

BATINGAW

BATINGAW; BELL; HERALD; The New Voice of Filipino Migrants in Australia

News, Views and Analysis from Migrante Melbourne



Filipino-Australians
Speak Out: Condemns
Violation of Civil
Liberties, Calls on
Arroyo to Immediately
Step Down

NEVER AGAIN TO MARTIAL LAW!

+ INFO ON **FREE SEMINAR** ON SPONSORING YOUR RELATIVES TO AUSTRALIA!

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March 2006

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BATINGAW ISSUE

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by George Kotsakis, Chairperson - Migrante Melbourne

Welcome to the maiden issue of Batingaw. Migrante Melbourne will toll this bell to let you know what is happening to the Philippines and our compatriots here and overseas. We will continue exposing the ills of the Filipino society and attempt to present an alternate solution which we think is viable.

I was watching The Filipino Channel the day after Pres. Gloria Arroyo lifted her state of Emergency (SoE). During a discussion, several Filipino migrants and contract workers asked why news reporters always focus on sad and ugly news from the Philippines rather than the good. Many compatriots here in Melbourne have similar views.

Can it be denial? Do we deny that we are Filipinos from a country so reeking with disease that we don't want to be part of it? A Philippines with many problems, riddled with a deep rooted sickness of corruption, poverty and unemployment. A sickness that promises nothing but a bleak future.

Filipinos are a complex people with a history full of conflict. A diverse country, an archipelago with 100+ languages, finding unity has always been a challenge. Filipinos are often at odds between their own compatriots. Yet, Filipinos are a proud race and not ones to deny their heritage. Only fools deny their own skin. Is it apathy then? I don't blame the poor Filipinos. Most are resigned to accepting the fate that awaits the Philippines. Graft and corruption is the core of the disease most says; others would add greed from the very leaders we look up to for deliverance. Other says imperialism especially American imperialism. That nothing ever comes from all the good effort of the sensible and just people hoping to salvage the Philippines from the quagmire.

Why then do Filipinos care to spare their hard earned money to keep afloat their relatives on the home front? Send their spares to alleviate the crisis after crisis of our brothers back home so that they can survive for another day. It cannot be apathy. If it is apathy, then Philippines would be in more dire circumstances. Never to be helped by the millions of dollars worth of remittances we send.

We all know well what is happening in the Philippines. However, we are often at a loss to respond. So overwhelmed by what matters most, surviving. When questioned, resorting to rhetoric and ambivalent reasoning that nothing is plausible except death itself. Nobody wants death, only fools advocate such. Filipinos are no fools.

"I am now an Australian. The Philippines is but a sad and bad memory for me." These are typical responses from our compatriots who have escaped the humdrum of hardship and

have wrestled free from the madness of the Homeland. "Go away" they say, because here we don't want to re-live the things that are going on in the Philippines. We don't want the rest of world to know that our motherland is sick either. Don't add pain to our shame. We want to forget our true faces.

Can you ever shed your color every time you speak? Every time you interrelate; one question always comes up - where are you from? Can you deny your past? Can we better ourselves here knowing that we can not stand equal because our country is in such a quagmire?

Don't get me wrong - I'm proud to be Filipino - it is why I am doing my part to bring a cure to a sick society. We should start by accepting that our country is sick and needs help. We should expose the issues and problems in our nation and start to bring about a solution. If this means making changes like introducing another system (Parliamentary, Transitional Council, National Democracy, etc...) until we find one that works for all and one we can be proud of. It is our duty - by blood and by tradition.

We are at the threshold of change. There are many sides, many opinions. However the ones that matter are our fellow compatriots back home. Those who are poor, marginalized, and oppressed, those who till the land, women who sell their body to feed their children and children who sell their innocence. We should listen to all their stories, whether bad or good. And lend our hearts and voices to them as we forge a better tomorrow. ■

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Global Diaspora Update: Profile and Issues of Filipinos Abroad

“The lack of jobs in the Philippines and the deepening economic crisis drive Filipinos to seek work overseas. Today, there are more than 10 million Filipinos who are living and working overseas in 186 countries.”

Being the first issue of this newsletter, we would like to give you a general landscape of Filipino Migration worldwide. While in other Filipino newspaper and newsletters you will read reports of successes of Filipino overseas, “Batingaw” will share with you mostly the problems and various issue our compatriots abroad face. These are realities that many Filipinos do not like to hear or would like to forget. On the other hand, there are also many among us who have family or relatives among the OFW in other countries aside from Australia whose faith may not be as good as ours. There are many of us who would like to learn about their situation. This, we do not normally read or hear from the mainstream media or the normal publication’s system.

This regular update is in line with Migrante’s objective of support, campaigns and advocacy work for all Filipinos around the world.

Since 1975 when Marcos established the (LEP) Labour Export Program, thousand of Filipinos leave for work overseas. From 36,035 in 1975 to 933,588 in 2004 were deployed yearly. The lack of jobs in the Philippines and the deepening economic crisis drive Filipinos to seek work overseas. Today, there are more than 10 million Filipinos who are living and working overseas in 186 countries. More than 2 million of these are undocumented who are spread in various countries and majority are in Malaysia, Korea, Japan and Singapore.

Every year, thousands of Filipinos go abroad to work but only a few are lucky. Many become victims of physical and mental abuses, rape and other human rights violations. Others are stranded because of the Philippine government’s inability to assist them.

Apart from exploitation, many Filipinos also became victims of mysterious death while others are languishing in jail for the crimes they did not commit.

As of March 2002 up to present, there are about 13 Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) who died mysteriously or whose cause of death remains unresolved.

OFWs who died mysteriously include Amalia Semilla in Japan; Ivy Collantes Bautista in Spain; Juanita Lajot in Singapore; Nimia Pintor and her children in South Korea; Racquel Pascual in Brunei; Janet Paradillo in Kuwait; Catherine Bautista, Nelsa Villarta and Louie Montenegro

Comparative data:

Increase in yearly deployment overseas of Filipino workers, every 3-year interval. (source: POEA Annual reports)

Year	Total	Year	Total
1975	36,035	1990	446,095
1978	88,241	1993	696,630
1981	266,243	1996	660,122
1999	837,020	2002	891,908

Remittances in US \$:

2001	6 Billion
2003	7.2 Billion
2005	Close to 10 Billion

Sources includes: *Statements & reports from Migrante International*
Statistics from Ibon Foundation
Reports from POEA & OWWA

in Lebanon; Maricon Gatapia in Singapore; Isla Gwen in Veneranda Pana; and Divina Urbi in the Netherlands.

According to the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), an average of 6-10 coffins arrive daily at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA). During the first half of 2004, 49 OFWs came home mentally ill, 39 of whom are women; 994 came home due to inhumane working conditions and maltreatment, of whom, 331 from Kuwait alone; 5,168 are imprisoned OFWs of whom 50 are minors and children; and 24 OFWs are on death row of whom 14 are from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Many of our compatriots abroad suffer various forms of abuses and exploitations. According to National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) last 2005, an average of 3,000 cases filed by OFWs against the deploying recruitment agencies in the Philippines for unpaid salaries and benefits.

We have also witness samples of these abuses right here in Australia with the experiences of the Filipino nurses in 2004 and just recently the abuses to Filipino chefs in Canberra.

Repression Being Misrepresented as Freedom, Says Filipino-Australians

Filipino-Australians hit what they called the “increasing repression” and “draconian measures” in the Philippines and have demanded for President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (GMA) to step down, as they held protest actions in key cities of Australia. With her in power, say Filipino-Australians, repression is being misrepresented as freedom.

BY CAESAR BEN BASAN A. BAROÑA, *Bulatlat*

Filipino-Australians hit what they called the “increasing repression” and “draconian measures” in the Philippines and have demanded for President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (GMA) to step down, as they held protest actions in key cities of Australia.

Filipinos and their supporters expressed rage over the policies of the Arroyo administration and showed their solidarity with the Filipino people in a rally at Federation Square in Melbourne, state of Victoria March 3. Displaying a flag of the Philippines and banners of the Philippines Caucus for Peace, Migrante-Melbourne, Gabriela Australia and Philippine Australian Youth for Action Group (PAYAG), the group said that Arroyo resorts to ‘unconstitutional means to remain in power,’ referring to Proclamation 1017 placing the Philippines under a state of national emergency.

They assailed curtailments on press freedom and the persecution of party-list representatives. They also demanded the release of trade-union champion and lawmaker Crispin Beltran. They also called on the Australian government, headed by Prime Minister John Howard, to withdraw its support for the Arroyo government, which they called ‘illegitimate.’ The group stated their support for the formation of a transition council to replace Arroyo.

On March 6, another rally led by Migrante-Australia and participated in by Australian union members from the Philippines Australia Union Links (PAUL) and Action for Peace and Development in the Philippines (APDP), converged at the Philippine consulate in Sydney.

“Arroyo unleashed the demons that she has been harboring,” said Edwin Subijano, Migrante-Australia head. He claims that these demons are “arbitrary arrests, dispersal of people’s assemblies and increased repression of individuals and organizations fighting for justice and genuine democracy in the Philippines.”

“The substance of Proclamation 1017 is tantamount to Martial Law,” he added. “Its lifting is not genuine.”



The group of protesters also agreed with the views expressed by urban poor leader Carmen “Ka Mameng” Deunida in an interview with ABC (Australian TV). Deunida reportedly said, “We don’t see any development in the Filipino nation. Instead, we are being strangled, we are dying from poverty.”

The group enumerated the reasons for ousting Arroyo to include rampant corruption, election “theft,” human rights violations, below-poverty living standards and media control. Afterwards, the group proceeded to the US embassy in MLC Square after the picket at the Philippine consulate.

At the U.S. embassy, Eva Tingson of the Philippines-Australia Women’s Association (PAWA) demanded justice for the alleged rape victim by U.S. troops in Subic.

In a separate interview, Philippines-Australia Youth Organization (PAYO) head Danica Recto said: “We may be living Down Under but we have the correct perspective. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (GMA) is turning the Philippines upside-down. With her in power, everything is topsy-turvy. Repression is misrepresented as freedom. She arrogated unto herself martial law-like powers purportedly to protect democracy. Who is she fooling anyway? We studied Philippine history.”

Recto added that the situation (in the Philippines) shouldn’t be surprising to people anymore. “Political rule that does not give priority to the rights and interests of ordinary people leads to tyranny and oppression,” she said. “That is why Arroyo has to go.” *Bulatlat*

Australia Sponsors Exploitation of Canberra Filipino Hospitality Workers

AUSTRALIA is once again host to the further exploitation of Overseas Filipino Workers with the latest report that 15 Filipino guest workers on skilled migration visas were subjected to sub-human conditions in the hospitality industry in the country's capital, Canberra, in January 2006.

Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers' Union (LHMU) claims the 15 were among 30 workers brought to Australia six months ago under a special arrangement with the Philippines Government and promised good jobs and pay.

Instead, some have found these promises being ignored and worse made to work in slave-like conditions and threatened.

David Bibo, a chef for 20 years in the hospitality industry before becoming an ACT (Australian Capital Territory) LHMU organiser, said these disappointed workers are now owed tens of thousands of dollars but are threatened with deportation if they stand up for their rights.

"The union is aware of workers who have been forced to work 12-hour shifts in hot kitchens without a drink or a break, a worker who was refused medical treatment after suffering a severe burn, and a worker who was grossly racially vilified and threatened with deportation if he did not eat food scraps taken from a rubbish bin", said Bibo.

Guest workers Donabella Cruz, Dario de Guzman and Louie Sales, forked out 50,000 Philippine pesos each (A\$1500) for a promised job in Canberra, only to be underpaid by up to \$16,000 by restaurant employers, after working up to 60-hour shifts. An additional A\$1500 were deducted from their wages.

According to LHMU, when Ms Cruz complained about getting less than A\$30,000 (the promised wage was A\$39,100 gross annually as a skilled chef with international standards) after working 60-hour weeks, she was then told she was paid as a trainee. When she sought help from LHMU to lodge a claim with the ACT Human Rights Office, she and colleague Napoleon Arrieta were locked out from the workplace by their employer within hours of the complaint being lodged.

Ms Cruz, a single woman from Pasig City with extensive work experience in international standard hotels in the Philippines, said this is the first time she has worked overseas and what she has experienced in Australia has made her reluctant to want to travel and work in other countries.

LHMU will lodge more complaints with the Human Rights Office at the request of other Filipino workers.

According to the workers, one was kidnapped by thugs and driven to Sydney for a plane home and he escaped luckily, when police pulled the car over for speeding.

Still another guest worker - Dario de Guzman - has taken out an AVO (Apprehended Violence Order) against his employer after receiving reports of threats made against him by his employer.

"The union is also concerned that some restaurant owners are now campaigning to have chef Dario de Guzman deported because they consider him a leading troublemaker," said Bibo.

Meanwhile Mr de Guzman, 35, a highly experienced chef from Makati City who came to work in Australia to feed a wife and 2 young children back home, is now out of work and deciding what to do next. He is unhappy with the disparity with what he agreed to in his employment contract and the actual working conditions he was forced to endure in Australia. [CONTINUED ON PAGE 6](#)

"...there is now an alarming trend whereby some elements of the Canberra hospitality industry increasingly rely on making profits by cheating guest workers from nearby Asian countries."

The new youth emerging

By A Reyes, Freelance journalist

The water is so flat it's like an intersecting mirror on you left and right, as you look out the window. As you gaze to take this all in, your eyes are drawn to the mountains in the distance - you usually can't avoid this the best of times.

This is usually the time that the train makes this majestic c-turn and you get to enjoy the whole idyllic picture in one whole swoop.

An open expansive lake and you're sitting smack bang in the middle of it all, as the train negotiates the turn in the bend; the mountainous terrain cradles on both sides. Welcome to what looks like Tagaytay at dawn.

Then an odd one or two fishes attempt to fly like seagulls and they soon realize the heavens are not meant for them.

But you've had the chance to swallow these all in along with the tear forming in the corner of your eyes, as your heart gets tugged again, longing for home.

It's two hours, if you get the slow train-ride away from Sydney; Gosford City is like your gateway to the Northern metropolitan outskirts on the way to the Central Coast.

Besides the source of many city commuters who prefer the cheaper accommodation here, this place boasts many popular beaches that even young outsiders regularly hang out in.

So it's little surprise that the yearly Fiesta on the Waterfront organized by the local association Ugnay Kabayan of the Central Coast (UKCC), has also become popular with the young at heart.

It has become even more so, because of the involvement and support of the youth group Philippine Australia Youth Organization (PAYO), first established in 1995 and revitalized in 2004.

On the day that I get there, I can't get over the fact that in broad daylight, you can safely walk across the big park area. From the train station, a brisk 15-minute walk, and a quick look at the oysters hiding under the seawater lining the lake banks, shortly after, the colourful stalls with tapered tarpaulins set up by the young people the night before, emerge.

In addition to the traditional fare of Filipino delicacies, there are the odd arts and crafts, with the games *pabitin*, *sipa*, climbing the pole and basketball entertaining the young, side by side with an assortment of Filipino board games on display and several other stalls tempting your senses.

But of course what stood out for me, was the upright makeshift bamboo stand displaying placards calling, "stop human rights violations in the Philippines", "End political repression" and "No to fascism", among a few, right next to the red and blue banner of MIGRANTE, quietly taking its spot at the end of the line.

I don't remember any fiestas in Sydney or NSW for that matter that boasted such a sight. That PAYO and MIGRANTE could support the launch of the UKCC festive event while they let the public know about the urgent issues back home is a credit to them.

“ It sounds magical. But this is what’s happening with the young people the more they are learning about what being a Filipino means....”

Even their Miss Philippines Australia Quest winner, Jessica Aguilera talked about the excitement of getting a sash while being able to do something about the tragedy of the mudslides in Leyte. The emphasis in this particular beauty contest among so many Miss Pinay contests in the Filipino community is the involvement of the candidates in the community and their appreciation and knowledge of the Filipino culture.

There is in fact no swimsuit nor evening wear competitions, the regular fare in most beauty pageants. Jessica was amazed about the fact that among the 2000 victims of the Leyte tragedy (the topic of the talent quest questions), many children were buried underground while attending school. In an SBS Melbourne interview that I previously filed she said,

“ Apparently there was a lot of children stuck in that school and I said whoa...they’ll never graduate because they got buried by the landslide. I’d really like to do a fundraising with them and see if we can at least rebuild the school.”

Meanwhile, as the rest of the PAYO members busily gave out flyers condemning the political repression and human rights violations in the Philippines, one of their advisers EJ Dela Cruz concluded,

“ It sounds magical. But this is what’s happening with the young people the more they are learning about what being a Filipino means. There are similarities to what’s happening here, that only the issues in the Philippines can give the answers to their questions. We’ve got our eyes always open with what’s happening there.

We think the State of Emergency was introduced to stop the progressive movement in the Philippines and justify the ongoing and increasing violence against the people there.”

They are also calling for the resignation of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, whom they called the “fake” President, since allegations of vote rigging in the last 2004 elections.

After accepting and providing the services as one of the judges at the beauty pageant, I took a lift home from some MIGRANTE friends, with a big smile on my face. I was excited about the new Filipino-Australian youth now emerging in Australia. ■

// Migrante Melbourne KAPIHAN SERIES: //

FREE Migration Seminar

A free migration seminar on sponsoring a relative under skilled migration, family, spouse and temporary working visas.

Presented by Reyvi Marinas, practicing migration lawyer and legal consultant, Migrante Melbourne.

SUNDAY 23 APRIL 2006, 2.00-5.00pm
Walker Close Community Centre
180 Millers Road, Altona North, Victoria

RSVP: Tel 0404 034 397 or 0421 119 776
or email melbourne@migrante.org.au

RESEARCHING DIASPORA: FILIPINO-AUSTRALIANS: NETWORKS, IDENTITIES, COMMUNITIES

The research project tracks people, capital, cultural and knowledge flows of the Australian-based Filipino diaspora. It explores settlement patterns, occupations, trade and business activities and innovations communities and networks of the Filipino-Australians in trans-national and trans-local settings across the Pacific.

Project Partners: Latrobe University, Australia Philippines Business Council and Migrante Melbourne Inc.

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Australia Sponsors Exploitation of Canberra Filipino Hospitality Workers

Union organiser Biboy asserted that these restaurant owners should take a long hard look at their behaviour.

Canberra politicians may not be aware of it but one of these restaurants where these Filipino chefs work is where they dine frequently.

He said that there is now an alarming trend whereby some elements of the Canberra hospitality industry increasingly rely on making profits by cheating guest workers from nearby Asian countries.

He also said that the Department of Immigration seems to have created a loop-hole for the restaurant owners: deeming the national capital a regional area, not a metropolitan area thus giving Canberra restaurateurs a big dollar incentive to exploit these guest workers by allowing them to ignore the Federal Award.

(Australian chefs working in Canberra are paid under a Federal Award which treats national capital workers the same as their co-workers in Melbourne and Sydney. However, the proposed Industrial Relations law changes which will come into place in March 2006 threatens to drag down minimum award conditions.)

MIGRANTE supports the Filipino hospitality workers' and union's moves to have the workers' basic rights and dignity protected and just working conditions upheld.

Migrante applauds LHMU ACT's efforts to raise these matters directly with the ACT Government, the ACT Human Rights Commissioner and relevant OHS (Occupational Health and Safety) bodies.

Migrante also supports the call of the union to make the Immigration Department accountable to its international obligations on maintaining optimum job standards for all workers, to police sponsorship agreements and to ensure fair working conditions are actually met and maintained.

Migrante also calls into account the Philippine Government which encourages a Labour Export Policy that drives its citizenry to extreme conditions of deprivation and exploitation in nearly 200 countries while often dismally failing to protect them. The Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo regime gleefully announced this year a rosy economy while neglecting to announce the absence of any real jobs, industry and agricultural production at home and the enormous contribution of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). (A major reason for the increase in the Philippines' GNP or Gross National Product from 5.7% to 6.5% last year were money OFWs sent home, a total of more than US\$10 billion.)

The practice of OFW export is so entrenched and systematized that the International Labour Organization stated that the Philippines is now the number one exporter overseas of guest workers. ■

ON THE LANDSLIDE DISASTER IN SOUTHERN LEYTE PHILIPPINES

Migrante Melbourne is running an appeal in partnership with Migrante International (Manila) and the International Migrant Resource Center (IMRC) to assist survivors with modest relief for the victims.

Please send your donations to: MIGRANTE International, 65-10th Avenue, Cubao Quezon City, Philippines, or to its Peso bank account: MIGRANTE, International Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) BSB & Acct no: 1993-0728-14.

Or send donation to Migrante Melbourne - Bank at Bendigo Bank, BSB 633000 Account No. 120724224.

Two days after Valentine's Day, several thousands in the province of Southern Leyte, particularly in the town of St. Bernard have been victimized by rampaging landslides last February 17, 2006 just before noon. Rocks, mud and debris from Mt. Guinsaugon avalanched over Brgy. Guinsaugon located at its foot after several days of heavy rain. Geologists and experts point to the continuous rain which surpassed the holding capacity of the soil, as the direct cause of the mudslide.

Profile of the Municipality and Affected Baranggay: St. Bernard is classified as a 5th class municipality (ranking as one of the poorest/depressed) with an area of 100 sq. kilometers and a population of 23,089. It is about 105 kilometers from Maasin City, the center of the province and close to 150 kilometers from the center of the region which is Tacloban City. As an agricultural town, it is no surprise that their patron saint is St. Isidore, whose feast date falls on May 29th.

The landslide occurred in Brgy. Guinsaugon, one of the 30 barangays of the St. Bernard. It is about 9 kilometers from the town proper and is reportedly the 3rd biggest barangay of the municipality with a total of 320 households and a total population of 1,875. The barangay is also said to be located along a faultline. Religious affiliations of the barangay are predominantly of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP).

The Tragedy: It was about 10:30 in the morning of Feb. 17, 2006 under continuing downpour of rain when suddenly an earthquake occurred recorded at 2.6 on the Richter scale (this is being disputed by other reports that the earthquake came after the landslide). After that, the residents just heard a sound like an explosion then came the mud and the rushing boulders bigger than the size of a house.

It was so sudden that the residents were caught unaware. School was in session and a Women's Health Day celebration was being conducted in the area.

Reports from different monitoring agencies said that the continuous rain for the past week was the immediate cause of the landslide. It is a rainfall-induced landslide. Southern Leyte received about 4 times more than the normal rainfall. (478mm vs. 137mm).

The Aftermath: There was an estimated 45 hectares of mud-covered area with about a 4-6 meter thickness. The school that was located near the mountain was buried under about 35-40 meters of mud.

Buried under the school building were about 206 (246 on other records) students including 6 teachers and 1 head teacher. From varied estimates, it is feared that more than 1,500 residents are buried under the mud. Some municipal officials were feared dead since they had attended the Women's Health Day celebration in the said barangay when the tragedy occurred. They were identified as follows: Public Health Nurse Athena Letigio, Municipal Social Welfare-CIDSS worker Felicidad Ilagan, Midwife Susan Sabandal, Brgy. Guinsaugon Captain Absalon Libaton and some of his council members. Also feared dead was Pastor Neil Toyhacao of the UCCP who was assigned in Brgy. Guinsaugon together with his 6-month old daughter.

Already the death toll (from bodies recovered) has reached to more than a hundred, 410 individuals rescued. Other reports put the missing at over 1000 individuals.

While it is Brgy. Guinsaugon that was hardest-hit, there were also other barangays affected whose residents who already evacuated. These barangays are Ayahag, Sug-angon, Nueva Esperanza, Carnaga, Mag-atas, Hinabian, Malinao, Kauswagan, Libas, Lower Bantawon, Sta. Cruz and Tambis I.

Thousands have already evacuated and they are currently taking shelter at the United Church of Christ Church and Roman Catholic Church in St. Bernard, Municipal town hall, Central School, Municipal Auditorium and the Cristo Rey Regional High School. ■

Gabriela Joins International Women's Day March

98 years since the shirt workers in New York marched out of their work and maintained a strike for more than 2 months demanding better wages and humane working conditions, women are still far from enjoying equal treatment with men and positive social attitudes towards them. According to the reports, only 15 % of Australia's managerial positions are held by women and a mere 7% in top positions such as CEO's and company directorships. Women are still demanding equal pay with their male counterparts. Women are still finding it difficult to balance career and family due to lack of affordable childcare facilities. Women are still being subjected to sexual harassment, gender discrimination and violence. 98 years is a very long struggle, longer than the civil war in America and the revolution in China.



Gabriela Australia recognises this social condition. Gabriela celebrates the International Women's Day every year to remind us of the women's rights won by the hard and sometimes bloody struggles of our predecessors. March 8 is also a day to reflect on our continuing struggles until the social condition that breed oppression of women are fully eliminated.

Last 8 March, Gabriela Australia joined the International Women's Day rally and the forum afterwards. The rally was participated by various unions and women's organisations. Among the speakers in the rally were: the secretary of the Textile Clothing and Footwear union who explains the losses of the workers under the new industrial relations legislation introduced by the Howard government; an activists from the Indigenous community who spoke about the oppression the aboriginal community have and are still experiencing, an activist from Latin America who talked about the status of women in South America and Sheila Galacio of the Philippines Australia Youth for Action Group (PAYAG) on the status of women in Asia.

Speakers include the Deputy Secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall Council, president of the Young Unionist Network, Sue Ann Post, a female comedian and Sharan Burrow, the President of ACTU.

The calls of women includes among others: Affordable or Free Childcare; Reversal or the cancellation of the Howard's New "Workers Choice"; Halt to Trafficking of Women; Halt to Commoditisation of Women and End to the Killings and Political Repression in the Philippines.

Migrante International holds 4th Congress

Migrante International held its 4th Congress on 27-29 December 2005 at Shalom Center, Malate, Manila. The general call of the Congress is to uphold the rights and welfare of Filipino Migrants and their families at home and abroad: "*Sahod, karapatan at kagalingan - Ipaglaban!*"

Three (3) delegates from Australia attended the said Congress. The delegates are: Reyvi Mariñas representing Migrante Australia; John Salvor Kotsakis representing Migrante Melbourne and Philippines-Australia Youth for Action Group (PAYAG - Melbourne); and Danica Recto representing Philippines-Australia Women's Association (PAWA) and Philippines-Australia Youth Organisation (PAYO - Sydney).

The highlight of the event exposed the Arroyo Government's anti-people policies that support a US-led economic and political attack on migrant's workers rights and welfare - under the façade of 'anti-terrorism' and worsening economic crisis wrought by imperialist globalisation.

The Congress passed resolutions to intensify campaigns against the Arroyo regime, the formation of 'country chapters' or national-level alliances of Migrante organizations and launching an 'anti-imperialist International Migrants Alliance' overseas, and establishing and strengthening of a 'national formation' of a Migrante mass organisation in the home front.

DBM to depict migrant odyssey

Dulaang Bayan Melbourne (DBM) is currently rehearsing this year's season presentation of "Summer Butterfly". After the successful performance of "Mga eksena sa Airport", Director Manny Asuncion had come up with another brilliant drama series that portrays the plight of Filipino migrants with its delicate intricacies and melodramatic events. One can only relate the experience and the trauma of how to be a migrant in a foreign land.

As the story revolves with the participation of various age groups, a myriad of chapters gave meaning to each one's survival to blend in. A load of true to life depiction of human tragedy and triumph expressed in artistry to entertain and to educate was the aim of DBM in its concept.

The show boasts a cocktail of drama, laughter and original songs composed entirely by a local musician.

DBM has been delivering community issues through theatre arts and is well known for its dedication to stage artistry. Everyone is invited to participate and new members will easily find themselves casually fit in whatever their interest maybe.



"Summer Butterfly"

"Summer Butterfly" will be shown on September 30th and October 1st of 2006. The venue will be at the Clocktower Centre Theatre located at 750 Mount Alexander Road (Corner Mt Alexander & Pascoe Vale Rds, Moone Ponds).

Matinee show starts at 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM. Ample and secure parking space are provided to accommodate patrons and supporters alike. The cost of ticket will be \$25 for all seats and all are encouraged to book early as seats are limited. For booking and inquiries, please ring Danny Fernandez on 9369 3158.

Workers and Communities Solidarity Picnic

Sunday, 2 April, 1.00 pm Yarraville Gardens Corner Hyde St and Somerville Road, Footscray
5 min. walk from Seddon Station Melway 42C8

Defend Workers' Rights and Conditions! Defend Community Living Standards!

Workers, unions and communities will not be intimidated by the vicious IR laws and will fight together to defend the hard won workers' and union rights, working conditions, job security and community living standards.

Trade union and community information stalls * Childrens' Activities * Food Stalls * Displays

Organised by: Western Suburbs Community and Unions Coalition --- Supported by Migrante Melbourne



Azon Multimedia

Meeting the community printing and online needs

- Event Tickets
- Souvenir Programs
- Brochures & Flyers
- Business Cards
- Web Design
- Graphic Design
- Photography
- Videography

For no obligation quotes
contact Danny on
Phone: 9369 3158
Mobile: 0421 2590631
Email: danny@tdasia.com

Events and Activities

2-5pm SUNDAY 23 APRIL 2006: FREE MIGRATION SEMINAR

ORGANISED BY: MIGRANTE MELBOURNE

DESCRIPTION: A free migration seminar on sponsoring a relative under skilled migration, family, spouse and temporary working visas. Presented by Migrante Melbourne. Speaker: Reyvi Marinas, practicing migration Lawyer, legal consultant, Migrante Melbourne.

Venue: Walker Close Community Centre

180 Millers Road, Altona North, Victoria

Cost: Entry by donation - light snacks and drinks will be provided. You are welcome to bring any food or drink to share

RSVP: Tel 0404 034 397 or 0421 119 776

02 APRIL 2006: COMMUNITY-UNION PICNIC

ORGANISED BY: WESTERN SUBURBS COMMUNITY-UNION COALITION

DESCRIPTION:

Trade Unions and Community Information stalls; Children's Activities; Food Stalls Visual display highlighting 150 years of significant struggles and achievements by workers, unions and communities.

Sunday 2 April

1.00 pm Yarraville Gardens

Corner Hyde St. and Somerville Rd.

Footscray. Melway 42C8 .

5 min walk from Seddon Station

01 JULY 2006: TIPANAN SA MELBOURNE - WINTER DANCE PARTY/FUND RAISING ACTIVITY

DESCRIPTION:

Saturday, July 1, 2006; 6 to 11 pm Civic Centre, Cnr Railway Ave. & Crown St., Laverton. BYO; Or you can purchase food & drinks at the venue. Price: Adult - \$10.00; children under 16 - \$5.00; Children under 6 - free A chance to be with friends and acquaintances. A day of fun ... dancing and dancing; singing; games and raffle.

30 APRIL - 8 MAY 2006: International Labor Solidarity Mission (ILSM)

ORGANISED BY: KMU-PHILIPPINES

DESCRIPTION:

The ILSM aims to bring to the attention of the international community the ongoing state terrorism, political repression and human rights violations committed by the US-supported GMA government particularly as it affects workers and their unions/ organizations in the Philippines. It also aims to generate international pressure on the government to stop violating human rights and peoples' rights with impunity. For enquiries contact eiler@eilerinc.org or call +(632) 9130326.

30 SEPT & 1 OCTOBER 2006: THEATRE PRODUCTION SUMMER BUTTERFLY

ORGANISED BY: DULAANG BAYAN

DESCRIPTION:

"Summer Butterfly" will be shown on September 30th and October 1st of 2006. The venue will be at the Clocktower Centre Theatre located at 750 Mount Alexander Road (Corner Mt Alexander & Pascoe Vale Rds, Moone Ponds).

Matinee show starts at 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM. Ample and secure parking space are provided to accommodate patrons and supporters alike. Cost of ticket will be \$25 for all seats and all are encouraged to book early as seats are limited. Please ring Danny Fernandez for booking and inquiries on 9369 3158.



Affix Stamp

To: _____

Migrante Melbourne : : PO Box 606, Laverton, VIC 3018