it is a function for the Government to carry that out, particularly the CFO, but we saw the need for an agency to implement this service. During the time that we were starting this, we introduced a voluntary program for foreigners marrying Filipinas and for foreigners sponsoring Filipinas for migration to other countries. In the absence of a law, right now the CFO cannot just require any foreigner who would like to sponsor a fiancée or spouse to undergo the counselling program as a prerequisite to his sponsoring a Filipino wife or fiancée. There are very specific efforts however, on the part of the Government right now to extend this requirement, not just to Filipinas marrying foreign nationals, but even to

foreigners. I would like to emphasise that we are primarily looking at the possibility of requiring additional documents from foreigners intending to marry Filipinas or intending to sponsor Filipinas for migration to other countries. We are not just talking about migration to Australia because Australia just comes third from among five major countries of destination. In 1993, we counselled a total of more than 19,000 women who left the country as fiancées or spouses of foreign nationals and every one of them underwent this counselling program where they are informed more than anything else about their rights, about their privileges as migrants to Australia and other countries, about agencies that exist, about possible support they can ask from existing agencies in Australia or the Philippine Government, if the need arises for them to ask for help.

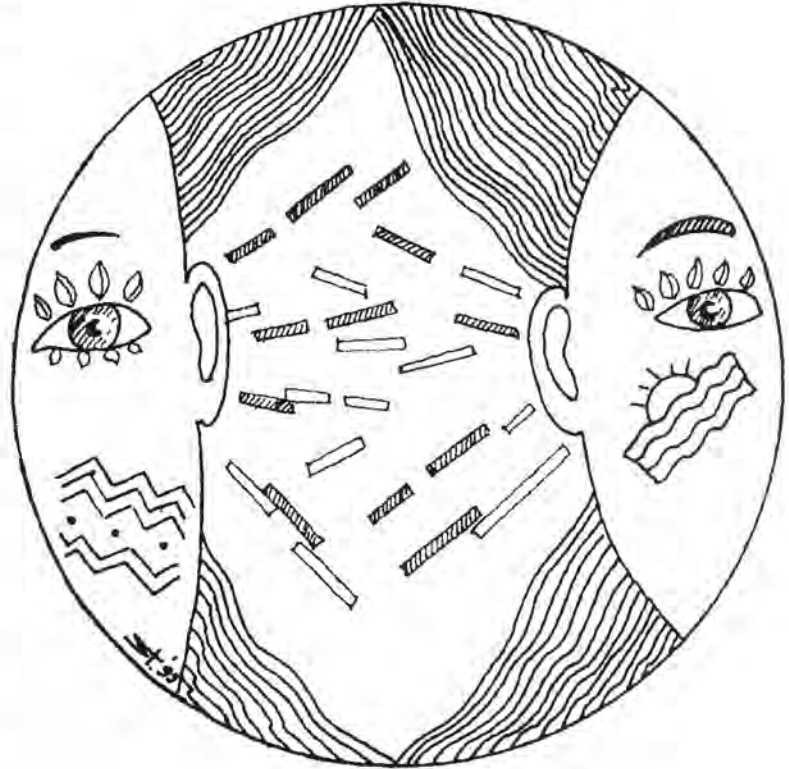
As far as the foreigners are concerned, I was discussing with Cheryl (of the Australian Embassy) a few weeks ago, whether it would be practical and realistic for the Philippine Government to initiate a law that would require foreign nationals to submit additional documentations about their background before they can be allowed to marry here in the Philippines. We realised, for example, that out of the 19,500 women that we counselled, 55 per cent left the country already married to their foreign partners. Once they go through our counselling sessions, we know that many of them would definitely leave because at the back of their head "it is worth giving it a try" despite the risks that we tell them of during the counselling program. We are not here to discourage, we are here to enlighten people, so that they can make informed decisions. On this other 45 per cent of women who have very little chances of changing their minds, we know that counselling should come at a much earlier stage in the migration process, and in the absence of law right now, we actually conduct information programs in the provinces and we are inviting NGOs to take part in this. As a matter of fact, I was just talking to Oyie before the session that we would like to invite you to join us in our training program and information campaign. We have produced comic magazines that are distributed free in schools, in provinces, at the grassroots level in coordination with NGOs and Government agencies.

Cheryl: It is important that we make sure that the person has much information about what will happen when she gets to Australia. Something the Study Tour has provided, in a way, are the contact to communities, which is something we can follow up on this end as well. For example, for those who going to the north coast of NSW, there is a person you should know. The information we can give people will end up being something that may not necessarily change their lives, but will help them to settle in Australia. There is no way we can force somebody to sit and listen to any kind of information from us if they are Australian citizens, but we encourage and invite participation, especially in cases where the Australian husband had previously sponsored and married a Filipino and is planning to marry again. Those men I have spoken to at length, and carefully, of what they are doing in front of the person they are marrying if possible, so that she has access to that information. Australia has a very stringent law on privacy and we do need to ensure that we do not disclose information given to the department that has not yet been given publicly. But I must say that one of the things in the interview, is that if the man does not disclose information about himself to his partner, that will raise the question as to the intention of continuing the relationship. [...tape unintelligible. Ed.] I can personally vow to the fact that I have raised that as an issue to someone who was sitting opposite me in that interview. I have raised, I believed diplomatically, but quite bluntly, that such information should be shared to his partner. But the Filipino women sometimes say, "but he loves me and he'll be different this time, and the women he married before are not good women, I am a good woman." Consequently she thinks she is doing the right thing.

Pastor Tigas, UCCP: I would like to share with you that I have performed many foreign marriages, so I am partly to blame. And the church too, because there are no facts transmitted to us about the character of the foreign husband. All they need to do is to go to their embassy in the Philippines and show us a copy of their legal capacity to marry. And besides I charge 2,000 pesos per marriage, but I am feeling somewhat guilty now. I think the

church has a role in this issue of prostitution. The church should do its job to raise the consciousness of our parishioners. And my question is, what is the extent of church in Australia in their job in raising the consciousness of their people to confront sexual exploitation in the Philippines.

Melba: I have brought this issue up many times in different churches and other NGO gatherings but always, the sympathy is from church women. We still haven't got sympathy from the men in churches. But overall the churches have not been really responsive. Only the Uniting Church in Australia has been responsive, but still it is not enough. The Catholic Church? It hasn't done anything.



Cheryl: It is one of the things that I think many Filipinos have difficulty coming to terms with in going to Australia. Australia is a very secular society, it is not like the Philippines. It does not pay the same lip service to organised religion that the Philippines does. And one of the things that comes out in the new video is to show migrants to Australia some indication on how different and difficult some of those aspects in life are going to be. I'm aware that some Filipino groups in small country towns in Australia have actually completely revitalised and reinvigorated the Catholic church. I look forward with great interest to seeing the same kind of social justice coming from the Catholic church here as well. But there is a real difference between the amount of power that the church wields in this country in comparison with Australia which is basically a secular society.

Edgar, ECPAT: What happens after the DOT withdraws accreditation? Would it mean that the establishments would be closed or, will it only be losing its Class AA classification?

Arlene: It is sad to say that the establishment can still operate even without the accreditation from our office. If for example they file a case, it has to be resolved in court. The accreditation is only voluntary on their part. It is only a thing of housekeeping.

Debbie: When we ask the embassy about how we can let the women know that the men they are marrying would not be of good character, the Privacy Act prevents them from providing information in Australia. But why is not the Philippine Government asking for the information that is required. Why doesn't the CFO ask for the certificate of clearance say, with regard to health, especially with regards to the mental health of the sponsor or to ask whether the applicant is free from previous convictions.

Catherine: As I mentioned earlier the basis for CFO existence is the law which mandated it to provide policy recommendations. But on recommendations of the problems that are not being addressed, five to six years ago we decided to go into service provision and that is why we have the counselling for the fiancés and spouses. However, when we talk about additional documentation, requiring them by law to submit additional documentation, we are not

empowered to do that as yet. Although we made recommendations nine years ago and nothing has been done about it, CFO cannot do this without any sufficient basis.

However, we have gone a step beyond this, and I should recognise the help that the Australian Embassy has given. They are now requiring applicants of a fiancé or spouse visa to undergo the CFO counselling program before an application is accepted. This was not done before. Despite the risk they [the Embassy] are taking, they made it a requirement. I think this is a very positive note that should be nurtured. With the help of the NGOs, with inputs like this, you pushing for certain reforms, I am sure that we will be able to realise this in the near future, if not from Australia because of its very stringent laws, then hopefully you can help us here in the Philippines to come up with a protective mechanism for women. Nine years ago, nothing was done, but with the consciousness right now of our citizens overseas, I guess Congress has no choice but to take this pact with us and require additional documentation for foreigners.

I'd like also to put some justice in the statement earlier that the church has not done enough in Australia. We have a lot of partners in the religious sectors in Australia, like the Good Shepherd Sisters and so many other orders, and I think this is a very good start and it needs to be nurtured and needs to be harnessed further with your help and constant input.

Sarah: How long has the 100 per cent ownership been around? We've been to Angeles and Puerto Galera and many of the local governments haven't heard about it, and they seem to have to no idea that this law exists. There seems to be a real communication problem here and it makes the situation even more difficult to know what is exactly going on, and who is responsible for what. Also I just want to ask again, if there was any social impact study of tourism on the local community and how it is aggressively being pursued in this country?

Arlene: In regards to foreign investment, this is governed by the Board of Investment (BOI). Of course there are certain requirements with regards to foreign investors.

Ed: I came from the BOI but that was a long time ago. But I know as a matter of policy that whenever there is an industry that is recognised as potential for developing or generating employment in the Philippines, the BOI declared that particular activity as one that is allowed 100 per cent foreign ownership and there are certain privileges that are given. But I think what (Sarah) is relating to is about these bars and other like establishments. It is only the big ones that are allowed to bring in the capital here and are allowed also to repatriate investments outside once they are able to generate some income out of this. We are talking about big hotels, big establishments, but not these bars. I am not so sure about the details of it.

Sarah: What about the social impact?

Arlene: We have only carried out a study on environmental impact, no social impact study yet.

Cally: Would there be a plan to do any social impact study?

Arlene: I'll recommend that.

Dee: When we were talking with the representative of AusAID we thought that the aid level that was being given specifically to women's organisations was rather a low percentage and from that we could not remember what percentage is being directed to NGOs dealing with prostituted women. Is it a figure you may be able to help us with right now?

Cheryl: Australia gives \$50 million aid to the Philippines annually. My recollection is that about \$4 million dollars of that is set aside entirely to the health sector for women's programs and of that I think I recall Margaret Thomas telling you that it was around \$400,000 in one of the projects dealing with HIV/AIDS working with the prostitutes collective. I did bring with me a set of documents from AusAID and I left them with Cecilia, and I also brought the information from Consul John Newton on the rule of no impediment to marriage.

Jorgette: This question is related to what we discussed yesterday on migration and prostitution. There were several cases brought to me by the women's services of New South Wales with regards to Filipino women who have no permanent residency status in Australia and therefore they are not entitled to any kind of support and benefits. When these women decided to go back to the Philippines they were not given any support by the Philippine Government and I want to ask if there would any available from now on.

Catherine: A very direct question deserves a very frank answer. No, there is no money for the repatriation of Filipino women who left as fiancées and who did not marry their partners. There is no money for Filipinos who left the country as tourists, worked there, and ultimately would want to come home. But you know, from time to time policies are being extended to accommodate cases depending on urgency. There is no hardened fast rule as far as this is concerned. We have received requests from women wanting to be repatriated to the Philippines. The question is, have they approached the Department of Immigration before, because I believe that as far as policy is concerned, once they get to know the women who have already extended their stay there, and after finding that they have violated immigration law and they are not in the capacity to pay for their return ticket, they would be sent back to the Philippines — deported, in short. But that is a way of coming back to the Philippines. If there are specific requests, can you forward them to our office, but I cannot promise anything definite because of the very limited resources that Government has right now.

Oyie: We are at a stage where we have all arrived at a consensus that this is a problem that we need to pay attention to. It is a serious problem and it affects the bilateral relations of Australia and the Philippines. And it does concern groups like the NGOs who came over to see the real score from our side, and it is again to the credit of the NGOs moving with very limited resources and with all the constraints, legal and political.

It has been pointed out that one of the difficulties of dealing with the problems involving foreigners and nationals in the Philippines is the fact that there are no laws, and second, that with the absence of law therefore, there is only so much you can do. I'd just like to give an example of how countries can take affirmative action on this question. I think more and more we are realising that problems such as these cannot be solved simply from one end to the other, it has to be coordinated globally, and of course the first line of action should be the bilateral level.



Having said that, Belgium, which has some problem, not a big one compared to Australia or Japan which I think has the most serious problem, initiated an investigation of a series of trafficking incidents a couple of years ago, and they did so by sending their police investigators over to the Philippines and inviting their counterparts in Belgium to consult with

the range of NGOs that are involved in this problem, from Manila to Luzon to Aparri. After having come out with enough data and information, they recommended to the Government: One, a bilateral agreement to the effect that there would be a two-year project in which Belgium and the Philippines, through the instrumentality of the NGOs, will come out with a legal and socio-economic study of the causes and consequences of trafficking. Two, an education training program in order to raise the consciousness of the public on trafficking in women. The third, which we have pushed for very much, was not accepted because it involved a lot of money for counselling and the socio-economic part of the program. But I'm saying that perhaps governments with the means, and not so much the means but the resource and the political will, should move and open the doors to address this problem in a more affirmative way. In Belgium, for instance, it took the King to move Belgium to accept and recognise this problem of sex trafficking on the highest policy level. He himself moved the Government to enact a law. First they had a year-long parliamentary investigation, after which they enacted a law, and this law is a landmark law affecting all of you. The law in essence gives the Belgium Government, or mandates the Government, to apply the principle of extra-territoriality in cases of trafficking where a Belgian national is found guilty of initiating and effecting trafficking activities in another country. This is what we should watch out for and examine carefully. And it did not stop on the legal part, it was followed up immediately by partnership with the Government and with the NGOs.

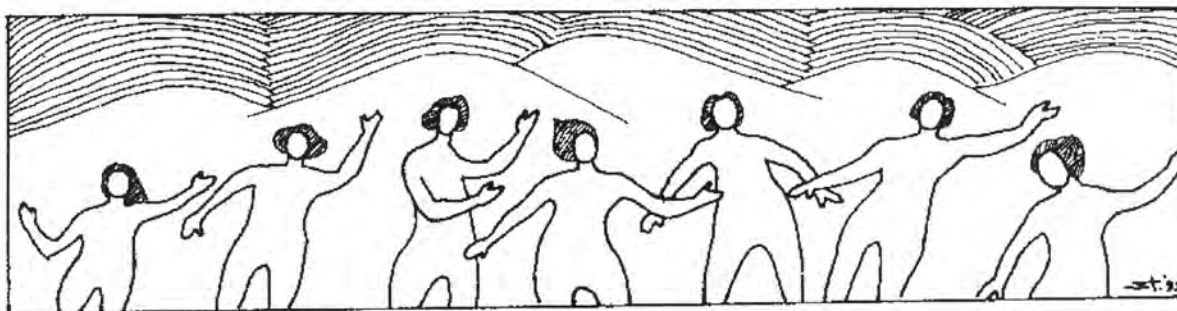
This concluded the 3-day dialogue...

During the morning of July 3, a press conference was held at which the Dialogue Statement reprinted on pages 9 & 10 was presented to the media.



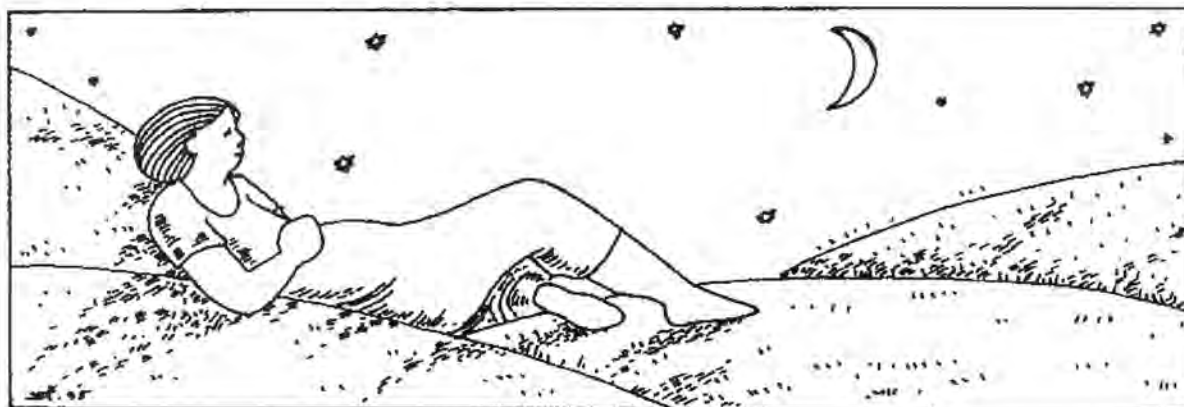
Photo: CATW-P

A Night of Celebration and Solidarity





All Photos on this and preceding page: CATW-P



THEY CALL US EVERYTHING ELSE EXCEPT VICTIMS

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

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

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

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

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

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

so helplessly enslaved by their needs,
and we would use them, seduce them,
bribe them, harass them, seduce them.
reduce them to begging little boys.
they call us everything else
except what we really are.
now they talk of dividing us
between those who were forced
and those who were supposed to have a choice.
between those who pretend to be old
and those who pretend to be young.

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

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



Graphic: ONNA/WOMEN from MANUSHI

About the Author: Richie Valencia-Buenaventura heads SBS Radio's Filipino program group. She wrote this poem during the Study Tour.

Reprinted from: KASAMA vol.9 no.5, Sept/Oct '95, the newsletter of Solidarity Philippines Australia Network.

Sex Tourism & Trafficking

Study Tour Ejected from Angeles Hotel

FROM June 19 to July 4 fifteen women from Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney, Brisbane, Newcastle, Coffs Harbour, and New Zealand were in the Philippines on an exposure/study tour investigating the involvement of Australians in the Philippine sex industry. On the fourth day of the tour the group met with local government officials in the mayoral office of Angeles City. But in the evening they were unwelcome guests for the city's bars, clubs and hotels. **EMERE DISTOR** describes the events of that night and traces the sex tour route from Angeles to Apuao.



GARY GRIFFIN, the manager of Bonanza Hotel in Angeles City is a different breed of businessman. Instead of inviting guests into the hotel, he is kicking them out — as was the case of the 15 participants of a study tour who were ejected by Mr Griffin upon discovery that the group was in the city to investigate Australian involvement in the Philippine sex industry.

Mr Griffin, a New Zealand national who had lived in Australia, was so possessed with arrogance that he even threatened the group that their "status" as visitors would be checked by the Australian Federal Police in Manila. Later in the tour, the group met with officials of the Australian Embassy in Makati which included a few from the Federal Police who although acquainted with Mr Griffin had still not heard a word from him nor from Rose, his Filipina wife.

Not to be mistaken as a classic case of sour graping, Bonanza is not necessarily a desirable accommodation. In fact if one were to be snotty, the hotel should not even expect to receive an imaginary star let alone the three-star rating given by the Department of Tourism. To begin with, one is destined to walk through a corridor with both walls decorated in glossy full colour posters of almost naked Asian women.

Upon entering the room, noisy air conditioning welcomes the occupants, one of whom will be unfortunate enough to sleep underneath the irritating cold-box. With a quick look around the room you could experience an instant craving for potato crisps as you catch sight of the chipping beige wallpaper. And if your crisps-craving should make you thirsty, the drinking glass beside the bed

is horrifying to be even near one's head, more so to drink from.

However, the circumstances surrounding the ejection of the group did not begin with complaints about the ambience and sanitation of the hotel but was started off when a news item about the study tour appeared in an Australian newspaper the day most participants left Australia. The article, written by Nick Cater entitled "Women Target Sex Traders", had obviously reached the powerful Australian business network in Angeles City who raised the alarm that this group of women are off to create "trouble" for the entrepreneurs. "...To embarrass men taking part in the sex industry," was how Cater ended his article — a statement offensive enough to cause "discomfort" for Australian business in the city.

Judging from the series of events that occurred prior to the Bonanza incident, it was obvious that the Australian network had prepared a calculated effort to sabotage the study tour's purposes. Reliable sources said that the businessmen had a meeting a few days before the arrival of the delegates in Angeles. The local group which organised the billeting for the participants was refused by two Australian-owned hotels located at the centre of the city's red light district and was finally accepted but eventually ejected by Bonanza. Another response to the presence of the study tour was that all Australian-managed bars along Fields Avenue and Diamond Subdivision posted in their entrances the following new guidelines: "NO CAMERAS, NO VIDEO AND NO UNACCOMPANIED LADIES ALLOWED" — all these efforts to make bar-hopping for the exposurists nearly impossible.

The next day, the study tour participants, many of whom are Philippine-born migrants living in Australia, filed a formal complaint of harassment and grave coercion against the owner of Bonanza with the police in Balibago. In the afternoon of the same day, a policeman visited Bonanza Hotel to conduct initial investigations. Mr Griffin was nowhere in sight but his wife, Rose, told an outrageous and, needless to say, untruthful version of the incident. According to Rose, some of the members of the study tour group refused to show their passports when filling in their check-in forms and, supposedly, this refusal caused the receptionist to become suspicious and so she requested the bags of the newly arrived guests be checked for security reasons. In her bizarre account of the events that followed, Rose claimed that the hotel management rang the police fearing that the guests were hiding something, but the guests "left" before the police arrived.

The owners of the Bonanza Hotel attempted to mislead the police into believing that the group were not even allowed to check-in their luggage. One can only imagine Rose's reaction when the policeman asked for the bed sheet left inside one of the rooms by a member of the group. Forgetfulness in this instance can be applauded as a "blessing in disguise." Had not the sheet been left inside the room, the hotel owners would be given an opportunity to parade their distorted version of the incident.



Artist: Elva Albacite

Angeles City is just one of the many areas in the Philippines investigated by members of the study group called *Campaign Against Sex Tourism and Trafficking in Filipino Women* (CAST). For sixteen days, participants of the tour witnessed the extent to which Australians are involved in sex tourism and trafficking in the Philippines. An Australian-based group called Network Against Sex Tours says an estimated 50,000 Australian men leave the country as sex tourists every year (*The Age*, 23 June 1991). But the role of Australians in the exploitation of Filipino women is not confined to being only a "user"; they are also "suppliers". Mr Ed Pamintuan, the incumbent mayor of Angeles City, had admitted that at least 80 per cent of the 152 nightclubs and other entertainment spots in Angeles are owned and operated by Australians (*The Courier Mail*, 25 July 1995).

Just 80 km from Manila, Angeles City has nothing to offer foreign tourists who expect fresh air, scenic views or even beaches. Still recuperating from the devastation of Mount Pinatubo, Angeles is hardly the place where you can breath fresh air, sight-see or swim. Like the many hard-stricken areas affected by the Pinatubo eruption, Angeles' air, water and scenery are as bad as Manila's. Defenceless visitors to Angeles are welcomed by *lahar* dust seeping into the pores. Instead of a stretch of beach resort, tourists are visually assaulted by relocation areas for families displaced by the eruption or the view of a fractured bridge and *lahar*-filled river. And yet, the influx of foreign tourists remains as steady as the time when Clark Air Base was still in operation. The Department of Tourism in Angeles confirmed that Australians comprised the largest number out of the 120,000 tourists who visited Central Luzon last year with Angeles City as their preferred destination (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 3 July 1995). To service the popularity of Angeles City, Australian tourists can board a shuttle bus from the international airport in Manila straight to Angeles for a reasonable charge.

Packaged sex tours are very popular with Australian men and are promoted through tour and travel agencies with business networks in Manila, Bangkok, United Kingdom, northern Queensland, Brisbane, and Victoria. Since Angeles City cannot offer all the Five "S's" (Sun, Sea, Surf, Sex and San Miguel) as a package, then this is where the sex tourism network comes into the picture. One notorious agency, named after a popular Australian icon, is in fact part of a corporation that owns coaches, a bar, five hotels and two resorts in the Philippines. Holding a complete structure under its corporate wing, the company became renowned for very cheap packaged tours to the Philippines. To beat competition, the company's travel agencies specialised in 21-day visa-exempt holidays in the

Philippines at a price roughly equivalent to two weeks wages of an average Australian worker.

Other foreign businessmen in Angeles City observed that their Australian counterparts are as tightly knit as the Chinese and this culture, they believed, compliments its tourism network all around the Philippines. Brochures and leaflets of resort destinations can be found in every Australian establishment in Angeles City which is often the first stop of tourists looking for local women as tour companions.

More often than not, the depiction of Filipino women in brochures and other materials is degrading. Photos of two or more Filipinas with a white male are typical in advertising tourist spots. Commodification of Filipino women is illustrated in the June 1995 issue of *Bayside Breeze*, a publication distributed free to expatriates in Angeles and La Union, which carried an advertisement inviting tourists to visit a resort which offers "Beautiful Ladies" or "Lovely Ladies". (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 3 July 1995).

Australian men who join these packaged tours are between the ages of 25 to 50 years old and are mostly working class. A steady stream of male customers can be attributed not only to the explicit promotions but also to the men who spread the news about these exotic holidays. Although Australian men have been frequenting the Philippines for more than a decade, their reputation among local women working in the "entertainment" industry is far from popular. Compared to the Americans who used to lord over the red light district of Angeles City, Australians are stingy, quite unlike their predecessors who were very loose with money. Sex workers in Angeles can, in fact, distinguish Australian men from other foreign customers not because of their accent but the way they bargain over the price for the women's services. Some women are wise not to be out-manoeuvred at the bargaining table but a few women, new in the industry, usually fall prey to men who promise to bring them to Australia. Aware that most women enter the sex industry to meet foreigners who can offer "green pastures", foreign men pretend that they will marry the women to get free sex and a willing domestic.

Apua is an 80-hectare island located in the province of Bicol. With a free domestic ticket being promoted by Philippine Airlines, the island can be reached within 45 minutes by plane followed by 3 hours in a bus and 30 minutes boat ride. Although the trip may daunt an impatient and not so adventurous tourist, the natural beauty of the island will right away cheer up visitors as experienced *bankeros* draw the ladder to its shores. Classified as a *barangay* of Mercedes, Camarines Norte, the whole island of Apua was bought by Swagman corporation in the early 1980s; they started building

the resort in 1986. It is unknown how much Swagman paid for the island, but it is believed to be one of the biggest investments of the corporation so far. The Apua Grande Resort boasts of its golf course, tennis court, swimming pool, tropical cottages with en-suite facilities, and "an array of wildlife including guinea fowl, Australian sheep, carabaos, ducks, geese, turkeys and varieties of wild birds" (*Leaflet of Apua Grande Island*).

Originally, the island was occupied by a local fishing community. When the Australian company took possession, it pushed the villagers to one end of the island where 300 families are now crowded into a tiny compound of *nipa* huts, shanties, elementary school, and chapel. These locals are not obliged to pay Swagman rent as the company have realised that the poor families cannot afford it in the first place. The retention of the villagers in Apua, however, proved to serve the interests of the newly established resort. During peak seasons, locals are employed at the resort while the fishermen provide a steady supply of fresh seafood.

The transformation of Apua as an island particularly catering to Australian men has been so successful that the resort has gained popularity as an exotic paradise in a country once described as "the land of cunt and contradictions" by one disgusting Australian chauvinist. With fresh air, white sand and gin-clear water, many Australian men invested in Apua by building houses on leased land. Foreigners are allowed by Philippine law to erect a building or a house on land they can lease for 50 years and renew for a further 25 years. Foreign investors like Swagman are exempted by the Department of Tourism because development of a resort falls under "pioneering investment" — a category that legitimately permits foreign investors to buy and not just lease land.

An investigation by some members of the study tour found that there are a total of 12 houses



in Apuao owned by Australian men, four of whom have Filipino women as partners. Prices of a lease on a house and lot being sold on the island fetch from (US) \$45,000 to \$150,000. The proliferation of Australian residents gives local women another means of livelihood as they are hired on a daily basis to perform domestic chores like gardening, cleaning, cooking, child care and washing clothes. The women used to receive 70 pesos (Aus\$1=18 pesos) for a day's labour which is half the legal minimum wage in the Philippines. Of late, the already depressing daily rate was reduced to 50 pesos by employers who are aware that many local women are desperate to compete for housekeeping in the Australian homes at an even lower rate just to augment their family income.

One newly-built cottage on the island is now becoming a focus of concern. Reputedly owned by a Filipina married to an Australian, the fancy cottage was erected as a training centre for prospective "entertainers" bound for Japan. The big in-house training centre is said to be targeting women coming from as far as Cebu and Manila. Built of bamboo, brick, concrete and stone imported from the Visayas, the centre has a number of cubicles, a moderately-sized spa bath and a big barbecue area. Although the training has not yet started, the potential of recruits to be seduced to work as prostitutes catering to sex tourists is a probable scenario that can be used to advantage by the Apuao resort management.

It is seemingly necessary for Swagman at the moment to regain the stream of customers it lost after the workers' union launched a strike at its

main office in Manila on March 18. Nine union officers were dismissed by the management, "on the grounds that they held an unofficial strike last September by meeting for one day to prepare for the upcoming negotiations on the wages as scheduled in their Collective Bargaining Agreement." (Report, KMU International Solidarity Affair, May 1995). Supporters of the nine dismissed officers maintained the picket line in Ermita but it was dismantled twice by gun-wielding policemen. The Apuao resort, which Swagman owns, was eventually affected by the tension between the workers and management in Manila. The island was closed for some months last year because a strong typhoon destroyed many cottages and other infrastructure. As a consequence, many workers were laid-off but the Swagman management refused to give severance pay to the workers. The Apuao resort re-opened early this year with a new management and newly-acquired name: T.S. Resorts, Apuao Grande Island. Incidentally, T.S. stands for Terrence Sayle who is the manager of the Swagman booking office in Brisbane.

by Emere Distor

About the Author: Emere Distor is the Coordinator of the Brisbane Branch of the Centre for Philippine Concerns — Australia. She is a free-lance journalist and an editor of KASAMA, the newsletter of SPAN.

About the Artist: Elva Albacite is a member of CPCA Brisbane Branch. She is a Visual Arts graduate of University of the Philippines-Cebu and Griffith University, Qld College of Arts.

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BONANZA Resort PHIL. INC.



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

Australasian Women's Delegation Confronts Flesh Merchants

REPORT FROM AOTEAROA/NZ BY CALLY SOMMERVILLE

ANGELES CITY & 'THE BONANZA INCIDENT'

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

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

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

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

For instance, we visited a resettlement site for victims of the Mt Pinatubo eruption. Two thousand families live on a block of land without sanitation, running water or electricity, in shacks built out of



salvaged scraps of wood and plastic. One midwife serves the whole community, and a doctor visits once a year. The local government has to date (since 1991), devoted no resources to these people. Ironically, a bridge is continuously being built and rebuilt using Japanese development aid. The bridge lies across a river bed, dried up due to continuous flows of lahar [volcanic debris] brought down by rains from the slopes of Mt Pinatubo. Every time it rains the bridge is swept away, but they keep on rebuilding it. I saw brand new flashy Japanese trucks transporting materials for the building of this

bridge which was about 500 metres from the resettlement site.

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

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

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

As a tourist destination it is hard to see what Angeles City could possibly have to offer. A few hours in the city and it becomes obvious. Angeles City has been, and remains, set up for sex. I doubt that there are any 'family' hotels in the whole of the city. I was not prepared for the extent of the sex industry in Angeles City, envisioning the bars as sex shops, but not the hotels as well. By the end of our

stay I felt that there was no place for women like myself in Angeles City. When I asked an expatriate if he thought I could find a place there in Angeles, he looked at me as if I was mad, but was unable to articulate to me that Angeles is run by men for men, and that women are there to sexually serve men as docile wives or as whores.

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

Whilst local officials point out that prostitution is illegal in the city, they appeared to have done little real analysis of, and planning for, the problem of the prostitution of women and children. Indeed, I drew the conclusion that despite official disparagement of prostitution, in reality it is tolerated and even covertly encouraged, as it provides foreign exchange (mostly for the bar and hotel operators — little for the women), and can be considered as the city's main development strategy. While the city planners acknowledged our assertion that foreign operators were exploiting local women and children, their plans for the rehabilitation of prostitutes were to insert them into other foreign-owned businesses, or to train them to work in the new Clark Special Economic Zone. Like other workers in export processing zones these women will be subject to super-exploitation by capital.

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

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

I was confronted by Mr Griffin as we left the hotel. During our conversation he implied that he could get away with sexual harassment as "that is what we call friendliness here in the Philippines", and showed to me how threatened he is by feminism in the West. He said, "I don't want white



women in my hotel because white women don't like white men, so now we're even."

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

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

APUAO GRANDE ISLAND RESORT

We travelled to this 80 hectare island in the Bicol region where the local people have been retained, pushed to one end, as they supply fish and very cheap labour. They work as gardeners, maids, cleaners, cooks, waitresses and bar girls, and domestics for the little kings resident in their large and palatial residences. By contrast the local villagers live in tiny little huts, buy bottled water

from Mercedes – a 40 minute ride on an outrigger – and although proud and apparently well-nourished they live incredibly simply, and are being exploited by the Australasian neo-imperialists. All around the island you can see the beautifully swept paths and tended gardens, at the expense of local drudgery.

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

In the barrio we talked with a local woman. Her very young children were reading comics which to me were shocking indications of the socialisation of young girls into a double standard of sexuality, and a general acceptance of prostitution. In one comic, stories depicted lesbians being beaten by men, a woman finally marrying a man who beat her as she realised she loved him, and a woman trapped in a syndicate. In the "sexi-syndikat" story the pimp was arrested by police but in the end, the woman was blamed for tempting the men!! These really shocked me.

OUTCOMES

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

We noted a trend of very young girls in bars, with reports from prostitutes' groups that the average age of the girls is declining and expected to be



DOMINATOR... BUT FOR HOW LONG? (PHOTO: CPCA)

about 10–12 years over the next decade. I myself spoke to one child in a bar who would have not been aged more than 12 years old.

I think it is important to stress that in the Philippines, and one can safely assume globally, the majority of children who are prostituted are girls. Since New Zealand has recently passed a law which allows paedophiles to be prosecuted for crimes they commit overseas, we should press the Government to launch its own investigation.

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

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

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

The Campaign Against Sex Tourism's analysis of prostitution is very clear. It is sexual exploitation of women by men, and ranks alongside other crimes of violence against women including rape, domestic violence and sexual harassment. Poverty (or the lack of poverty) is not a justification for sexual violence against women. CAST also believes that age is irrelevant, and all prostitution, including that of children, is a violation of human rights. Clearly the



ALL AROUND THE ISLAND YOU CAN SEE THE BEAUTIFULLY SWEEPED PATHS AND TENDED GARDENS, AT THE EXPENSE OF LOCAL DRUDGERY (PHOTO: CPCA)

actions of the Angeles City police and local government, are ignorant, and are targeting the victims rather than the perpetrators. The perpetrators are the men (and a minority of women) who procure, pimp and protect for prostitution rackets, and the 'clients' (better seen as the prostitutes) who should be the targets of police and government activities.

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

About the Author: Cally Sommerville was the sole New Zealander of the 15-strong Australasian women's delegation that travelled to the Philippines in June/July 1995.

This is a condensed version of Cally's report originally printed in *KAPATIRAN*, No.6, Sept 1995. *KAPATIRAN* is the newsletter of Philippines Solidarity Network of Aotearoa (PSNA).



Feminism, Human Rights, and the Traffic in Women

by Sheila Jeffreys

DELEGATES at the 1995 NGO Forum on Women heatedly debated issues surrounding the traffic in women and prostitution. These topics continue to excite controversy in the community of feminist human rights activists and thinkers, as a result of a massive increase and diversification of the global sex industry in recent years. Recent developments in prostitution such as military prostitution and sex tourism combined with the economic consequences of development which have left women and children in dire need, have led to the 'industrialisation' of global prostitution in which huge profits are being made by sex traffickers. The traffickers move women and girls in their hundreds of thousands across borders or from one part of the country to another in Asia, Africa and South America, and from Asia or Eastern Europe to Western Europe, by using promises of jobs or riches, by trickery or kidnapping

or by buying them from their families. For example, 160,000 Nepalese women are estimated to work as prostitutes in India, 20% of whom are under 16. A Federal report in Australia shows that hundreds of Asian women are being forced to sign bonds of up to \$30,000 to work illegally in brothels in Australia.

Feminists engaged in efforts to stop trafficking basically fall into two camps: those who believe that prostitution is a form of work that women freely choose and those who consider prostitution a form of patriarchal abuse of women. Both groups were well represented in Beijing. The first group, including representatives of the Netherlands-based Foundation against Trafficking and the Thailand-based Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), seeks to separate the traffic in "persons" from prostitution entirely, recognising "forced" trafficking of any persons—men, women or children—

for any purposes, as a violation of human rights. What they term "free" prostitution, they define simply as a form of work like any other. The Coalition against Trafficking in Women (CTW), founded by Kathleen Barry and presently directed by Janice G. Raymond and Dorchen Leidholdt, represents the second point of view. The CTW has regional branches in South America and the Pacific and has affiliated human rights and women's organisations in countries such as Tunisia, Burma, Mauritius, France and Belgium. This group argued in Beijing for a new United Nations Convention against Sexual Exploitation, which would define men's use of women in all varieties of prostitution as a violation of women's human rights.

In the last decade, feminist antiviolence activists have looked to the language of human rights as a strategy for countering worldwide violence against women. Though the liberal language of "rights" has some drawbacks, many feminist activists see it as useful in their efforts to demonstrate the seriousness of violence against women. International human rights law provides a means of pressuring governments that are less than zealous in using their national justice systems to protect women. And the work of women internationally around human rights provides a wonderful forum, as at Beijing, to hone feminist understandings of violation and to work together against it.

But feminist antiviolence activists who rely on the language of human rights usually omit prostitution from lists of abuses suffered by women. Although they oppose trafficking, which they define as "forced," they argue that "free" prostitution is an occupation that women freely "choose." By making this distinction, unfortunately, "rights" antiviolence activists create a number of problems for the project of ending the traffic in women. As early as the 1920s and '30s, feminists argued that elimination of trafficking depended upon the abolition of men's use of women in prostitution. Just as antiviolence activists are using the UN today, between the two world wars activists took their campaign to the League of Nations. They argued that "national" prostitution, over which governments were reluctant to act, was the very source of the traffic in women. Men's "need" to use women in prostitution, trafficked or not, was created within national boundaries through attitudes towards women and acceptance of the sexual abuse of women. Brothels, legal or not, acted as intermediary points for the trade; as a consequence, the 1949 Convention against the Traffic in Persons, the culmination of feminist efforts, required member states to outlaw brothels. Unfortunately the Convention was signed by an unusually small number of states, 67 in the first instance, and there was no effective method of enforcement. Many countries outlawed brothels in

the 50s and early 60s whether they were signatories or not.

But since the 1960s progress has been in the opposite direction. International prostitution has greatly expanded, with new forms emerging. Today, for example, sex tourism is a major industry in which men from rich nations exploit the poverty and sometimes clear sexual slavery of large numbers of women and girls. Sex tourism would be relatively untouched by the outlawing of "forced" trafficking. The Philippines is a good example. Women from the Philippines are often trafficked into prostitution in other countries — in other words, this is a sender country for trafficking but not a destination country. In the Philippines, however, thousands of women are "employed" by the sex tourism industry I visited in 1995 on the study tour of sex tourism. The reluctant young women we saw trying to avoid the pawing hands of Australian sex tourists and thousands of British, German, Japanese, and American customers would not be touched by international legislation to outlaw "forced" trafficking. These women "choose" prostitution because they have few, if any, other options for making a living. International trafficking laws would not protect them.

Neither would international laws against trafficking be of much aid in many instances in which women undoubtedly have been trafficked. Young women in Thailand, for instance, who are knowingly exchanged for money to support their families and then taken to be used in urban brothels could not be said to have been "forced." Even when women are obviously victims of force — instances that even the most liberal Dutch rights activists would acknowledge — they are unlikely to be able to prove it. Consider how difficult it is for a woman to prove she has been raped. Narrowing the problem of the abuse of women in the global prostitution industry to a question of "forced" trafficking simply will not be effective in halting men's abuse.

There are many reasons why antiprostitution feminists reject the language of "choice" and "work" for prostitution both in the Philippines and even in the rich world. Activists and theorists such as Evelina Giobbe of the U.S. organization WHISPER (Women Hurt in Systems of Prostitution Engaged in Revolt) and Cecilie Hoigard and Liv Finstad in Norway define men's use of women in prostitution as violence against women. They argue that women in prostitution must dissociate to survive and that such techniques severely damage women's relationships with others, with themselves, and with their sexuality. Post-traumatic stress syndrome, used to describe the symptoms of sexual abuse survivors in cases of incest, is now being used to understand the effects of prostitution abuse on women.

Arguments about "choice" pose considerable problems as well. In relation to other forms of violence against women, we do not generally ask why women are in that situation and why they stay. We would see such a concentration on the motivations of the victims as woman blaming. I see arguments as to "choice" in prostitution as woman blaming, too. They suggest that women may be responsible for prostitution when this is not the case. Women "choose" prostitution because their social and economic opportunities are severely restricted, whether through physical and psychic abuse, including the fact that in many male supremacist cultures women are valued only for their bodies, or because of unequal pay and job opportunities, unequal access to education and the need to care for children. By limiting women's options, male supremacist societies push women into prostitution, an industry constructed by men to service their "needs." Only the severe subordination of women ensures that there will be women available for prostitution.

International concern for the traffic in and sexual exploitation of children is growing very fast as witnessed by press coverage of the first World Congress on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Stockholm in August 1996, attended by representatives of 400 NGOs. Activists in this campaign seek to separate child from adult prostitution on the basis that children cannot really "consent" or choose. But most "adult" prostituted women have entered prostitution under sixteen years and women and children are trafficked together and used in the same way. Only action against the global sex industry as a whole can offer real solutions to the use of children, though children might provide more sympathetic "victims" for governments and media.

The Convention against Sexual Exploitation proposed by the Coalition against Trafficking in Women counters the global sex industry by taking a wider perspective than the antitrafficking movement. Sexual exploitation is defined as including but not being limited to female infanticide, wife and widow murder, battering, pornography, prostitution, genital mutilation, female seclusion, dowry and bride price, forced sterilisation, and forced child-bearing, sexual harassment, rape, incest, sexual

abuse and trafficking, temporary marriage, and sex predetermination. Men's use of women in prostitution—regardless of the context—is defined as an abuse of women's human rights. CTW argues that such abuse violates several important international human rights instruments. These include Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 6 and 9 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which affirm the right of all persons to life, liberty, and the security of persons; Article 4 of the Universal Declaration and Article 8 of the ICCPR, which prohibit slavery and the slave trade; Article 5 of the Universal Declaration and Article 7 of the ICCPR, which recognise the right of all persons to be free from cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. Reinterpretation of these articles to get the abuse of women recognised and included is a hard struggle. The new convention would establish the importance and independence of such rights for women.



Most importantly, this convention would decriminalise the activities of prostituted women on the grounds that these women are not committing any crime and must be relieved of police harassment and legal penalties. It would penalise pimps and clients as the violators of women's human rights. It would require states to provide adequate resources to support women in surviving and leaving prostitution, by providing refuges, housing, education and training, and business loans. The most controversial article is that which penalises pimps and clients. Feminists between the wars identified men's demand as the cause of the abuse of women in prostitution and demanded education and other measures to reduce that demand. So the concern to target men's "need" is not new. It would attack the global sex industry at its source, reducing

men's demand to use women or children for sex, whether on overseas sex tours or in their own neighbourhoods at home.

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About the Author: Sheila Jeffreys teaches at the University of Melbourne and is a member of the Australian branch of CTW.

This article was originally written for the US feminist newspaper, *Sojourner* based in Boston.



Sex Tour with a Difference

by Dr Meredith Burgmann, MLC NSW

IN JUNE THIS YEAR a group of Australian women travelled to the Philippines for a "sex tour with a difference." The delegation was organised by the Campaign Against Sex Tourism and Trafficking in Filipino Women. Half the group were Filipino Australians and half were Anglo Australians. We were investigating Australian involvement in the sex tour industry and the so-called mail order bride industry. What we discovered was quite shocking. Australians have become major players in the sex tour industry in the Philippines and are actively involved in the encouragement of paedophilia.

In Angeles City, which is 80 km from Manila, Australians now own the majority of bars and brothels in the red light area. Angeles City has become the centre for prostitution in the Philippines since the closing down of brothels in Manila's red light area, Ermita. When the Americans left Angeles City in 1991 when the Clark Air Force Base closed, Australians bought up the bars and brothels in the red light area, Balibago. The women's groups in the Philippines estimate that between 60% and 80% of the brothels in Angeles City are owned by Australians.

Sex tourism is an enormous problem for the Philippines Government. It has always displayed an ambivalent attitude to it in the past because sex tourism is the country's third biggest dollar earner. Visitors to the Philippines are 80% male and from some target countries such as Japan it is as high as 95%. The Ramos Government has displayed a moralistic and opportunistic attitude to the trade, blaming the women while taking the foreign dollars. When President Ramos held a press conference during our tour he announced a crack-down on the industry and said that steps would be taken to strengthen the morals of the women. In the Philippines prostitution is illegal for the women but not for the men. This strange brand of Catholicism also means that pressure is put on the women who are mostly good practising Catholics not to use condoms. The women's movement in the Philippines estimates that half of all Filipino men visit prostituted women. This means that the spread of HIV in the Philippines will be an enormous problem in coming years.

The women's delegation received enormous publicity in the Philippines and also huge hostility from the bar owners. In Angeles City the group was thrown out of one hotel that they had pre-booked. They had checked-in and received their keys. Some were lying down and some were swimming in the pool or having showers. The owner, an irate New Zealander who had been living in Australia, had



received a fax from Australia about the tour and threw the women out claiming they had booked in under false pretences.

By the time I got to look at the brothels in Balibago my face had been on Philippine television quite extensively and my women escorts asked me to disguise myself. The male escort who had been arranged to take me into the bars (as single women are of course not allowed) was a black American Colonel who was rung by the Embassy that morning and told not to be involved with my visit. The police in the red light area continually approached our small group and claimed they had cleaned up the area. Ramos has in fact instituted a "crack down" on the bars and brothels which had resulted, unfortunately, in the arrest and harassment of many bar girls but not one deportation or arrest of sleazy Aussie bar owners.

One of the points our group was trying to make was that the average ugly Aussie tourist who skites about his sex tour in the club before he dons his thongs and stubbies and catches his plane to Manila is actually involving himself in paedophilia. Without doubt they are having sex with underage

prostituted women and not only come under the jurisdiction of Philippine paedophilia legislation but are also breaking Australian law. The Federal Government last year passed the Child Sex Tourism Legislation which for the first time makes it illegal for an Australian National to commit a crime overseas. However this legislation has been in force for a year and no arrests have taken place. One of the major recommendations of our group is that proper resources be provided so that the legislation can become effective. A few high profile arrests and jailings of these ugly Aussie tourists would certainly have a deterrent effect.

Other recommendations from the group are that warnings about our Child Sex Tourism Legislation be stapled to airline tickets for travelling to the Philippines; that the Sex Discrimination Commissioner institute an enquiry into the organised sex tourism industry in Australia and; thirdly that our privacy legislation be changed so that Australian men seeking to sponsor Filipino brides into Australia must divulge on the sponsorship form details of their past history of domestic violence and/or criminal behaviour.

At a personal level my experience in the Philippines has convinced me more than ever that the only way to stop exploitation, violence, harassment and corruption in prostitution is to legalise it in all its forms. The State Government must proceed with its intention to legalise brothels in NSW.

About the Author: Dr Meredith Burgmann is a member of the Legislative Council in New South Wales.



Study Tour:

a personal reflection by
Deborah Wall

THIS WAS MY SIXTH VISIT to the Philippines since I left the country twenty three years ago — I joined a delegation of fifteen women to undertake a fact finding mission about the involvement of Australian men in sex tourism. But this time, I was shocked to find the prevalence of prostitution or what some residents euphemistically call the 'entertainment industry'. This so-called industry involves not just sex tourists from overseas but also Filipino men — of all class backgrounds.

"Do you realize," I said in Tagalog to a Manila taxi driver, "that this development — the rise in sexual violence against women and what appears to me to be a boom in the prostitution industry — is utterly unacceptable. How can a working class Filipino man who is struggling to make ends meet find enough money to pay for sex?" He swallowed hard and said, "sexual desire is a natural urge for men. We can only pray to the Lord."

During a bar-hopping tour of Manila and Quezon City bars, we were first taken to a movie house which at night time was transformed into a live sex show. This place is apparently frequented by construction workers and porters in a nearby market. The live sex act was called off because it was the manager's birthday.

At Lexus, an upper-class establishment, we observed what looked like Filipino-Chinese businessmen having drinks with 'Guest Relations Officers' (GROs) dressed in black. In front of the lounge seating is a Las Vegas type stage setting where expensively dressed men and women danced to disco music under tantalizing colourful strobe lights. Behind the scene at the ladies' toilet we saw a young woman visibly upset about being 'cheated' during her encounter with a client. The woman was being comforted by other GROs who all looked under age and who seemed to be under the influence of drugs. Next we went to Baget where a disco culminated in a complete strip tease by a beautiful woman.

It was stated by one Filipino woman that prostitution is simply the "colonization of a woman's body" and that its continued existence is a reflection of the inequality of women's standing with men in all aspects of life.

For a number of years, I have been following up developments about the use and abuse of Filipino women, in particular during the martial law days when Marcos promoted in earnest his country



as a tourist destination. The export of labour overseas also began at about the same time in the early seventies, purportedly as a revenue earner to help pay the country's escalating foreign debt.

The beginning of what was colloquially known as the 'mail order bride' phenomenon in Australia may be traced from the time of the tourism boom in the Philippines and in the Asia Pacific region generally in the seventies. It was not surprising therefore to see a further development — the phenomenon of 'serial sponsorship' of Filipino women by Australian men supposedly with the intention of marriage.

Our presence in the Philippines attracted media interest both locally and overseas. Based on press cuttings we collected after the trip, I outline reactions as reported by the Philippine and Australian press.

Philippine President Ramos directed the Department Of Foreign Affairs to coordinate enquiries into the sex tourism industry. In response, government agencies and officials went into a frenzy forming various task forces in the lead up to President Ramos's impending state visit to Australia in August. Mayor Edgardo Pamintuan of Angeles City created 'Task Force Magdalena' giving the police force power to conduct investigation, raids and closure of illegal establishments. Tourism Secretary Eduardo Pilapil called for the creation of a task force composed of representatives from the Department of Tourism, Bureau of Immigration, National Bureau of Investigation and local government units. The Bureau of Immigration and Deportation planned to form 'Task Force Sexual Trafficking' to gather information on the activities of foreign nationals in the country.

How effective was the Philippine Government's response to the delegation's main recommendation — that the Australian and Philippine Governments enter into agreements to facilitate the investigation and extradition of Australians involved in the prostitution of women and children in the Philippines?

The measures undertaken by the Government as reported by the press are worth examining:

Mayor Katherine Gordon of Olongapo City deployed a combined team of police and city health officials to go after suspected sex tour operators. (*Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 13.7.95)

More than forty bar girls were arrested in Australian operated sex bars in Angeles City. (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 25.8.95)

The Philippines ordered 100 Australians allegedly engaged in sex trafficking to leave the country within the month or face arrest and deportation. (*Telegraph Mirror*, 25.7.95)

The Immigration Commissioner, Mr Leandro Verceles issued a mission brief to "track down about 30 foreigners, mainly elderly Australians on retirement visas who, sometimes balk at the renewal process because they find the sometimes arduous 60-kilometre journey to Manila too taxing." (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 26.7.95)

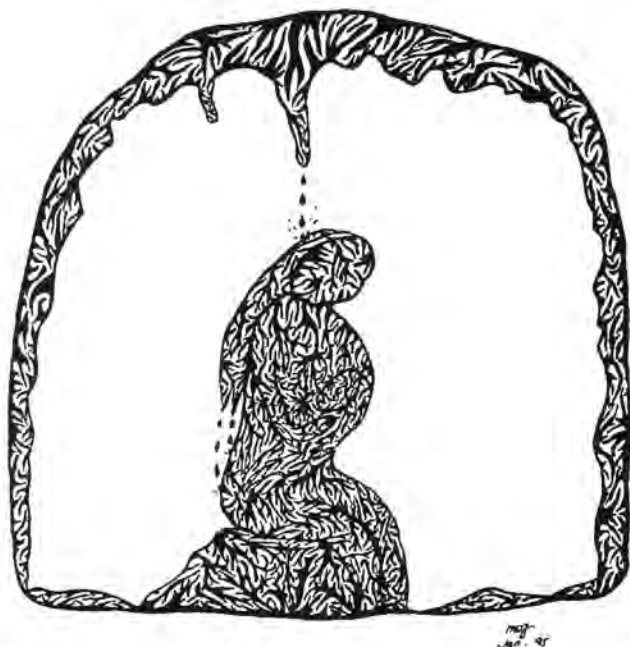
Thirty five illegal business establishments associated with prostitution and drug trafficking were closed and several bars suspected of engaging in sex trade padlocked by the police. (*Reuter News Service*, 30.7.95)

Australian Federal Police to go to the Philippines to train local law enforcers on surveillance techniques and investigation of sexual offences. (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 25.8.95)

Would the arrest of the bar girls, the threat to deport elderly Australians on expired visas and the closure (probably temporarily) of illegal establishments eliminate the problem of sex tourism? And how does the surveillance training to be provided by the Australian Federal Police help? How does this form of aid line up with the comment of government officials quoted in the Manila press that the crackdown on sex tourism is an uphill battle as it is well known that bars and hotels engaged in the sex industry are protected by corrupt politicians and police? (*The Australian*, 15.7.95)

Whether the measures undertaken by government agencies and officials are far reaching or whether they are simply 'a publicity stunt' can be assessed by an essential yardstick: the Government's economic strategy.

The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women-Asia pointed out that government policy (on sex



tourism) and economic strategy are contradictory. The Government's aggressive promotion of tourism as a strategy for economic development must assume the use of women to attract tourists who go to bars, clubs and resorts, often owned by foreigners. This situation, of course, is not entirely new. The use of 'hospitality girls', a euphemism used for prostitutes during President Marcos' term of office in the seventies, appeared to commentators to be part and parcel of the country's tourism marketing strategy. Today 'Guest Relations Officer' is the equivalent term used. How then can the Ramos Government purport to stamp out sex tourism as a government policy in view of what could be termed a 'tourism based economic strategy'?

Sex tourism, including the practice of paedophilia, is an emotive issue in both the Philippines and in Australia. Many people are horrified particularly by the reported use and abuse of innocent children for sex. The phenomenon is often explained away by so-called 'Dickensian' conditions in countries such as the Philippines. Australian columnist Padraic McGuinness criticises the "blue stockings of Australia", "arrogant do-gooders" (alluding to the delegation?) for fomenting "hatred of Australians in The Philippines", giving the impression that the main offenders are Australian clients as well as owners of sex bars and brothels rather than seeing the situation as the "inevitable result of desperate poverty, of corrupt institutions and bad economic management in the past." (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8.8.95 and 11.8.95)

For McGuinness, the solution is simple. Rather than resort to 'unhistorical moralism', we in

Australia should give the Philippines time to develop economically and if we want to help the poor (substitute prostitutes and child labor victims), we must encourage free trade with that country, presumably to accelerate its economic development and following that logic, this will eventually reduce if not eliminate sex tourism.

McGuinness' analysis obviously does not extend to examining specifically President Ramos' economic strategy with regard to the consequences of tourism. Tourism brings in foreign revenue as does the export of labour. Filipino women comprise nearly half (47%) of total Filipino overseas workers, Non-government organisations (NGOs), however, estimate the proportion to be closer to 60%. The management of the Philippines balance of payments deficit, according to a Manila NGO group, Freedom from Debt Coalition, is "facilitated by overseas workers' remittances estimated at \$3 billion in 1992."

In the Philippines, income generated from visitor arrivals in 1992 was US\$1.67 billion and in 1993 was US\$2.12 billion. The bulk of tourists are men (63.7%) and have a median age of 38 years. The number of Australian tourists rose from 49,670 in 1984 to 69,864 in 1994. The number of Australian visas issued to Filipino fiancées or brides reportedly average about 2,000 a year. To put this in perspective, the Commission for Filipinos Overseas released figures showing the distribution in part of Filipino fiancées and spouses of foreign nationals between 1989–1994: 44% or 41,859 (USA); 29% or 27,575 (Japan); 10% or 9,134 (Australia).

One may well ask, what do these facts and figures have to do with sex tourism? I believe they show the 'structural' nature of sex tourism and the consequences of the Philippine Government's economic policy and strategy, particularly for women. In Japan, the Middle East, Malaysia, and Hong Kong, and other countries overseas, many Filipino women have experienced violence and sexual abuse. The world of traffickers in Filipinas and other women has been described and documented by Belgian journalist and author, Chris De Stoop in his book, *They are so sweet, Sir*.

Tourism is a key pillar of the Philippine Government's economic strategy. It is an important source of income in the Philippines. The Philippine Government sees tourism as a source of foreign exchange receipts and employment. Like Thailand, the Philippines attracts tourists interested in the availability of women as prostitutes. But most of the income generated by sex tourism goes to tourist agencies, club owners, tour operators and pimps.

As regards development of tourism infrastructure, one may bemoan the increased foreign control of land resources through

ownership by foreign investors and their Filipino partners who are often used as a way of circumventing the Philippine nationalisation law which prohibits foreign ownership and management of businesses such as bars, hotels and resorts.

Among the measures undertaken in response to President Ramos' directive was the arrest of bar girls in Angeles City. This is an example of a further victimization of the victims of the sex industry – the prostituted women.

In what way are they victims? Seventy-five per cent of the population live below the poverty line. The minimum wage of 145 pesos a day (nearly US\$5 a day) contrasts with the daily cost of living for a family of six – 244.25 pesos. The combined unemployment and underemployment rate in the country is around 40–50%. Many women unable to find work in the rural sector go to urban areas where they end up in poorly paid jobs, for example, in garment factories or in the electronics industry. Some go overseas as migrant workers – e.g. as domestic helpers; others marry foreigners and go overseas.

Still others, unable to find work, end up in prostitution. Many of them do not receive the minimum wage for their alleged job titles as waitresses, bar girls or entertainers, but get paid through 'bar fines' or money paid by clients to allow them to be taken out. This practice underlines the myth of prostitution as 'work'. Bar operators do not regard them in the same way as ordinary employees. Normal working conditions and wages don't apply. But this is another issue.

As the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women argues, the focus of the Government crackdown should not be the so-called bar girls but the "violators of women and children", "the profiteers", "the foreign and local criminal networks." Hence, the delegation recommended that the Government should work toward legal reform to consider imposing criminal sanctions on the clientele of prostitution and to repeal the law in order to decriminalise women in prostitution and thus prevent their continual victimisation.

Concerned NGOs agree with President Ramos that economic alternatives for women must be examined. The President was quoted as saying: "It is imperative to strengthen the ethical and spiritual values of victims of said sex tours and to devise viable economic alternatives to wean them away from prostitution." As might be expected, the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women retorted that the president might like to address not only the moral values of victims but also those of "entire populations of men on the sexual prowl." In 1992, legislation (RA 7192) was passed supposedly intending to promote economic



alternatives and provide women with some resources but nothing substantial has occurred.

If indeed President Ramos is serious about addressing the problem of sex tourism, he would support a study involving the Government and NGOs – a study that would examine the social costs of tourism strategies, in particular those that result in the sexual exploitation of women and children. This is a key recommendation by the delegation to the Philippine Government.

About the Author: Deborah Wall is the Convenor of the Filipino Women's Working Party and Head Teacher, Management Studies, Sydney Institute of Technology.



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

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



Batang Paslit

By Robert John Tejero

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

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

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

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

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

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

Innocent Child

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation: Emere Distor

Trafficking in Women: Australia's Role in the Exploitation of Filipino Women

by Sabina Lauber

An extract from the original article printed in *Pandora's Box*, published by the University of Queensland Women and Law Society, September 1995.

What Needs to be Done

The exploitation of women through trafficking can only be stopped through international cooperation to restrict both the demand and supply of women. Attempts by individual nations to deal with only one aspect have brought merely band-aid solutions that will shift the problem to other shores.

Poverty is only one aspect of the problem. It is certainly vital to improve the social and economic conditions in countries of supply. However, the problem has its roots in the power differential between wealthy nations and poor nations and gender inequality. Poverty alleviation must be coupled with programs to directly empower women and provide them with broader choices in their own societies. Simultaneously, the opportunities for exploitation by men must be limited and demand curtailed.

The current structure of Filipino laws against prostitution and their enforcement attempts to restrict the supply of prostitute women by punishing women. A blind eye is turned to clients and the pimps who supply the precious foreign dollars. Little attempt is made to restrict demand.

Despite the significant amount of financial benefit that the Philippine Government obtains from the sex industry, very little money is fed back into social and economic services for women. These are desperately needed to provide viable alternatives for women in the Philippines. Most importantly, a re-examination of traditional values about women is required. Only through this will the exploitation of Filipino women be recognised as a serious domestic issue by the Government.

Several excellent reports and papers already have been written on the phenomena of sex trafficking by Filipino women. Unfortunately they have been ignored by the authorities.¹

The solution to this problem requires equal attention to the demand side. This is where Western nations, such as Australia must step in. Australia is clearly under international obligations to protect human rights of women and prevent Australian nationals from infringing these rights. Some work has been done to assist Filipino women in Australia to enforce their legal rights in situations of domestic violence.² However, little has been done to prevent Australian men engaging in and profiting from sex tourism and mail order brides.

To effectively tackle this problem, Australia needs to actively pursue legal and social reform in the following areas:

- investigate and legally sanction Australian networks that promote and organise sex tours to the Philippines,
- set up legal and educational programs to halt the eroticisation of Filipino women and racism,
- actively encourage Filipino authorities to prosecute Australians in breach of the human rights of Filipino women. This could include cooperation between the Australian and Philippine police forces,
- shut down mail order bride agencies in Australia,
- re-direct Australian aid to the Philippines to assist exploited women.
- enforce the Child Sex Tourism legislation which makes it illegal under Australian law to engage in child sex overseas.³

Some of Australia's most effective efforts would be through the encouragement of the Philippine Government to act against this exploitation. Despite considerable pressure from women's groups, this has not been forthcoming. During the Philippine President Fidel Ramos' recent visit to Australia, there was a strong reluctance to discuss this issue in any substance.⁴ The few media comments made focused mainly on child sex tourism and ignored the wider issue of women's exploitation. Clearly, Senator Gareth Evans

¹ See for eg WEDPRO Report: Aida Santos, Picking Up the Pieces of Women's Lives: Prostitution and Sexual Exploitation in Asia-Pacific, submitted to the World Health Organisation, May 1995.

² ALRC Report No 69(1), Equality Before the Law: Justice for Women, Sydney 1994.

³ Crimes (Child Sex Tourism) Amendment Act 1994 (Cth). No prosecutions have been made under this Act (as at Sept. 1995).

⁴ President Ramos visited Australia in August 1995.

and president Ramos were meeting to discuss business and trade between their counties, each hoping to increase the amount of foreign dollars flowing into their respective countries, irrespective of cost.

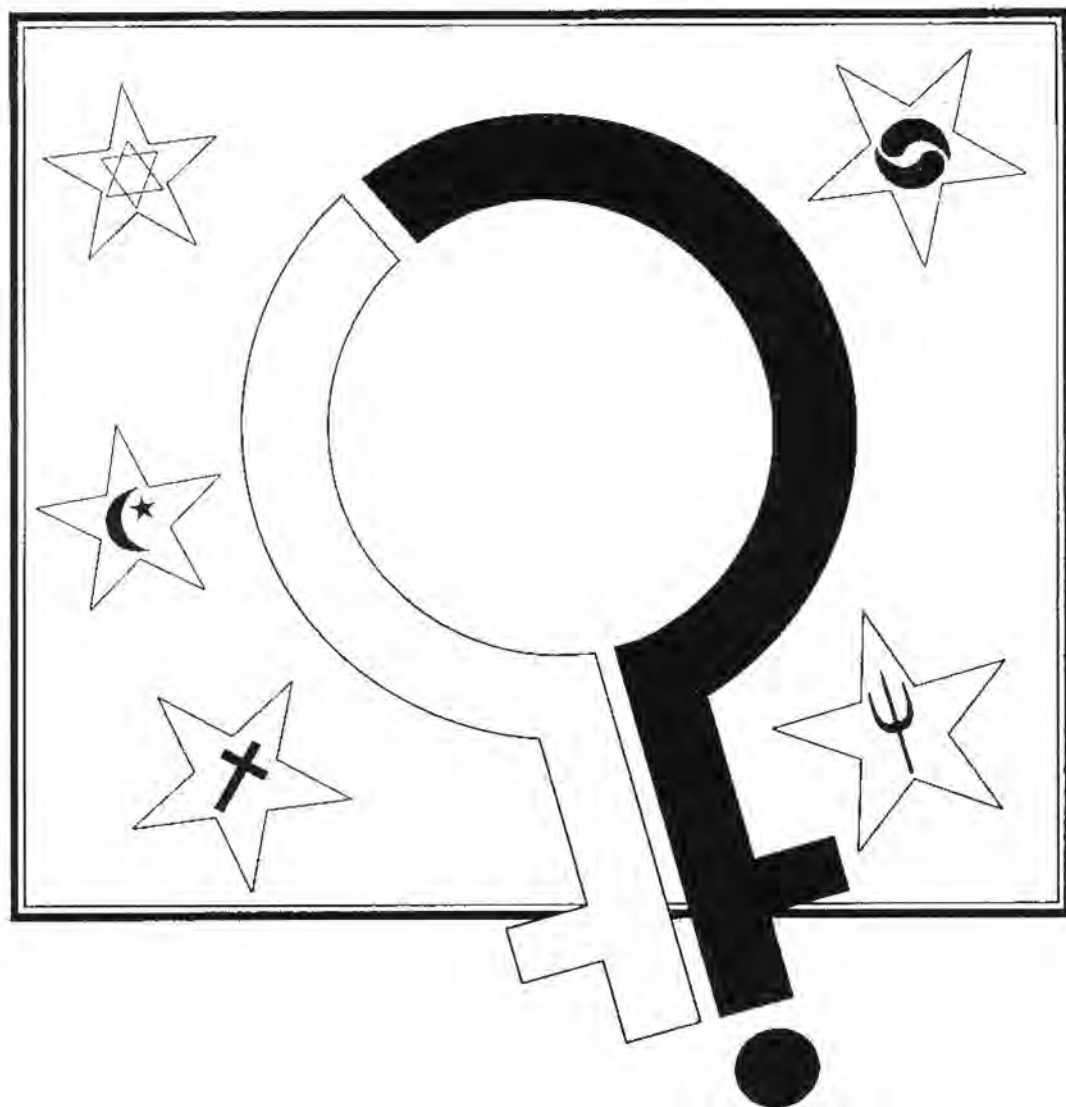
Conclusion

The trafficking of women is about sexual exploitation which occurs on an international scale. It is a complex problem with supply and demand working together to fuel a massive sex industry. This industry is particularly evident in the Philippines, where the sexual exploitation of its women brings in significant foreign income so that it is tolerated and sometimes encouraged.

Australians are significant users of Philippine sexual services, thereby breaching human rights of these women. Australia has obligations under International and Australian law to prevent and punish such actions.

However, the methods of tackling this issue involve a comprehensive program which halts demands as well as supply. Governments have tended to deal only with the supply side, which has often been completely ineffective or merely shifted the problem to another area.

The need for foreign dollars and international trade is not an excuse for ignoring the human rights of Filipino women. Nor is the overactive male libido. Australia and the Philippines have obligated themselves to enforce human rights in international conventions. Now is the time for them to put their money where their mouths are.



Appendix 1: Graphic artists' works in this text

Elva Albacite on pages 76 & 77.

Onna/Women from *Manushi* on page 74.

Clipart compilation/Dee Hunt on page 75 & cover.

And from *Clipart* vol.1 no.1/Isis International:

Sandra Torrijos on pages 5, 8, 25, 27, 29, 33, 35, 39, 44, 46, 50, 54, 61, 62, 63, 65, 67, 71, 73, 79, 80, 85, 88, 89, 91, 97, 100 & 102;

Grace de Jesus-Sievert on pages 21, 60, 69 & 83;

Irene R. Chia on page 86;

Melvie S. Galacio on page 90;

Jean Faye Rodriguez on page 94.

Isis International publishes a wide range of women's material, information kits and books, as well as a regular magazine *Women in Action*.

For subscription rates and book list write to:
Isis International, PO Box 1837, Quezon City,
Philippines
or phone (632)96-72-97 or fax (632)924-10-65
or Email: isis@phil.gn.apc.org

Appendix 2: Study Tour Itinerary and Agenda

Monday evening, June 19	The majority of overseas participants arrive in Manila
Tuesday, June 20	Welcome and orientation
evening	Briefing on Manila exposure
	Bar-hopping in Manila, Pasay, Quezon City and immersion with women in Quezon Avenue
Wednesday, June 21	Assessment of exposure
	Situationer of Philippine women
	Briefing on Angeles City exposure
Thursday, June 22	Depart Manila for Angeles City
	Welcome and orientation with NKAC and WEDPRO
afternoon	The Mayor's Parlour
evening	The Bonanza Incident
	Bar-hopping
Friday, June 23	The Police Station (while others visited Australian retirees)
afternoon	Pinatubo resettlement area
	Return to Manila
evening	Assessment of exposure
Saturday, June 24	Briefing on provincial exposures
	Forum with Sheila Jeffreys – <i>Prostitution: a Violation of Women's Human Rights</i>
Sunday, June 25	Depart for provinces
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Puerto Galera• La Union• Apuao Grande Island

Wednesday, June 28	Return to Manila
Thursday, June 29	Assessment of exposures Meeting with Australian Embassy officials Forum with Sheila Jeffreys – <i>Lesbian Feminism</i>
Friday, June 30	Preparation for Dialogue
Saturday, July 1	Dialogue Day 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Remarks • Keynote Addresses • Plenary Presentations • Open Forum • Plenary • Workshop – <i>Prostitution: The World's Oldest Exploitation of Women</i> • Shibashi • Workshop Reports • Open Forum
Sunday, July 2	Performance by Merlinda Bobis at the Australian Embassy Dialogue Day 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenary • Report on the provincial exposures • Play – <i>Calvary of Women in Prostitution</i> • Plenary • Shibashi • Parallel Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) <i>Migration and Prostitution</i> B) <i>Multiculturalism and Racism: Tensions for Women in Australian Society</i> • Workshop Reports • Open Forum
Monday, July 3	Country caucuses: Action planning for post-Dialogue period Dialogue Day 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenary • Country caucus reports • Discussion/approval of Dialogue resolutions and recommendations • Press Conference • Panel discussion with representatives from Philippine agencies and the Australian Embassy
evening	A Night of Celebration and Solidarity
Tuesday, July 4	The majority of participants depart Manila Others visit with Senator Nikki Coseteng, the Commission on Filipinos Overseas and the Department of Tourism

Appendix 3: The CAST

Sponsors in Australia:

The Hon Dr Meredith Burgmann, MLC NSW
Senator Margaret Reynolds, Senator for Queensland
Senator Sid Spindler, Australian Democrats' Senator for Victoria
The Hon Ann Symonds, MLC NSW
Lindsay Tanner, MP, Federal Member for Melbourne
Agnes Whiten, Women's Adviser to the Archbishop of Brisbane
Senator John Woodley, Australian Democrats' Senator for Queensland
Assembly Social Responsibility & Justice Committee, Uniting Church in Australia
Centre for Multicultural Pastoral Care
Centre for Philippine Concerns—Australia
Coalition Against Trafficking in Women—Australia
Collective of Filipinas for Empowerment & Development
End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT—Australia)
Filipino Women's Network of Australia
Filipino Women's Working Party
Global Learning Centre
Network Against Sex Tours
Philippines Australia Solidarity Group Qld.
Solidarity Philippines Australia Network
Union of Australian Women
Women's International League for Peace & Freedom—Australia

Sponsors in the Philippines:

Coalition Against Trafficking in Women—Philippines
End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT—Philippines)
ISIS International
KAKAMMPI
KALAYAAN
Kanlungan Center for Migrant Workers Inc.
Nagkakaisang Kababaihan ng Angeles City (NKAC)
SINAG—Kababaihan
Women's Education, Development, Productivity and Research Organization (WEDPRO), Inc.
Women's Crisis Center
Women's Legal Bureau Inc.

Participants from Australia and Aotearoa/NZ:

Joan Barredo—Dicka, Adelaide
Meredith Burgmann, Sydney
Melba de Guzman—Marginson, Melbourne
Emere Distor, Brisbane
Sarah Ford, Sydney
Dee Hunt, Brisbane
Sheila Jeffreys, Melbourne
Sabina Lauber, Sydney
Angela Nesci, Adelaide
Vicki Ponsford, Melbourne
Jane Queripel, Newcastle
Cally Sommerville, Auckland
Jorgette Sonter, Coffs Harbour
Richie Valencia—Buenaventura, Sydney
Deborah Wall, Sydney

Co-ordinators who were not able to attend but were with us in spirit:

Joy Balazo, Sydney
Jill Cooper, Launceston
Veth Guevarra, Sydney
Bong Ramilo, Darwin
Eileen Shewan, Christchurch
Lulu Turner, Canberra



Philippine Secretariat: c/o Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), Suite 406 Victoria Condominium,
41 Annapolis St., Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila, PHILIPPINES
Phone (+632) 722 0859; 721 6046 • Fax (+632) 722 0755

Australian Secretariat: c/o Centre for Philippine Concerns—Australia (CPCA),
PO Box 338, North Melbourne, Victoria, AUSTRALIA
Phone (+613) 329 9042 • Fax (+613) 326 7140

Appendix 4: The Balibago Precinct

ON the night of the 22nd June, members of the Study Tour were ejected from Bonanza Resort by its New Zealand manager. Indignant, the group lodged a formal complaint of grave coercion against Gary Griffin at Balibago Police Precinct. In the proceeding pages is the copy of the sworn statement signed by Melba Marginson and Sheila Jeffreys on behalf of the CAST group.

REF ID: A66484

95-2953

At Large 2

23 JUN 1996
4:15pm

MELBA MARGINSON Y DE GUZMAN
2000 2000 6 20

CITY Australia

SELELA JEFFREYS.

██████████, Australia

GRAVE COERCION

NIGHT TIME
22 JUNE 1995
BONA WZA HOFEL

SAN PABLO ST., MT VIEW, BALIAGO, ANGELES CITY

GARY GRIFFIN, OWNER/MANAGER OF
ANZA HOTEL, SAN PABLO ST., MT VIEW,
BALIAGO, ANGELES CITY

POSE GRIFPIN, OF SAME
ADDRESS

INDEX REPORT PREPARED BY THE GROUP
SWORN STATEMENT OF MELBA MARGINSON
SWORN STATEMENT OF SHEILA JEFFREYS

SHEILA JEFFREYS, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], Australia
Complainant/Address

Melba Margison
MELBA MARGISON

[REDACTED], Australia

SWORN STATEMENT OF MELBA MARGINSON GIVEN TO TAKEN BY SPOII MARGINAO M BAPOLA AT THE OFFICE OF INTELLIGENCE AND INVESTIGATION SECTION, PRECINCT 4, BALIBAGO, ANGELES CITY THIS 23 JUNE 1995 AT ABOUT 1:05 PM IN THE PRESENCE OF POLII NOMELO AMARILLO.

QUESTION: 01 - Melba Marginson, do you swear to tell the truth and nothing but the

truth in this investigation?

ANSWER: 01 - Yes sir.

Q: 02 - Will you please state your name, age and birth date?

A: 02 - Melba Marginson y de Guzman, legal age, married, with postal address at [redacted], Australia [redacted], tourist and presently staying at Philippine Episcopal church compound, E Rodriguez Ave., Quezon City.

Q: 03 - You just mentioned you are tourist, what is your present status or activities in this city?

A: 03 - Being a member of the Philippine Concerns-Australia and I am here in this city (Angeles City) as a participant in an on going Study Tour on Australia Sex Tourism and Trafficking in Filipino Women.

Q: 04 - As a member of the said tour, when did you arrived in this city?

A: 04 - I together with other participant of the tour arrived here in the Angeles city on 22 June '95 at about 10:00 AM.

Q: 05 - What prompted you to appear in this office?

A: 05 - To file a corresponding charges against the owner of the Bonanza Resort Hotel located at San Pablo st., Mt View subd., Balibago, AG for ejecting our group on the said hotel for no apparent reasons.

Q: 06 - Will you please state the incident that transpired on what you have mentioned?

A: 06 - Yes sir. On 22 June '95 at about 10:00 AM we, arrived this city and we proceeded at the Women for Empowerment Development Productivity Research and Organization (WEDPRO) located at Apt 6, PG bldg., McArthur Hwy, Dau, Marikina and after day long activities at about 5:45 PM on 22 June '95 we went to Bonanza Resort Hotel located at San Pablo st., Mt View subd., Balibago, AG where we were booked-in to spend the night which was previously arranged by Jing Pante, WEDPRO staff on 21 June '95. And at about 7:00 PM same date, a certain Rose Aligol owner of said hotel approached Luz and Boyet Rimban also our companions, who happened to be in the bar having some drinks and they were told that the group had to leave the said hotel and their money will be refunded and later a few minutes our companion from WEDPRO in Manila led by Aida Santos were also denied entry from the hotel. And later, at about 8:00 PM one of the female staff accompanied by a uniformed security guard knocked in our respective rooms showing a fax copy of news article "Women Target Sex traders" written by Nick Carter and we were forcibly asked to leave the premises and we were threatened that in five minutes the Police will be coming to get everybody out. And when everybody gathered at the lobby, Mr Gary Griffin, an Australian who introduced himself as the owner of the hotel and told us that we are being ejected because we are trouble makers as evidence by the Fox News item and even threatened us that he will going to report the matter to the Australian Federal Police. And there we no alternative but to leave the place in protest placing us in embarrassing position causing enormous distress, discomfort and trauma. And there we subsequently reported the matter to the police.

Q: 07 - Will you please state the name of your group?

A: 07 - Yes sir. they are Sheila Jeffreys, Dee Hunt, Debbie Wall Joan Barredo Dieka, Emere Distor, Jane Quirpel, Gally Smaerville, Sarah Ford, Richie Buenaventura, Vicki Pansford, Angeles Nessel, Jorgette Senter

Q: 08 - For the meantime I have no more to ask you, do you wish to add or retract from your statement?

A: 08 - No more, sir.

Q: 09 - Are you willing to sign your statement?

A: 09 - Yes, sir.

END OF STATEMENT.

Melba Marginson
MELBA MARGINSON
Affiant

STATEMENT OF SHEILA JEFFREYS I JOY TAKEN BY PO3 ROMEO M AMARILLO AT THE OFFICE OF INTELLIGENCE AND INVESTIGATION, SALACOT, BALIBAGO, ANGELES CITY IN THE PRESENCE OF SPO2 MARCIANO MANOLA THIS 23rd DAY OF JUNE 1995.

QUESTION: (1) Do you swear to tell the truth but nothing but the truth in this investigation?
ANSWER : (1) Yes sir.

QUESTION: (2) Please state your name, age and other personal circumstances?

ANSWER : (2) I'm Sheila Jeffreys I Joy, 47 years old, single, of [REDACTED], Australia.

QUESTION: (3) What prompted you to appear in this office?

ANSWER : (3) We were ejected in the Bonanza Hotel located at San Pablo Street, Mt View Subdivision, Balibago, Angeles City by the management.

QUESTION: (4) Will you narrate in brief the incident that transpired in Bonanza Hotel?

ANSWER : (4) At about 22 5:00 PM yesterday . we arrived at Bonanza Hotel and checked in and paid for the rooms. I went to my room to rest. At 8:15 PM June 22 1995, the woman manager knocked on my door and said we must all leave her hotel immediately because she had received a fax of an article in an Australian news paper which said that our group meant to embarrass Australian bar owners in the town. I found all my companions had been told to leave. As we sat in the lobby waiting to get our money back, the male owner abused and threatened us. He said , we had to get out fast because the police would come in 5 minutes. He said also, he would make trouble for us over our visas and contact the Federal Police and Australian Embassy and he said he didn't like white women. When we had got the money back, we left.

QUESTION: (5) For the meantime, I have no more question to asked you. Do you wish to add or retract from your statement?

ANSWER : (5) None sir.

QUESTION: (6) Are you willing to sign your statement?

ANSWER : (6) Yes sir.

END OF HER STATEMENT

S. J. Jeffreys
(Affiant)

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 23rd day of June 1995, at Angeles City .
I certify that I personally examined the affiant and that I am satisfied that she voluntarily executed and underated her statement.

ADMINISTERING OFFICER



Appendix 5: Press Coverage in the Philippines and Australia

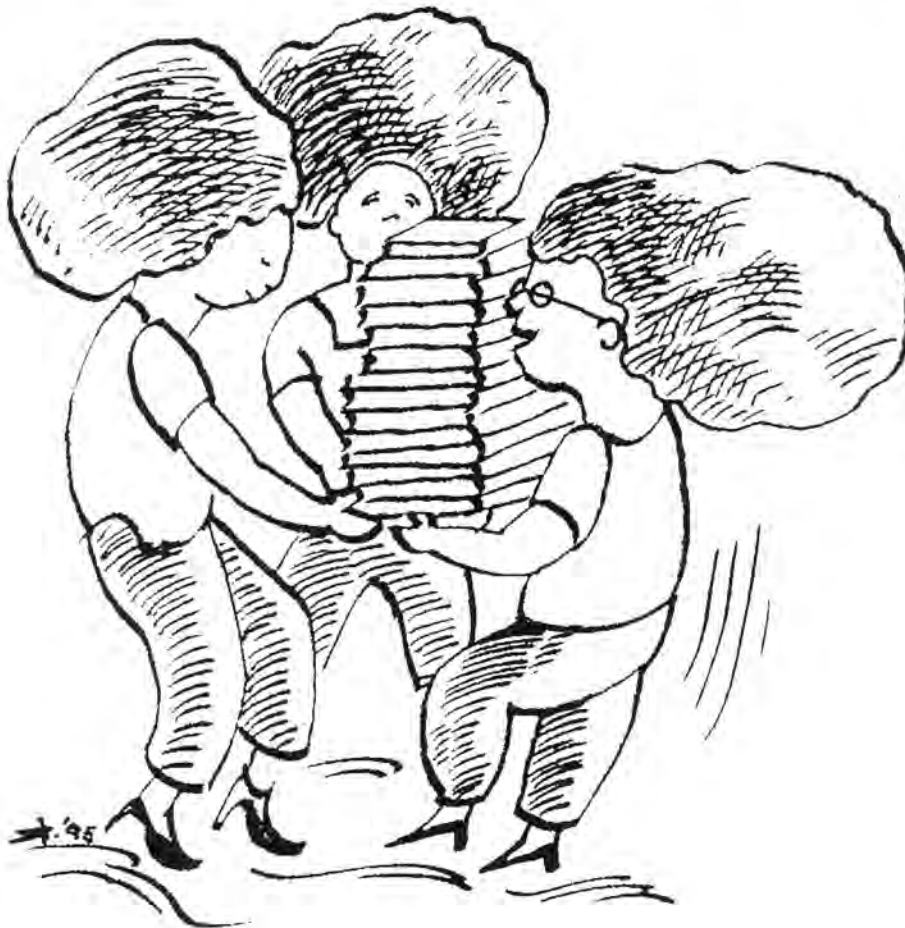
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Angeles hotels oust sex tourism probers, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 3 July 1995
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'Alarming Trend' , Aussies in RP sex tour probed, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 4 July 1995
18 Pinay brides, fiancees meet death in Australia, *Philippine Star*, 4 July 1995
Aussies in the thick of sex tours, say women's groups, *Malaya*, 4 July 1995
Probe sex tours – NGOs, *Manila Times*, 4 July 1995
RP, Aussie governments asked to stop sex trafficking, *Philippine Star*, 4 July 1995
Fidel Ramos orders clampdown on sex tours, *Manila Bulletin*, 6 July 1995
Flesh trade, (Letter to the Editor), *Manila Times*, 6 July 1995
Mayor warns sex tour operators, *Manila Chronicle*, 6 July 1995
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We don't need any merchant of Venus, *Manila Bulletin*, 7 July 1995
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Crackdown on sex tour operators, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 9 July 1995
Government blamed for rise in child prostitution, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 9 July 1995
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Ramos urges stronger ties, *Herald Sun*, 22 August 1995
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Appendix 7: Some Useful Addresses

To contact the Study Tour Sponsoring Organisations in the Philippines:

c/- Cecilia Hofmann, **Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW)**,
Suite 406 Victoria Condominium,
41 Annapolis St., Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila, PHILIPPINES
Phone (+ 632) 722 0859; 721 6046 • Fax (+ 632) 722 0755

Organisations in Australia

**Assembly Social Responsibility & Justice
Committee, Uniting Church in Australia**
222 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Phone 02 9287 0900 • Fax 02 9287 0999
Email: ucacomm@peg.apc.org

**Australian Centre for Investigative Journalism
University of Technology**
PO Box 123, Broadway, Sydney NSW 2007
Phone 02 9330 2488

Centre for Multicultural Pastoral Care
333 Given Terrace, Paddington Queensland 4064
Phone 07 3876 3294

Centre for Philippine Concerns–Australia (CPCA)
Contact: Melba Marginson
597 Queensberry Street, (PO Box 338)
North Melbourne, Victoria 3051
Phone 03 9329 9042 • Fax 03 9326 7140

CPCA Brisbane Branch
Contact: Emere Distor
Justice Place, 84 Park Road, Woolloongabba, Qld
4102
Phone 07 3891 5877 • Fax 07 3891 6944
Email: cpcabris@gargoyle.apana.org.au

CPCA Northern Territory
Contact: Bong Ramilo
GPO Box 3297, Darwin NT 0801
Phone 089 89 7061 • Fax 089 89 7322

Coalition Against Trafficking in Women–Australia
PO Box 1273, North Fitzroy Vic 3068

**End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT –
Australia)**
PO Box 2593W, Melbourne Vic 3001
Phone 03 9650 3295

Filipino Women's Working Party
152 Wilson Street, Newtown NSW 2042

Global Learning Centre
102 McDonald Road, Windsor Qld 4030
Phone 07 3857 6666

Head of Group Radio (Filipino), S.B.S.
14 Herbert St, Artarmon NSW 2064
Phone 02 9430 2883

Kabalikat Inc.
PO Box 514, Cannon Hill Qld 4170
Phone 07 3348 8415 • Fax 07 3849 3744

Kapatiran,
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