

PROCEEDINGS OF  
THE EUROPEAN CONFERENCE  
ON  
TRADE UNION REPRESSION  
AND STRUGGLE  
IN THE PHILIPPINES



**February 8-9 1986**  
**London - England**

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**Conference sponsored by:**  
**Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU)**  
**British Trade Union Support Committee**  
**Filipino Trade Union Society (FTUS) Ireland**  
**European Labour Desk for the Philippines**

These proceedings are published by  
the European Labour Desk for the Philippines

*Cover: Workers from Judric Cannery on strike*  
*Photo: Raquel Sancho*

# The Philippines

The Philippines is a country of 7,100 islands located between the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean. It is rich in mineral resources, forest, marine and agricultural products.

Before President Cory Aquino came to power in February 1986, the country has been ruled for 20 years by President Ferdinand Marcos, backed by the government of the USA. The US has several military bases in the Philippines, of which the largest are Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Base. These are the largest American bases in the world outside the US. US companies have over \$1 billion worth of investments in the Philippines.

Under Marcos, the poverty of Filipino people has increased, while the country has been opened up to exploitation by multinational companies. Inflation and unemployment have risen. Manufacturing industry has become very dependent on imported goods, while Philippine raw materials are exported after only minimal processing. Agricultural growth has declined. Big corporate farms — many of them owned by multinationals — have gained control over large areas of land, transforming small, self-sufficient farmers into low-paid plantation workers and contract growers. The number of landless agricultural workers has more than doubled since 1971. Marcos also borrowed heavily: the country's foreign debt has increased 42 times. As the debt has grown, so has the IMF's control over the government's economic policy.

Resistance to Marcos' policies was met with increasing repression. Political arrests, murders and 'Disappearances' became common. The number of troops in the armed forces has increased fivefold since Marcos declared martial law in 1972. Although martial law was nominally lifted in 1981, government repression still increased.

**Land area:**  
300,000 sq. km.

**Population:**  
54.7 million      Rural: 62.77%  
                    Urban: 37.2%  
Number of ethnic groups: 64

**History:**  
Colony of Spain 1521-1896  
Colony of USA 1896-1946  
neo-colony of USA to the present

**Languages:**  
National language is Pilipino.  
Official languages: Pilipino and English.  
Seven major languages and about 70 dialects spoken.

**Religion:**  
Roman Catholic 85%  
Protestant 7%  
Muslim 5%  
Animist and Buddhist 3%

**GNP**  
300,967 million pesos.  
real decline (1984-85) 4.6%

**Inflation Rate in 1985:**  
23.11%

**Foreign debt:**  
\$ 26 billion.

**Armed Forces personnel:**  
1972    60,000  
1983    300,000

**US Military Aid:**  
1970-74 - \$ 139.9m  
1975-79 - \$ 186.9m  
1980-84 - \$ 305.1m  
1985-90 - \$ 900.0m

**Government budget:**  
1986: 90.8 billion pesos.  
1985: 67.325 billion pesos, of which:  
P 6,513m went to education  
P 2481m went to health  
P 7865m went to defence  
P 15,987m went to the debt service fund.

	<i>(in thousands)</i>	
	Number	%
Total	20,128	
Employed	19,142	95.1
Unemployed	986	4.9
Underemployed	31.0	
Total of employed and underemployed	6,901	34.3

<i>as per December 1985</i>		
Industrial workers in Metro Manila	P 57.08	
Industrial workers outside Metro Manila	P 56.00	
Plantation workers	P 46.67	
Non-plantation agricultural workers	P 32.00	

Number of strikes pending at start of year		
1983	1984	1985
6	9	42

Number of strikes declared during year:

1983	1984	1985
155	282	405

Number of workers involved:

1983	1984	1985
33,638	65,306	109,000

Number of working days lost:

1983	1984	1985
581,291	1,907,762	2,440,000

### Poverty, health, nutrition

70% of the population live below the poverty line. In 1985, an average family (six people) would need P 107.95 per day for food alone. The legal minimum wage is P 57.08 per day. Many workers are paid less than the legal minimum.

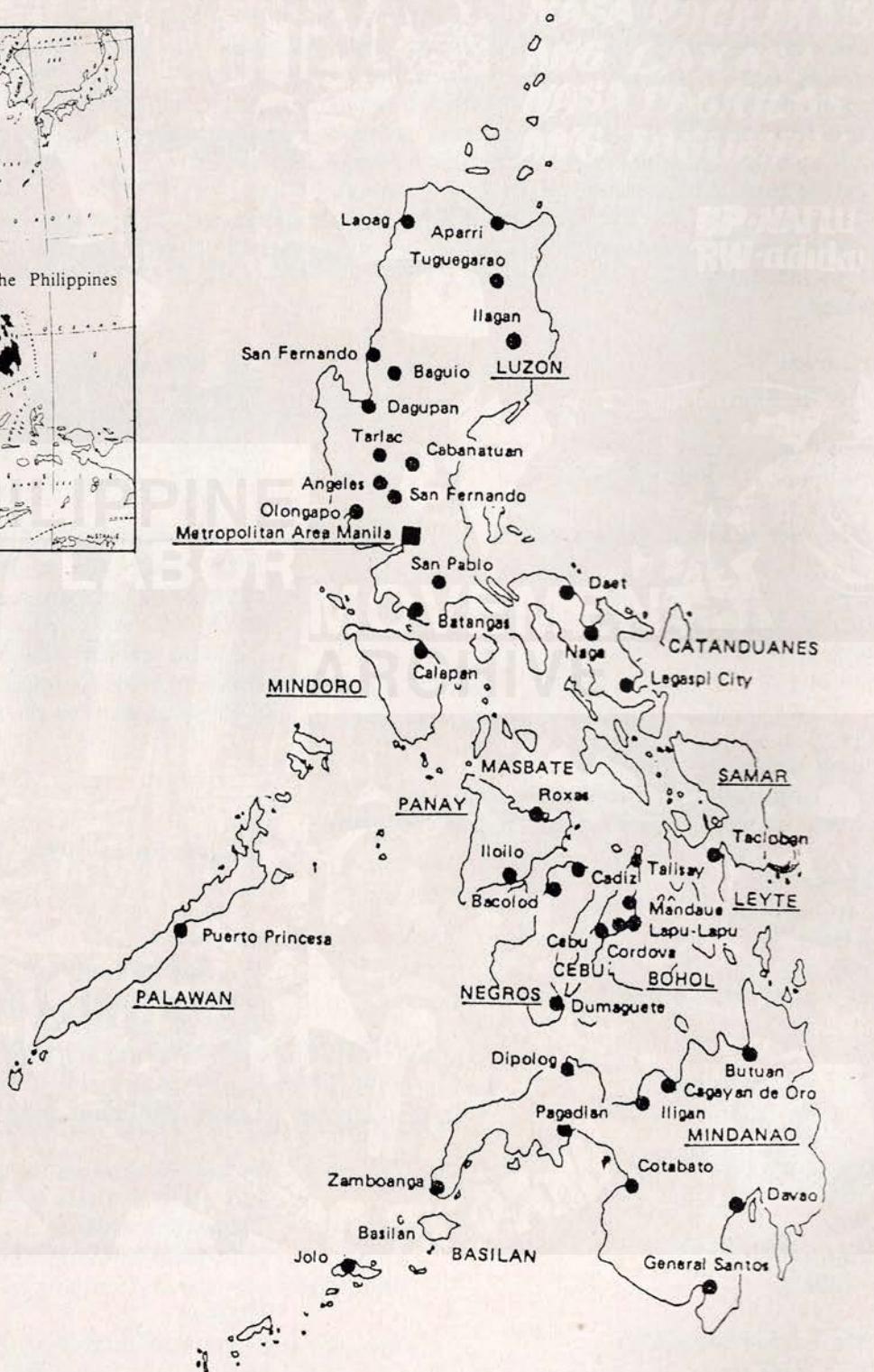
70% of Filipinos suffer from malnutrition.

50% of deaths of under-fives are due to malnutrition.

Infant mortality rate: 59.3 per thousand live births.

86% of urban families live in congested slums.

53% of the rural population do not have safe drinking water.



# Introduction

THIS BOOKLET is a compilation of speeches, resolutions and documents presented during a European labour conference on trade union repression and struggle in the Philippines. The conference, which was held last February 8 and 9 in London, England, marked the first time in European history where unionists from all levels in Western Europe gathered in support of a third world union.

Though many changes have occurred in the Philippines since this London event, we decided to publish the Conference papers for two reasons. One, the documents itself provide insights on the basic problems faced by the Filipino workers during the Marcos dictatorship. Two, the documents also provide a number of possibilities in strengthening solidarity ties between Filipino workers and workers of other countries.

To bridge the gap between the conditions faced by the Filipino workers during the Marcos era — as documented in the Conference — and the changes that have happened after the downfall of the dictator, we decided to come out with this introduction. Together with the Conference documents, these could well be the basis of how European and foreign workers can assess the impact of the events in the Philippines, in so far as it affects the Filipino workers.

## 'People's Power' in the Philippines

The London conference happened right on the heels of a presidential election held last February 7 in the Philippines. The election was marked by rampant fraud and violence which precipitated the historic people's uprising against the dictatorship. Barely three weeks after the election, the Filipino peoples's revolt, which is now termed 'people's power' in the Philippines, led to the ouster of the dictator.

It is the Filipino people themselves who deserve praise for their heroic act in ousting the Marcos dictatorship. In the 4-days' revolt, triggered by the military 'rebellion' led by Marcos' defence minister and the acting armed forces chief of staff, the Filipino people in their millions barricaded the streets and prevented Marcos' tanks and forces from annihilating the 'rebels'.

It is not the benevolence of the United States (which now claims to have engineered Marcos' downfall), nor the planned military coup (which led to a disorganised 'rebellion' when Marcos saw through it), that made the ouster of the dictator possible. The victory rightfully belongs to the great mass of nameless people, living and killed, who persisted in their struggles all throughout the 20 years of Marcos dictatorship.

## Unjust Structures Still Exist

The downfall of the dictator signals a new beginning for the Filipino people. This constitutes the first step towards a full democratisation process in the Philippines.

While the Filipino people have every reason to celebrate the victory against Marcos, there are still more reasons to be vigilant. The dictator has been ousted but various unjust structures, built all through the years, still exist.

In the economic field, the reign of Marcos' cronies — especially in the monopolised industries of sugar, coconut, lumber, etc. — continues its plunder of the country. Warlordism in the provinces is still intact. Favoured foreign multinationals continue to hold sway in almost every industry, much to the detriment of a few remaining Filipino businesses.

In the military field, the same team who had engineered the martial law era, and who had victimised thousands of people during Marcos' rule, were able to entrench themselves by virtue of the 4-days' 'rebellion'.

The political scenario is still very volatile at this stage. Even the Marcos' loyalist party, the KBL, is trying to regain lost ground. It is reorganising its rank in order to deliver attack against the present set-up. The new government itself is founded on a very shaky ground.

## The New Government of the Philippines

The new government of Corazon Aquino is now in place. It is a loose and fragile coalition made up of three main sections, each representing a different trend.

At one end is the military/rightist section, composed of the so-called new Armed Forces of the Philippines and former Marcos' loyalists who were able to retain their posts.

The middle section, leaning more to the right, is made up of traditional politicians and the conservatives in the Church. Most of them are in the UNIDO party which pursues a strong pro-US stance in almost every issue.

The 'left' section of the new government is made up of liberal politicians mostly belonging to the PDP-Laban group.

The military/rightist section, who had shared power with the Marcos dictatorship, constitutes a danger to the democratisation process. These forces may even try to subvert the present coalition and revert to the old order of dictatorial rule.

On the other hand, the middle section takes a conservative stance in pushing forward the

democratic struggle, and seems satisfied with pursuing an American type of democracy devoid of social dimensions and social justice. These forces, as exemplified by the UNIDO group, stand for the restoration of an elite type of democracy existing before the Marcos era.

The third section is composed of personalities known for taking patriotic and pro-people stance in some major issues. They enjoy popular support, and could be the force in the new government which may push for more substantial democratic changes.

Outside the new government, there are various people's organizations, popularly termed as 'cause-oriented' groups, pressing for basic structural changes. The most major grouping is called BAYAN (New Patriotic Federation), a nationwide coalition of militant groups representing various sectors of Philippine society, such as workers, farmers, students, teachers, the religious, etc. The Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) represents the labour sector and is a major force within this broad federation.

## Two-Fold Tasks in the Democratic Struggle

Two-fold tasks await the Filipino people in pursuing the democratic struggle that has just begun: first, to secure the gains made during the period of dictatorship; and second, to push forward the democratic rights and aspirations of the Filipino people.

Securing the gains made by the democratic movement in the Philippines means consolidating the new-found unity of the Filipino people, and eliminating the remaining vestiges of fascist rule in the country. The immediate tasks in this regard include the release of all political prisoners through a general amnesty, trial of all those involved in the abuses perpetrated by the Marcos dictatorship, and return of all illgotten wealth of the dictator and his cronies.

Pushing forward the democratic struggle means genuinely implementing structural changes and creating democratic institutions that will safeguard the interests of the Filipino people. This includes nationalisation of key industries, genuine land reform, and people's participation in the government.

## KMU's Program and Demands

The KMU, considered the largest independent trade union center in the Philippines, welcomes the newly-installed government of Corazon Aquino as a product of the sovereign will and struggle of the Filipino people. The KMU is willing to support the new government to carry out, deepen, and give concrete meaning to the struggle for democracy.

In the labour field, the KMU shall continue the fight against yellow unionism, and for workers' rights and benefits. In this instance, the KMU puts forward the following demands aimed at uplifting the economic and political conditions of the workers:

1. repeal of all anti-worker labour laws and decrees made by the dictator. This includes the full restoration of workers' right to organise and right to strike (especially among government workers who have been denied such rights by the Marcos dictatorship), and the drafting of a new set of labour laws responsive to the needs of Filipino workers.

2. revamp of the pro-employer Ministry of Labour, and the immediate resolution of long-pending labour cases.

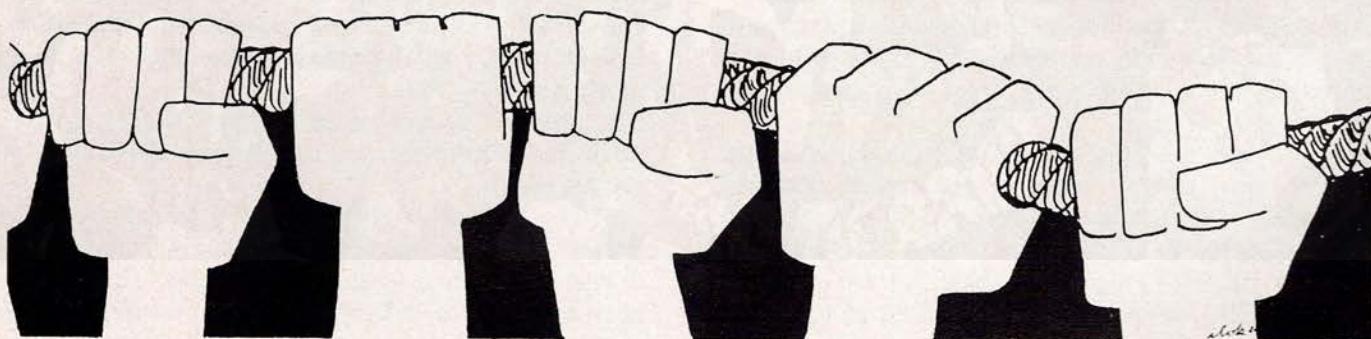
3. justice to all workers victimised by the Marcos regime. This includes prosecution of military, police and criminal elements involved in picketline and labour-related killings and violence, and indemnification of the victims.

4. carry on with concrete social and economic benefits for the workers. This includes implementation of viable economic, social and cultural programmes for the development of Filipino workers.

On its part, the KMU is willing to do its share to make these demands a reality.

On the international workers' solidarity, the KMU is ready to participate in all international workers' groupings that enhance the unity of workers worldwide. The KMU now seeks its rightful place in the ILO as the genuine representative of the Filipino workers — a position long denied to it by the Marcos dictatorship.

March 1986



# Trade Unions in the Philippines

The Philippines has a long history of labour organisation. Printing workers formed a national union in 1902, when the country was an American colony. The colonial legacy remains today. Labour relations and union structures are still based on the US model. US intervention did not disappear after Philippines independence. As part of an anti-communist drive instigated by the Americans in the early fifties, the Philippines government banned the major union federation the Congress of Labour Organisations.

When Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in 1972, he swiftly banned labour organisations and other progressive bodies. The first signs of a militant labour fight-back came in 1975, when workers at la Tondena bottling factory staged a sit down strike. This proved to be the start of a resurgence of workers resistance. In November 1975 100,000 workers marched to protest against the ban on striking. Fierce government measures, including detentions and torture of union activists failed to halt industrial action. The labour ministry recorded 174 strikes involving 135,000 workers between June 1975 and June 1978.

By 1980 the Philippines economy was seeing a severe downturn. In May that year a new united front of radical independent union federations was formed under the banner of the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) or May 1st Movement. This provided a militant alternative to the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), which had been set up within Marcos' 'New Society' and was little more than an arm of government labour policy.

In mid 1982 the government moved against the KMU, arresting many of its leaders. Yet this seems to have had little effect on its ability to organise. Between 1982 and 1986 in each year the number of strikes has doubled. In May 1985 President Marcos tried to ban the KMU May Day marches. Hundreds of thousands of workers marched anyway.

## Labour laws and military repression

Labour relations is on the US model. Striking and picketing right are severely restricted. The ministry of labour is able to declare a strike illegal. By Presidential Decree it is illegal to strike in certain industrial areas — the free trade zones — or in certain industries, such as electronics.

Minimum wages are set by law, but frequently ignored. The use of private armies or the military to break up picket lines is common. From January to October last year over 10 workers have been shot dead on the picket lines and in strike related violence, while 40 others were reported 'salvaged'. ('Salvaging'

is a term referring to the disappearance and murder of victims by the military and by right wing death squads).

## National union centres

Unlike Britain there is more than one national union centre in the Philippines. These centres are competing against each other for union membership.



## The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)

The TUCP was organised in 1975 on the initiative of President Marcos. It claims a membership of over 1 million, but this figure is almost certainly an exaggeration of its real strength. The TUCP is the affiliate of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). It has recently been revealed that TUCP is the largest single recipient of funds from the National Endowment for Democracy set up by President Reagan in 1983.

The Australian union mission to the Philippines in May 1985 says in its report. "The TUCP has remained close to President Marcos since its inception. President Marcos has traditionally been guest speaker at TUCP conventions and May Day rallies, and the TUCP supported the continuation of martial law in the 1970s, the imposition of repressive labour laws which violate ILO conventions, and the jailing of union leaders from rival trade union centres. Delegates observed that at the TUCP May Day rally

in Negros in plantation owners' trucks, and reportedly paid money and given a free T-shirt to encourage attendance".

A New Zealand Federation of Labour mission to the Philippines was even more damning. In its 1984 national congress the NZFL described the TUCP as "merely a tool of the Marcos dictatorship which helps suppress the wages and conditions of Filipino workers."

## Federation of Free Workers

This single federation claims a membership of 200,000. It is affiliated to the World Confederation of Labour. It was formed in the 1950s by American Jesuit priests. It receives considerable funding from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in West Germany. The FFW leader Juan C. Tan supported martial law and praised the 'New Society' of President Marcos as having "produced great possibilities for permanent and continuing change." However, despite a conservative outlook, and a policy of not supporting strikes, the FFW has achieved some gains in wages through negotiation.

## Trade Unions of the Philippines and Allied Services (TUPAS)

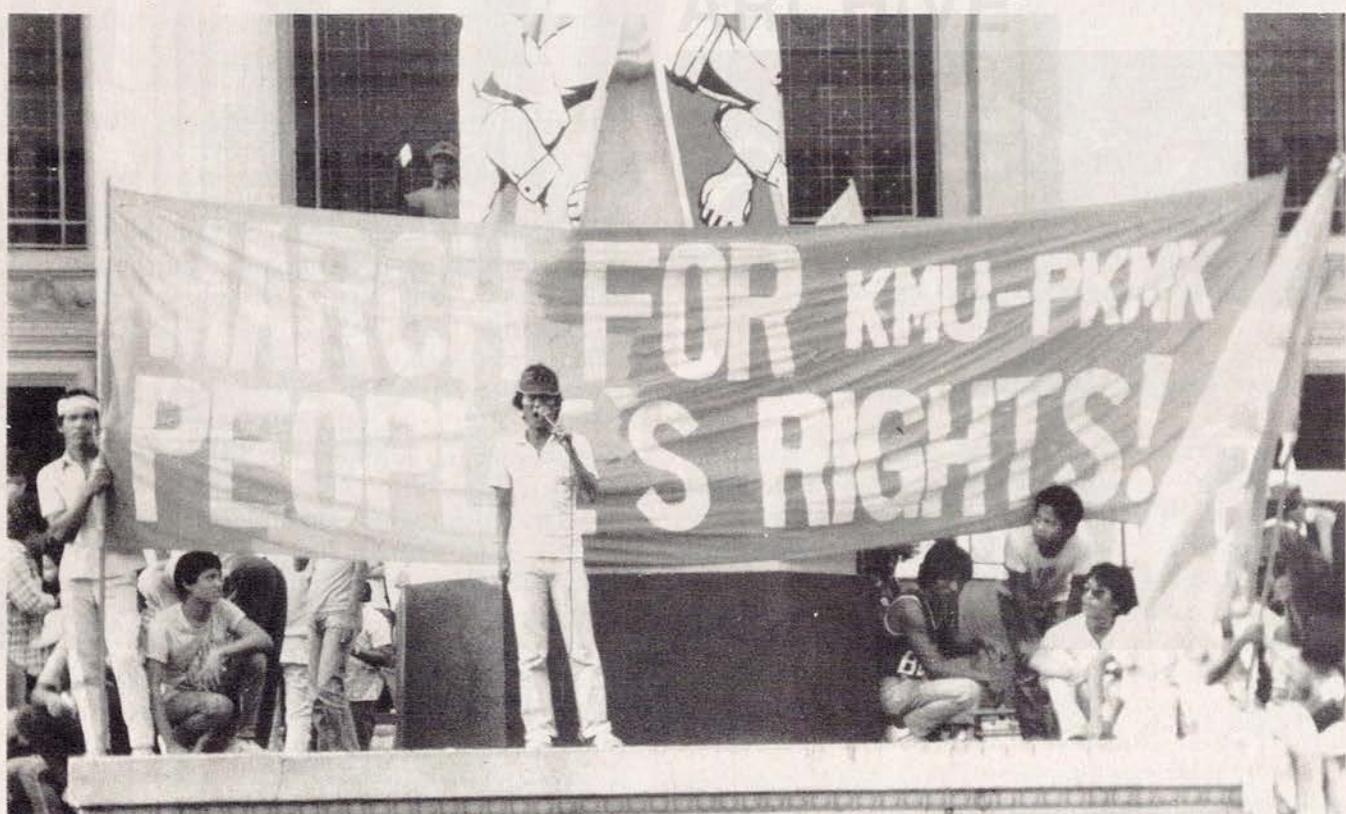
TUPAS is a single federation, which claims 180,000 members. It is affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Unions. TUPAS takes a clear stand of opposition to the government's labour policies, and its Secretary General was jailed along with KMU

leaders in 1982. TUPAS has formed a loose coalition with KMU organising Union action around the issue of poverty. TUPAS is the only union other than KMU which supports and promotes strikes by its union locals.

## Kilusang Mayo Uno

KMU was founded in 1980 out of a coalition of union federations which organised a May Day demonstrations that year. The KMU describes itself as 'genuine' (it really represents workers' interests), militant (it sees labour-capital relations as intrinsically antagonistic, and supports strike action) and nationalist (it opposes US domination of the Philippines). KMU membership is said to have grown from 50,000 in 1980 to 500,000 in 1985. In 1982 many of its leaders were arrested in military raids. Among these was its 80 year old President Felixberto Olalia who died while in detention, and its General Secretary Crisplin Beltran. Beltran was Amnesty International's Prisoner of the Month just before he managed to make his escape; from detention.

KMU is independent of any international affiliations, however it has bi-lateral relations with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the General Confederation of Italian Workers, the Federation of metal Workers of Italy, the confederation of Canadian Unions and the New Zealand Federation of Labour. The latter have found that the case against the TUCP being affiliated to the ICFTU as representative of Filipino trade unionists so strong that they have asked for its disaffiliation and have requested that the KMU should receive recognition as the representative of Filipino unionism.



**European Conference on  
Trade Union Repression and  
Trade Union Struggle in the Philippines  
February, 8th 1986**

**PROGRAMME**

10.00 am	Registration and Coffee
10.30	Welcome and Opening Remarks
10.40	<b>Trade union repression and struggle in the Philippines</b> Speaker: Mr Roberto T. Ortaliz General Secretary, KMU President, National Federation of Sugar Workers
11.00	Open Forum
11.25	Coffee Break - Signing up for workshops
11.40	Solidarity Messages
11.50	<b>Factory level struggle of unions in the Philippines</b> Speaker: Ms. Cleofe Zapanta General Secretary, Women Workers' Movement in the Philippines (KMK)
12.05	Open Forum
12.20	<b>Response from a European trade unionist</b> Speaker: Mr. Ken Martin SOGAT '82
12.35	Workshop preliminaries (Introduction of participants)
1.00 pm	Lunch
2.00	<b>Workshops</b> 1. Multinationals in the Philippines and International Workers links 2. Free Port/Enterprise Zone in the Philippines. 3. Filipino Women Workers and their Struggles. 4. Trade Union Organising in the Philippines. 5. Genuine Trade Union Education in the Philippines.
4.00	Report Back on Major Workshop Resolutions Conference Statements
5.00	Slides/Video Shows about Unions in the Philippines

# Trade Union Repression and Struggle in the Philippines

*Speech by Roberto T. Ortaliz, General Secretary of Kilusang Mayo Uno*

Sisters and brothers,  
fellow unionists and friends,

I bring to you warm solidarity greetings from the Filipino workers and the Filipino people.

I would like to extend the KMU's deepest gratitude for the British unions and the European unions which send delegates for this Philippine conference.

The theme of this Conference aptly describes the situation of unions in my country. For there is both an escalation of the repression of unions and the struggle of the Filipino workers for decent living, justice freedom and democracy.

Just before I came here to Europe, the government's repression of unions in my country continues without let-up. The killings and abduction of trade unionists has become widespread. Last September 20, in Escalante, Negros — a sugar-producing province where I come from — the military and paramilitary forces opened fire on 6000 unarmed demonstrators, killing 27 people, 18 of whom were sugar workers belonging to my own union, the National Federation of sugar Workers. These plantation workers were only demanding a fair distribution of rice subsidies to their hungry families, a small plot of idle sugar lands where they could plant survival crops, and a string of other equally legitimate demands. A family member of one of the victims later said, "We only want to survive, but it seems the government in our country does not want this."

Not content with this bloody massacre, four more sugar workers were abducted last December. Their bodies were found early this month, bearing torture marks and gravely mutilated. Also, last month, the strike at a soft drinks factory in Laguna was dispersed by heavily-armed men, killing one striker and wounding several others. One severely-injured worker who was run over by a truck had to have his legs amputated. In Manila, a few days before the strike by tobacco workers at Fortune Tobacco Corporation, the chief steward of the KMU union was kidnapped and brutally murdered and mutilated beyond recognition.

Statistics alone indicate the growing repression of workers in my country. From January to October last year, 10 workers were killed on the picket-line and in strike-related violence, while 40 others were reported 'salvaged' or summarily executed. Four hundred more were injured or wounded in separate assaults on labour, while 6 labour leaders remain missing up to now. The Task Force Detainees of the

Philippines, a church-based organisation monitoring human rights abuses in the country, reported that there are at least 40 trade unionists imprisoned throughout the country.

The labour death count for the last year alone stands at a staggering 80, exceeding the total number of workers murdered from the declaration of martial law in 1972 up to 1984. From 1973 to 1984, there were about 46 'salvaging' incidents. Almost 50% of all 'salvagings' took place from January to October 1985 alone. From 1973 to 1984, there were 14 reported disappearances. Again, almost half of the recorded abduction of workers took place in the first seven months of last year.

The daily minimum wage of P.57.00 (£2.21) falls short of the P.120 (£4.64) daily cost of living, the poverty-line minimum for the average family of six, while the government even allows the employers exemptions from the payment of this daily minimum. Aside from receiving slave wages, workers are also subject to inhuman and hazardous working conditions. In many companies, forced overtime, reduction of working hours, high quotas and very short rest periods are normal. Labour Ministry records reveal that a total of 46 workers died, while 560 more were injured and 3,869 suffered total disability in factory accidents in 1985. Government reports also practically admitted it was powerless to enforce labour standard laws, as it revealed that more than 86% of existing companies and firms do not comply with labour standards on working conditions. Except for accidents, the health hazards are not even recorded.

Various anti-labour laws have, as their primary consideration, the protection of the interest of the State and capital, and not labour's interests. The government has tailored its laws so as to effectively curtail the right to strike, to picket and to engage in other concerted activities.

The Philippine labour movement is at a critical point today. The frenzied killings and abductions of workers are escalating at a time when the Marcos regime is on the defensive against the growing tide of popular resistance to his rule. They are escalating at a time when the Filipino workers are fighting back to earn a decent living and a democratic future for their children and the whole nation.

This signifies more than a glimmer of hope for the working people in the Philippines. One proof of this is the growing strength of KMU which was formed just five years ago. The government-recognised union, the TUCP, which was formed

during the period of martial law, is fast decreasing in membership and is losing effective leadership over the majority of the filipino workers.

Another proof is the erupting strike movement in the Philippines, which is indicative of the growing fight of workers for survival and control of their own destiny. This is a strike movement which is hitting both the employers and the Marcos regime, which has consistently ignored our repeated pleas for increased wages, jobs, and full implementation of trade union rights and benefits.

In 1983, 155 strikers rattled the dictatorship and its foreign backers. In 1984, a total of 280 strikes were registered, the majority of which were resolved in favour of the workers. Last year alone, 405 strikes were staged, 70% of whic were led by the KMU. Last year's strikes marked a 45% increase. The number of employees involved in these strikes increased even more — 67% — or from 65,000 to 109,000, resulting in 2.44 million working days lost. In the majority of these strikes, the workers succeeded in securing major concessions from the management, gains which could not have been possible had the workers confined their struggles to the bargaining table.

In the face of ruthless suppression, the workers responded with militant mass actions, demonstrations, and rallies one after another. In a show of defiance against the regime's anti-labour laws banning strikes, it has even leaped from spontaneous and factory-wide work stoppages to coordinated strikes.

A zone-wide strike in the Bataan Export Processing Zone (BEPZ) which involved over 15,000 workers and paralysed 85-95% of the production in the area, is one of the recent examples. Another successful blow dealt by the people, led by the workers, against the dictatorship was the Mindanao-wide people's strike. Held twice in 1985, this paralysed 95% of all commercial and transport activities. The upsurge of more militant forms of action stemmed from the heightening political consciousness among workers which was hastened both by the worsening economic crisis and the efforts of KMU organisers to raise the workers level of political education by planting the seeds of genuine and progressive trade unionism

The year also witnessed the outbreak of bigger and more work disruptions at the Cosmos bottling Company, Stanford Microsystems Inc., Baxter Travenol, American Hospital Supplies, Dynetics and in many other companies and industries. The 355% increase in strike duration in 1985 from 1984 attests to the fact that the workers are becoming more and more emboldened and firm in pursuing militant struggles. This, despite the regime's repressive policies and the great risks involved.

The KMU has recognised the need to align and unite with the broad masses of the Filipino people, who are likewise suffering from State oppression and repression and are fighting for basic democratic rights. KMU closed ranks with the peasants, the urban poor, students, professionals, nationalists and other progressive sectors and unified its cause with

the rest of the Filipino people.

In establishing stronger links with these groups, the KMU has shown it has not only transcended the bread-and-butter brand of trade unionism, but has also raised its level of participation in the struggle of the Filipino people against the continuing exploitative and oppressive rule of the US-backed Marcos regime. It has assumed a vital role in the organised people's movement for national independence and democracy.

But these struggles of the workers and the Filipino people is hardly over. Until the US domination, in collusion with the local ruling class, is delivered to its just conclusions and the Filipino people are liberated from their clutches, all efforts are mere scratches on the surface.

Like you, we are plagued with the same problems of lay-offs, redundancy and unemployment. We are both confronted by the oppression and repression of the big capitalists and the State. We share a common enemy.

Now, more than ever, international support and solidarity assumes pivotal importance. And it is to this task that we address ourselves today.

This conference is being organised at a time wherein European workers and people are properly concerned about Latin America and South Africa as a moral issue. I must say that the same concern should be given to the Filipino people.

I therefore appeal to all trade union members and delegates from the various Trade Union Centres and Federations present here today to actively campaign your own unions and federations to:

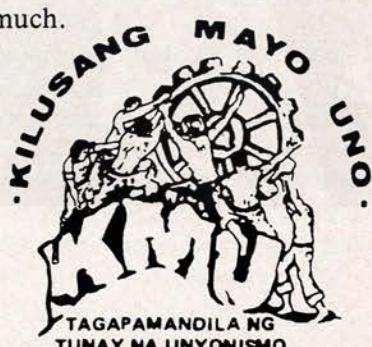
1. Spearhead the lobby to pressure the present regime to abolish the Preventive Detention Action and all oppressive and repressive laws and legislations directed against the Filipino people.

2. Pressure the present regime to put an end to all acts of trade union repression, to abolish all repressive labour laws and to unconditionally release all labour leaders and workers and all other political prisoners;

3. Work for the acceptance of fraternal linkages and recognition of KMU on all levels of your own unions as a genuine trade union centre in the Philippines;

4. Support or to solicit support for KMU and/or affiliated unions and federation, whether in the form of moral, material or financial support — encouraging direct links with workers in KMU and your own membership.

Thank you very much.



# The Women Workers in the Philippines

## A case of struggle against exploitation and repression

Speech by: Cleofe Zapanta, Secretary General, Kilusan ng Manggagawang Kababaihan (KMK)

### 1. Introduction

Greetings from the militant and struggling women workers of the Philippines!

The Filipino women workers today are in ferment. The largest bulk of workers in the Philippines today come from the services sector, in as much as the IMF-World Bank stunts the manufacturing sector and other strategic industries.

In the services sector, one line wherein women employees are dominant is in commercial services. For it is here that imported products made by workers in multinational corporations in your own countries and mine are injected, shoved down our throats and "artificially created as needs" through advertisements to ensure huge PROFITS for these multinational corporations.

The case of Shoemart Incorporated illustrates this point. The largest department store chain in the Philippines today, it is in Shoemart that some 5,000 workers, of which 80% are women, display themselves and their wares to a consuming Filipino public. And to ensure that this cycle is perpetrated, utmost repression has been experienced in SM and in other commercial stores.

### 2. The company

Shoemart Incorporated started as a small shoe store in downtown Manila. Later it expanded into 6 big branches in various commercial centres. It has grown to be one of the biggest department stores if not the largest all over the Philippines, with total assets amounting to P 604 million (Eng. £ 23.32 million) in 1983 and a net profit of P 82 million (Eng. £ 3.17 million) in the same year, Shoemart has landed as number 18 in the top 1,000 corporations in the Philippines.

### 3. Struggle of the Workers

In spite of the huge profits earned by the company in the past four years, the conditions of its 5,000 workforce are not better than their Filipino co-workers.

Most of these workers earn only P 52 (£ 2.00) per day which includes both the basic wage and emergency cost of living allowance (ECOLA) while others continue to receive only P 35 (£ 1.35) per day.

Workers at Shoemart are not only badly paid, but also cheated by management. The work for 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ -

10 hours in three shifts, but overtime work is not paid by management. Of its 5,000 workers only 3,300 or 66% are considered regular workers. The rest are 'casual' or 'agency-contracted workers' who enjoy no protection and security at all.

Most of the women workers complained of kidney problems. Usually the women workers are only allowed 3 minutes to use the toilets. With toilets at a ratio of 3:1,300 customers, 3 minutes would be just impossible to beat. Furthermore, a locator board is hung in order that management can see easily the 'toilet violators'.

With very strict company rules and regulations, the workers, especially the women, are left at the mercy of their immediate supervisors. Women workers especially the young and attractive ones are usually targets of sexual harassment. They are lured into becoming mistresses or girlfriends of managers ('bata') in order that these women workers can have easier moments with their jobs and faster chances for promotions.

Even sick leaves/vacation leaves are good only up to 8 days. But one cannot easily avail of it. It is up to management to decide on when you can have it. As such, in cases of 1-2 days absences, the worker is required to bring her parents' residence certificate and a letter explaining her absence. If it is a 5 day absence without leave, the worker is automatically terminated.

With these exploitative and oppressive conditions, the incumbent union (SMEU) which was led by management supervisors and department managers was clearly working against the interests of the workers. With four collective bargaining Agreements signed in the 13-year period, the conditions of the workers are worse than those of workers in other department stores.

SMEU or the yellow union had remained unresponsive to the problems faced by the SM workers and did not even allow their constituency or membership to be heard. In fact, the newly signed CBA was never known by the workers at all.

As such, in 1984, the workers could no longer bear more exploitation and more sufferings. Organising efforts to establish a genuine trade union were initiated. Twenty-one workers joined the initial core group. Although carefully done, Shoemart management learned about our efforts and thereby immediately summoned and questioned the identified or alleged leaders of the Genuine Trade Union. Management tried to coerce them and threatened them that they will be sacked if they continue with their organising activities.



*Military violence against workers of the Artx Textile factory, who went on strike in 1984.*

Some of the leaders were weakened while the others persisted. New forms of harassment were implemented by SM management on the leaders.

Seven of them were transferred to different branches. The leaders were asked to sign retraction papers. Finally, the acting President of the Genuine Trade Union was laid off.

In spite of all these harassments, the workers were convinced all the more to establish a genuine trade union and a militant one which is not easily cowed by management's repressive actions.

At the newly opened branch, most of the workers were under casual status and were asked to sign an undated resignation paper.

To dissuade the other workers from joining the GTU, gimmicks were initiated like the song and dance contest and the like. But, all these were side tracked by the workers opting for recognition as the workers' representative and for better working conditions.

As harassments and suppression increased, more and more workers became aware of management's profit motives and SMEU's pro-management character. More meetings, seminars and discussions ensued. Signatures were accumulated and a petition for a certification election was filed.

The certification election was literally delayed by management. To a point that SM management closed

down the malt shop section wherein most of the union leaders are. 14 of them as a result were again laid off. A notice of strike was filed to protest at such actions against the genuine trade union. While waiting for 15 days, negotiations took place on these demands:

1. Reinstatement of 14 laid-off leaders from the Malt Shop Section
2. Respect of the right of workers to establish their genuine trade union
3. Reinstatement of all other workers laid-off
4. Stop suspensions and reshuffling
5. Terminate workers from SMEU who had mauled leaders from the GTU.

Nothing happened with these negotiations at the Ministry of Labour. In order to prevent further harassment, a strike was declared at Makati Branch on March 16 1985. As you will see in the pictures, workers, (both men and women) are being beaten up by goons, anti-riot policemen and the military. SMEU staged a counter picket with a 'we love SM' banner slogan to distract the customers attention from the picketers. Loud speakers were also set-up by management directly towards them which created so much noise. Security guards were also used against the strikers. The managers and supervisors dragged and coerced the women.

On the 6th day of the strike, water cannons were used to disperse the workers from their picket at the

instructions of the Mayor of Makati — Mayor Yabut. Later, they were arrested by the military — one by one. Cosca, a strike supporter vomited blood when water cannon struck him in the chest. The Vice President, E. Babagay was arrested. Gemma Sanchez was strangled by a towel by the chief of the security guards. Many more were hurt in this skirmish. The GTU decided to withdraw momentarily and strengthen their position.

On March 26, a multi-sectoral indignation rally against GTU repression was held, about 3,000 supporters amid confettis were blocked by anti-riot policemen before they could reach Shoemart.

As a result, the boycott Shoemart campaign became stronger.

Again, attempts by management to disperse the rally resulted in more violence. Workers were beaten up, cameras were destroyed, blood oozed from the workers' heads whether men or women. More than 100 policemen and three firetrucks came to disperse us. And many more . . . but the struggle goes on, and the workers are not cowed!

## Conclusion

The struggle of the Shoemart workers is reflective of the struggle of the women workers in the Philippines today. As women workers, they are exploited as workers and discriminated against as women. In their struggle for emancipation from class exploitation and gender oppression, the women workers' struggle is incorporated and intrinsic to the struggle of the working class for emancipation and liberation.

Furthermore, the Shoemart struggle is related to the struggle of other workers in the Textile and garments industry, electronics and transport industries.

Thus, the Filipino women workers are at the forefront of the women's struggle in the world.

Hence, we call on all workers of the world to support our historic struggle.

In solidarity we say, MABUHAY TAYONG LAHAT! MAKIBAKA HUWAG MATAKOT!

Thank you.

*KMK-rally on International Women's Day*



# Workshops

## Multinational Corporations

The Philippines Support Group in the UK has devoted substantial energy in recent years towards the development of links between workers with common MNC employers in Britain and the Philippines. This has included MNCs in the auto industry, garments and electronics, — with varying degrees of success. There have also been more general campaigns associated with MNC investment in the Philippines (commonwealth Development Corporation plantations for example), which have had less of a specifically trade union orientation.

Campaigns around MNCs are of considerable value, yet there are a number of unresolved problems and complexities which present important issues for trade unionists concerned with extending solidarity to trade unionists in the Philippines.

Although MNCs have an influence over the development of the Philippine economy — this influence is not in proportion with the direct impact on employment and investment. The number of workers employed by MNCs form a tiny percentage of overall employment in the Philippines. The influence of MNCs is often predominantly political rather than economic.

The level of investment by European MNCs is tiny compared with MNCs with origins in the USA, Japan and elsewhere. Indeed, it can be argued that there is a rapidly increasing power of MNCs based in other SE Asian countries — especially Hong Kong.

It is certainly *not* clear that MNCs are simply transferring investment from North to South — or from the older industrialised countries to the new. There are many instances where investment is being transferred back to the North — taking advantage of new technologies, new industrial relations practices, and increasing use of out-working, part-time labour etc. There are also considerable differences between industrial sectors.

There are growing numbers of MNCs pulling out of the Philippines. Of the 56 MNCs operating in the Bataan Export Processing Zone in 1979, only 28 remain in 1986.

Electronics, textiles/garments, agriculture and other sectors each have very different patterns within the international division of labour, and have each been affected in different ways by recent technological and economical developments.

### MNC Worker Solidarity

Although solidarity organised between MNC workers in Europe and Philippines can be an important tool, the logic of the work will tend towards a focus on the multinational company itself,

rather than remaining a specifically Philippines issue. In other words, MNC workers may seek overseas contacts wherever the company operates regardless of the campaign priorities for Philippines solidarity.

On the other hand, through workplace-based international contacts, solidarity work can exert considerable pressure on national and international unions in Europe to recognise genuine trade unionism in the Philippines.

As a campaign issue therefore, MNCs provide complex questions when attempting to build workplace solidarity campaigns, and it is still relatively rare for such campaigns to have any lasting success.



### Multinationals, Trade & Protectionism

MNC-related trade union campaigns in Europe also involve considerable questions concerning protectionism, which can often run counter to national trade union policies on trade and jobs.

In a period of high unemployment and industrial restructuring, the central question for European trade unionists working for MNCs is job security. The potential for trade union solidarity beyond gestures of support, depends to a certain extent on policies concerning overseas trade, and the relative fortunes of different plants within the international restructuring of production by MNCs.

This poses crucial questions for trade unionists in both Europe and the Philippines.

If production is being transferred from Europe to the Philippines, causing job losses in Europe, how would the Philippines unions react to European calls for support in blocking the transfer of the work?

The European (and North American) unions depend heavily on various protectionist policies, as a major strategy for domestic economic development. How would the Philippines trade union movement react to the imposition of trade barriers against Philipino goods?

Although the damage inflicted on the Philippines people by Marcos' pro-MNC policies is well understood, does this mean that the trade union movement in the Philippines would welcome further job losses caused by the withdrawal of MNC investment?

Beyond the useful day-to-day work of exchanging company information, messages of support, and other forms of solidarity, to understand the longer-term implications for such international co-operation needs much fuller discussion and dialogue.

## **Free Port/Enterprise Zones in the Philippines**

Free trade zones, sometimes called export processing zones, are industrial enclaves separated off — sometimes behind concrete walls. They offer an export platform geared to the needs of multinational companies, with ready built factories, international telecommunications and air or sea port facilities through which companies can ship in parts for assembly, and ship out goods to the world market. Imports to and exports from the zone are exempted from custom duties. The companies are given tax holidays, the right to repatriate all of their profits and a ready supply of cheap labour.

The first free trade zone was established at Shannon in Ireland in the late 1950s. The idea quickly spread to the poor countries of the South, which saw in such zones a chance to reproduce a booming Hong Kong style economy in their own country. By 1980 more than 55 countries, stretching in a chain through Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia, had set up free trade zones. Even China has set up similar zones on its territory adjacent to Hong Kong.

### **Bataan Export Processing Zone (BEPZ)**

The Bataan Export Processing Zone in the Philippines was set up in 1972, immediately after President Marcos declared martial law. The zone has been the centrepiece of the economic policy of the regime, aimed at attracting international capital to the country.

The main aims of the zone were:

1. To bring employment
2. To bring modern technology and knowhow to the country, which would spread out into Philippine industry.
3. To bring new capital investment into the country, and to earn foreign exchange.

As well as offering tax holidays to companies coming to invest in the zone, the government passed special laws decreeing that all production taking place inside the zone is vital to national security. This has included Dunlop producing tennis balls, Iwahurri making disposable cigarette lighters and Mattel making Barbie dolls. Striking was banned inside the zone. The repressive laws are enforced by a special armed zone police and network of spies.

However, the zone has not succeeded in performing the economic miracle proclaimed of it by the regime. Employment in the zone has declined steadily since its peak of about 27,000 workers in 1981. Presently there are about 14,000 workers. Many of the companies have started to leave the zone as the period of their tax holiday has finished. Mattel, Ford, Astec Electronics have all left the zone in the last few years, along with many others.

The companies have not brought technology and knowhow to Philippines industry. A recent report by the Australian National University says that most of

the firms that have come to the zone are engaged in labour intensive production such as garments, toys and electronics and have little technical to offer. The few which do are tight lipped about their trade secrets.

Nor did the zone bring in much foreign exchange. Although from 1973-1982 the zone companies chalked up a total of \$ 82 million, the Australia University report points out that this is far from offsetting the costs of building the zone of \$ 192 million. Moreover instead of bringing money into the Philippines, foreign companies used up scarce Philippines capital by borrowing inside the country. The report says 'The estimated loss to the Philippines from domestic borrowing alone of foreign firms in the zone is itself large enough to cancel all the total gain from employment generation and foreign exchange earnings'.

### **Strikes**

The other area in which the zones have been a failure has been in suppressing strikes. Most of the workers in the zone are young women from rural backgrounds without previous experience of unions. Nevertheless they have organised into one of the most militant labour forces in the country. In four years there have been four general strikes in the zone. In 1983 when workers in the British BSR-owned Astec Electronics went on strike for recognition the authorities brought battle trained marines into the zone. 20,000 workers in the zone stopped work in sympathy with the Astec women and forced the company to negotiate. The last general strike was part of a province wide strike against the building of a nuclear power plant in the locality.

### **How the Companies use the Zone**

The British company Baird Textiles illustrates how companies use the zone. Bairds operates several garments factories in the UK, although some of these, particularly in Manchester, have recently shut down in a process of 'rationalisation'. Its biggest factory, however, is on the other side of the world in the Bataan Export Processing Zone. But the factory there is not making garments to sell in Asia. From its Intercontinental Garments Manufacturing Co (IGMC) plant inside the zone, Baird produces most of its Telemac range of ladies outwear. The IGMC plant is really just a huge cutting and sewing shop. The cutting instructions are telexed direct to the cutting room in IGMC from Bairds office in Stockport. All the materials, the cloth, zippers, buttons and even the thread come from Hong Kong. All that is required from the Philippines is labour. The finished coats are shipped direct from the Philippines plant to the huge Telemac warehouse in Reddish, near Stockport. There they are repacked and distributed to all the wellknown high street stores such as Debenhams, Littlewoods, C & A, Hepworths and John Collier. In 1982 IGMC locked out workers when they made demands for back pay owed to them.

## Call to all Delegates on Women Workers Issues!

### Introduction:

The Women Workers Movement in the Philippines calls on all brothers and sisters of friendly and militant unions to support and endorse in their unions the following appeals:

1. The women workers as all workers in the Philippines today are daily harassed by the state and the management, based on the following facts:
  - women workers are paid lower than their male counterparts;
  - the wages however are more than 100% below the poverty line;
  - the women working as government employees have no right to organise themselves into trade unions;
  - the women workers in so-called vital industries have no right to strike;
  - the women workers in garments, textile and electronics industries are threatened with rotation or reduction of working days and retrenchment as a result of an economic crisis which has greatly affected labour-intensive and export-oriented industries.

This situation is a prevailing one for all workers in the Philippines, and women workers are very much victimised by it. We appeal to the people in the workshop to develop international solidarity and protest against these inhuman working conditions.

2. A prevailing situation in many factories is forced overtime, almost daily and even on Sundays. This is a big burden especially for women who also have to look after the family.

We appeal to participants of the workshop to denounce this illegal overtime work especially forcing women with the threat of losing their jobs.

3. Sexual harassment of women workers is not an uncommon situation in the factories by male management or male workers in supervisory positions. It is often used as a threat for dismissal if the woman worker is not cooperative or would file a complaint.

We appeal to the delegates of this workshop to denounce in the strongest terms possible, this criminal act and to take a firm stand for the support of the women workers who are fighting against this form of harassment.

4. The labour conditions in the factories, especially in textile, garments and electronics are totally substandard, and hazardous to the health of women workers.

We appeal to the delegates to denounce and condemn the multinationals which have only one interest of protecting their products due to high profit motives and of being totally uncaring as to the working conditions of women.

We also appeal to you to put pressure on the Philippine government to fully implement

positive labour standards for the health and safety of women workers.

5. The Maternity benefits of women workers have been reduced. From 14 weeks of paid maternity leave plus an opportunity to apply for sick leave if still needed as a result of delivery to the Social Security System of the SSS, the maternity leave benefit has been reduced to 6 weeks as paid maternity leave and could no longer avail of sickness benefits from the SSS as needed. The compensation received in fact has also been reduced. Before, it was computed based on your total daily wage. Now, it is computed on your basic wage which does not include the Emergency cost of Living Allowance or ECOLA.

We appeal to the delegates in this workshop to support the women workers demand to 14 weeks of paid maternity leave computed on the total daily wage (basic wage plus ECOLA).

6. Corollary to maternity leave benefits is the paternity benefits of men workers who are married. Right now, the law is silent on this provision. Rarely it is taken up in collective bargaining negotiations by the trade unions. A few have one day provision for paternity leave.

We call on all the delegates to this workshop to support the demand of the women workers for the provision of 7 days paternity leave for the husbands or married men workers. We also call on male trade unionists.

7. The past year was marked by picket line violence initiated by the capitalists through the help of hired goons, policemen and the military in implementing return to work-orders from the Ministry of Labour and Employment. Three women workers were slain in the picket line and in protest actions.

We appeal to the delegates of this workshop to support the demand of the women workers to indemnify the victims of harassment and repression or picket line violence. The victims are Leticia Celestino, Nenita Bronzon and Henita Orvot.

8. The women workers encounter specific problems in taking leading roles in the unions, federations, and national centre due to different reasons. Namely, cultural oppression, male chauvinism, lack of leadership training, lack of support to attend to the double task of being a wife and a worker. All these problems can be remedied with the proper organisational structures, educational programmes and support mechanisms for the assurance of women workers' participation in mobilisations and in leadership positions.

We appeal to all the delegates in this workshop to support morally and financially the Women Workers Movement in the Philippines, the Kilusan ng Manggagawang Kababaihan (KMK). If possible, adopt a full time woman worker organiser.

9. We appeal to you all to take efforts to inform co-unionists to actively support the KMK.

## Trade Union Organising in the Philippines

### Forms of Union Organising in the Philippines

TRADES UNION in the Philippines are based in the factory level, with only one single union allowed to operate in each of a single firm. A grouping of 10 unions, each having its collective bargaining agreements or contracts with the employers of their factories, can constitute a federation. The federation can operate on every line of industry, or whenever it is possible for them to organise. (There are only a few federations or national unions which focus their organising along industry lines, such as the National Federation of sugar Workers and the National Union of Workers in Hotel, Restaurants & Allied Industries.)

A grouping of federations constitutes trade union centers, just like the TUC here in Britain. However, unlike Britain, there are two national union centers in the Philippines competing against each other for union membership. One is the TUCP which was organised in 1975 on the initiative of President Marcos during the period of martial law. According to independent surveys, TUCP has now about 600,000 members as compared to its reported figure of over a million during initial formation. The other trade union center is the KMU, which was founded in 1980 out of coalition of independent federations, and has about half a million members today, as compared to 50,000 members at its beginning.

A new trend of union organising is now developing in the country, mainly through the efforts of the KMU. This is organising union Alliances in the territorial and industrial level which allows local unions belonging to KMU, TUCP, various unaffiliated federations, and independent unions to group together and create common programmes of action. If we include these various alliances which are being led by the KMU, the latter's effective leadership reaches out to 800,000 or more workers.

### Restrictions on Union Organising

There are several restrictions imposed by the Marcos government regarding trade union organising. The following restrictions, among others, are included in the series of complaints filed by the KMU at the International Labour Organisation (ILO):

1. Workers in export-oriented industries, electronics firms, public utilities, oil and energy, banks, and hospitals are not allowed to strike.
2. Government workers are not allowed to unionise and to engage in any concerted activities, much more to strike.
3. Security guards, managerial employees, so-called apprentices and learners, contractual workers, casual, probationary and temporary employees are barred from union membership.

### Process of Organising

To organise a union in the Philippines, the following processes as laid down by the Philippine Labour Code must be followed:

1. A factory union must first seek legitimacy status by registering with the Ministry of Labour, or affiliating with registered federations. The process of registration usually takes months, giving opportunity for the employers to sack the union organisers.
2. If a union already exists in the factory, the contesting union has to wait till at least two months before the end of the bargaining contract (usually 3-year duration) in order to file for a new union election. This process is also long-drawn with much legal technicalities involved. A simple election case normally lasts for more than a year, thereby frustrating the free will and choice of the workers.
3. Once a local union is certified as the sole bargaining agent, negotiations with employers take place. If the local is affiliated, the mother federation can just do the bargaining with the employer.
4. Theoretically, the unions, except those in the 'restricted' industries, can stage a strike if the bargaining bogs down or if the employers start doing 'unfair labour practice', like sacking employees, etc. However, the following legal provisions are imposed: (a) there should be a strike notice; (b) there should be secret balloting with a clear 2/3 of the union members opting to strike; (c) results of balloting must be reported to the Ministry of Labour; (d) there are mediation proceedings, initiated by the Ministry, to try and settle the dispute; and (e) if everything has been complied with by the union, the law allows the Labour Minister and President Marcos himself to declare the strike as harmful to 'national interests' and have it stopped by the use of military force. Killings in the picketlines is being justified by the government as a result of the strikers' intransigence to follow government orders.



The legal restrictions imposed by the government serves as its justification to suppress unionism in the Philippines. Suppression of union organising, specifically that of KMU's takes the form of abduction and arrests, and 'salvaging' (secret execution) of union organisers. So far, at least 40 workers are in jail and a similar number have been 'salvaged' (from January to October 1985 alone), while 6 more are still missing, as a consequence of their union activities.

#### Appeals

1. We ask you to pressure the Philippine government to stop abduction, arrests and killings of trade unionists in the Philippines.
2. We ask you to pressure the Philippine government into immediately releasing the more than 40 workers and unionists who are still languishing in jail.
3. We ask you to support KMU's complaint to the ILO regarding the Philippine government's continuous violations of Conventions 87 and 98, which means heavily restricting the rights of the Filipino workers to self-organisation and free collective bargaining.
4. We ask you to support the KMU's organising work all over the country, by adopting Filipino organisers or providing material and financial support to the various KMU-led alliances.

## Trade Union Education in the Philippines

Workers' education in the Philippines is characterised by two approaches. One type can be called 'technical' in as far as it provides workers (predominantly union officials) with skills to implement the Labour Code in their favour.

A second type, without neglecting the 'technical' skills, places them within the framework of a more critical and radical thinking. For short, a course offering more general knowledge but as a means to social change.

The first one is essentially characteristic of TUCP and FFW education programmes. The second one is called GTU (genuine trade union course), and covers the progressive and militant labour sector from KMU, TUPAS and independent unions, and even extending to local unions of TUCP and FFW.

The militant trade union movement in the Philippines sees the GTU-type of education as the appropriate type of basic union education in the Philippines.

#### Objectives of the GTU-Type of Education

This education is situated in a setting where the labour movement has been denied most of its basic rights. After the 1950s, there has been a fragmented



"Onward with the strike until we succeed - Fight for a meaningful Collective Bargaining Agreement - Defend the life of the union"

workers' movement, elite-led (labour aristocracy), dominated by yellow unionism and with a dire lack of historical and class identity. It effected a low rate of organisation.

The objectives of the GTU-type of education are as follows:

1. establishing a class identity and consciousness, providing a historical identity and insight in the role of the workers' movement, and sharply defining and highlighting their interests.
2. establishing a self-awareness of worth, both as workers and Filipinos in a larger society.
3. improving skills to cope up with both the factory-level and the national level struggles.

### Methods

The method of education starts from the concrete to the abstract, from the confines of the factory to the society at large, from the present to the past and the future. The method of instruction departs from the conventional class-room type, stressing more on workshops, role-playing, and small cultural activities. Visuals (charts, slides) are being used to make the process not merely verbal, but multi-sensory.

### Courses

To obtain these objectives, the militant workers' movement in the Philippines embarks on a massive education program, from the grassroots (factory-level) upwards, rather than from the top downwards. This is a program based primarily on the PAMA and GTU courses.

#### I. PAMA (Introductory Workers' Course)

This is a one-day course which tackles the situation, problems and aspirations of the Filipino worker. The course is divided in 4 parts: 1) importance & characteristics of the workers in our society, and who and what are the forces they relate with inside the factories; 2) the situation & problems of labour, including the general situation of the society; 3) the principles & tactics of genuine unionism; and 4) direction of the workers' movement.

This course is intended for all workers, especially those not yet organised in a union, or in the process of being organised, or the unionised even who are still under control of a yellow leadership. The course fits those who are not able to participate in a live-in seminar (PAMA is usually on Sundays).

Out of the 500,000 members of KMU, 300,000 have already participated in the PAMA courses as of last year.

#### II. GTU Course

This is a 3-day live-in seminar which deepens the concepts and practice already indicated in the PAMA course. The course has the following chapters: 1) the situation and problems of the Filipino workers; 2) the trade union movement; 3) the movement towards liberation of the workers and the Filipino people; and 4) the history of the Philippine labour movement.

GTU course, like PAMA, is intended for all workers. The former however, deals comprehensively with the roots of the problems in Philippine society and the role of genuine militant and nationalist unionism. This is seen as linking up the trade union movement with the efforts of other sectors of Philippine society towards genuine freedom and democracy.

#### III. PGI (Instructors' Training Course)

To massively implement the PAMA and GTU courses, an instructors' training course is developed. This is a 4-day live-in seminar combining theoretical and practical aspects of training instructors from among the workers. The course focusses on principles, methods, techniques, and aids for instruction work. This is a 4-day live-in seminar given to those who have finished GTU and have potentialities to become instructors.

The course is divided into the following: 1) refresher of the important points in the GTU course; 2) basic principles of teaching; 3) methods of instruction; 4) drawing up lesson plans; 5) practice-teaching and evaluation; and 5) tasks after the training.

Aside from these courses, there are still others being given on request and tailored to the present needs of unions, federations and labour service programs, such as research training, media & communications, management skills and union management skills.



#### Appeals

The KMU Education Department seeks the support of various European unions to provide necessary funding and materials for its educational thrusts and campaigns.

The decentralised, grassroots system of education requires that several offices be set-up in various parts of the Philippine regions to service the education needs of KMU's enlarging membership.

Specific training programs are also being developed, such as collective bargaining & research, health & safety, cooperative building, media skills, and new technology & multinationals' operation, where European unions can lend assistance and expertise.

# Conclusion

This conference notes that:

1. the Philippine Labour Laws, especially the ones restricting the right to organise and strike (BP 130, the New Labour Relations Law, and BP227, the Anti Scab and Picketing Law, and LOI 1458, which legalises military intervention on picket lines) result in injury to workers. They are therefore grave and direct violations of ILO Conventions Nos 87 and 98 of the International Labour Standards of which the Philippines is a signatory.
2. The Philippine labour laws are used by the state to suppress the legitimate activity of workers.
3. The Philippine state accuses KMU of violating the Anti-Subversion Law when the latter defies these labour laws, thus justifying the state's acts of imprisoning and murdering workers, and issuing workers with Preventive Detention Actions (PDA), treating them as subversives and enemies of the state.
4. Issuance of the DPA is a special power of the president which allows him, in the interests of 'national security', to order the arrest of anyone without going through the proper court procedure.
5. The Marcos regime uses the military to check the growth of the progressive labour movement in the Philippines.
6. Legalised military intervention against the progressive labour movement has led to the arrest of 373 labour leaders and workers from January to August 1985.
7. Military intervention against picket lines and rallies, and indiscriminate arrests have left 80 workers dead and several 'missing' in 1985 alone.
8. Multinational companies are exploiting Filipino workers through starvation wages, unsafe working conditions, forced overtime and similar practices.
9. Filipino women workers face additional exploitation and repression in the form of lower pay, sexual harassment and discrimination.
10. The KMU is the largest democratic labour organisation in the Philippines with a membership of eight large federations, many municipal, regional and industry alliances, and many independent trade unions across the whole country totaling a membership of over 500,000.
11. The KMU can mobilise a great number of workers to struggle for economic and trade union political rights.

12. The KMU represents the genuine interests of workers in the struggle for justice, freedom and democracy.

This conference strongly condemns the US backed Marcos regime for its crimes of oppression and exploitation of the Filipino workers and the suppression of the trade union rights.

**Furthermore the participants to this conference resolve:**

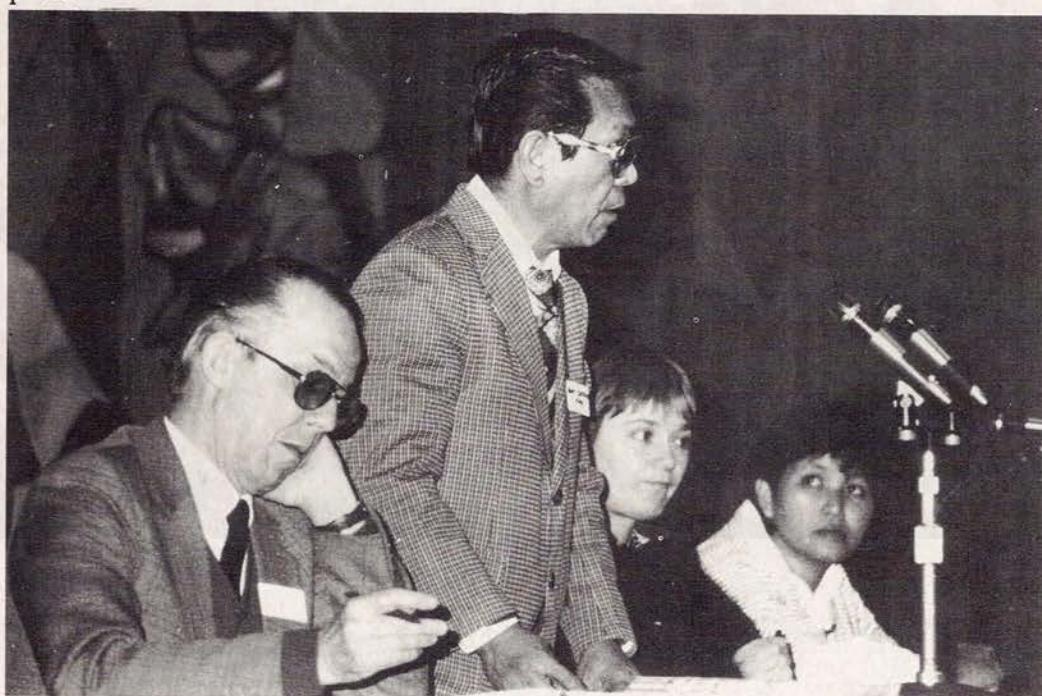
- a. To campaign and lobby for the abolition of anti-labour laws in the Philippines, for ending all acts of repression of the regime against genuine trade unions and for the release of all detained labour leaders, workers and other political prisoners.
- b. To campaign for recognition of KMU as a genuine trade union centre in the Philippines, in our own unions, federations and trade union centres.
- c. To encourage our own unions, federations and trade union centres to send delegates to the May 1st celebration of KMU and /or KMK for trade union fact finding and ensure participation of women in these delegations.
- d. Give equal attention to the struggle of Filipino women workers against double oppression, sexual harassment, maternity leave agreement and encourage activities in support of the migrant Filipino women.
- e. To campaign for material and financial support to KMU and KMK for:
  - genuine trade union education programme
  - a workers education institute
  - trade union resource centres
  - trade union newsletters and other publications
  - KMU and/or KMK organisers.
- f. Encourage publication/programmes on the situation in the Philippines in general and about the situation and struggles of the Filipino workers specifically not only in trade union publications but also in the mass media.
- g. Encourage the establishment of worker to worker links
- h. Encourage the setting up of Philippine Trade Union networks or where they already exist joining them and becoming active to build trade union solidarity on a local, regional and national level.
- i. Sending of telegrams and letters to support ongoing strikes in the Philippines, such as the IGMC strike in Bataan.

## List of Participants:

Ireland:	Communications Union of Ireland (National) IDATU (National)
Italy:	CGIL — Italian Federal Confederation of Labour (National) FLM (National)
France:	CFDT (National)
Greece:	Greek General Confederation of Labour (National)
Norway:	National Federation of Public Servants (Branch)
Sweden:	SAC (National)
USA:	Graphic Communications International Union (Branch)
New Zealand:	Hotel and Hospital Workers Union (Branch)
Britain:	National level: National Union of Journalists National Union of Public Employees Confederation of Health Service Employees SOGAT '82
	Regional Level: Transport and General Workers Union National Union of Mineworkers
	Trades Councils: Battersea and Wandsworth Dundee
	Local level: National Union of Public Employees CPSA NALGC ACTSS (TGWU) NAFTHE NUJ ACTT NCU SOGAT '82 Hotel & Catering (TGWU) ASTMS NUM CAITS

International Trade Secretariats: International Textile, Garments and Leather Workers Federation and Miners' International Federation.

There was a total of 105 participants at the conference which also included representatives from voluntary agencies both in Britain and on the Continent; academic institutions; interested individuals and members of the press.



Roberto T. Ortaliz,  
Secretary General  
of KMU, during the  
International TU  
conference on the  
Philippines, London  
8th February 1986.  
Photo: C. Taylor -  
INSIDE ASIA

## **Conference resolution for IGMC workers**

Solidarity and greetings to the IGMC Workers Union in the Bataan Export Processing Zone in the Philippines. The operation and profits of William Baird Ltd from producing garments in the Philippines for export to the UK have benefitted for years from:

1. Location in a free trade zone — a fenced off industrial zone guarded by zone police. The zone offers tax holiday and other incentives including 100% repatriation of profits.
2. Special laws banning strikes inside the zone area and providing cheap labour.
3. The harassment of union activity by armed zone police and the use of a zone intelligence network. Two union organisers in the zone are currently in military detention and have been tortured.
4. The suppression of union activities by the use of the military forces to break strikes in the zones.

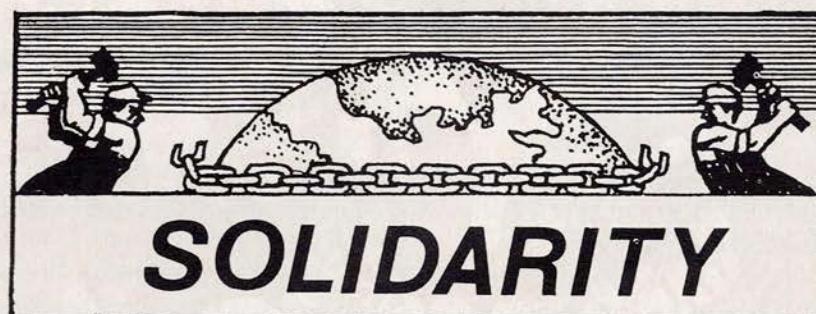
We protest against this gross exploitation of Filipino workers in this way by a British company. It is a grave and serious matter that a British company should suspend workers for attending marches against the dictatorship of President Marcos. The company profited from the repressive nature of the regime and is now penalising the workforce for struggling against this repression.

The action at the company at this time of political turmoil and potential repressions after the election period is particularly savage.

The European Conference of Trade Union Repression and Struggle in the Philippines being held in London on February 8th 1986 send you our support and solidarity greetings.

Victory to the IGMC Workers Union!

Victory to the Filipino Workers!



## European conference on Trade Union

### Repression and trade union struggle in the Philippines

February 9th 1986

#### Programme:

	Facilitator: Mr. Paul Donaghy, President, President of NIPSA, Ireland.
10:00 am	Registration
10:30	Introduction of participants
10:40	Summary of the first day, and aims for this meeting.
10:50	<b>Plight and struggle of the Filipino workers: An appeal for solidarity</b> PresentationMr. Roberto Ortaliz, General Secretary, KMU. President, National Federation of Sugar Workers
11:15	Discussion on concrete cooperation
1.15 pm	Summary of main points of the discussion
1:30	Lunch



## Introduction and Opening

The second-day Conference is an informal meeting of middle and senior level unionists from different European countries. The meeting aims to broaden solidarity work in support of Filipino workers, by initiating action programmes among participating unions.

Paul Donaghy — president of NIPSA/Ireland, and chair of the meeting — opened the gathering by reviewing the issues of trade union repression and struggle in the Philippines covered in the previous day's conference. He noted that the Irish Congress of Trade Unions had given formal recognition to the KMU and this meeting should focus on looking at how international union support can be given to the KMU as the representative of genuine unionism in the Philippines. He noted the resolution agreed by delegates to the previous day's conference and suggested that this should form the basis of the day's discussion.

# Plight and Struggle of Filipino Workers: An Appeal for Solidarity

(Speech by Roberto T. Ortaliz, General Secretary of Kilusang Mayo Uno, February 9, 1986, London Conference)

FELLOW UNIONISTS,

The Filipino workers today live in complete poverty and hunger. The daily minimum wage is set at about 2 pounds a day, which is way below the 5 pounds a day worth of basic necessities to continue living. The Filipino workers live in makeshift houses, often made of cardboards and tins, just to save on rent. The children, usually malnourished, have to forego schooling at the age of ten because the family cannot afford to pay for their education. More often, they end up selling anything in the streets, running after cars and jeeps, just to be able to help in the family's upkeep.

The Filipino workers today suffer increased exploitation and oppression within the factories. Intolerable working conditions, high quotas, forced overtime, and lack of safety equipments are some of the things they face at the workplace.

The Filipino workers are pushed to the wall. There is no recourse but to organise and to fight back for decent wages, security of tenure, and workers' rights and social benefits. But such organising and unionising marks the Filipino workers as endangered species. To be a worker in the Philippines is to face risk. To be a worker and a unionist is to face double risks. In undertaking union work, we do not only run the risk of being kicked out from our jobs, we run the risk of losing our lives as well.

Union work in the Philippines does not only mean coming to grips with the employers, it also means coming to grips with a dictatorship which is doing anything it can to keep the workers in line.

They are killing the workers in the Philippines. Everywhere.

They are killing them inside the factories. Two women workers in the electronics industry, both handling unlabeled chemicals for three years in the tindip section where they work, died of cancer last year.

They are killing the workers in the picketlines. Ten workers were killed last year in separate incidents where the police, military and hired goons tried to disperse the picketlines.

They are killing the workers in the streets. Eighteen sugar workers, out of 27 people, were massacred while demonstrating in the streets of Negros.

They are killing workers right within the confines of their own homes. One worker-leader in Metro

Manila was gunned down while lying in his bed at night.

Many more cases of killings, abduction, secret execution or 'salvaging', disappearances, arrests and torture of Filipino workers are happening daily. Without let-up.

ON BEHALF of the plight and struggle of Filipino workers, the KMU calls on all participants of this Conference to support and endorse in their unions the following appeals:

A. We appeal to the participants of this Conference to extend all possible means to stop the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines from illegalising the KMU and destroying the gains made so far by the militant labour movement through its five years of arduous struggle.

Specifically, we ask the participants to:

1. Request your unions to officially recognise the KMU as a legitimate trade union center. Recognition, in a way, gives clear signal to the Marcos regime that its efforts to isolate the KMU, both in the domestic and international fields, are bound to be in vain.

B. We appeal to the participants of this Conference to spearhead a series of campaigns aimed at increasing awareness of European unionists to the situation and struggle of workers in the Philippines. Specifically, we ask the participants the following:

1. Request your unions to organise fact-finding missions to the Philippines. The mission can be composed of national, federation and/or regional level unionists who will observe and study the conditions of workers in the Philippines. The mission could present findings and recommendations as bases of your union's future policy actions.

2. Request your unions to publish in the union's paper regular information about the Philippine labour movement.

3. Request your unions to set up workshops highlighting the situation and struggle of workers in the Philippines. Your unions can ask the assistance of Philippine trade union support group in your own country to conduct such workshops.

C. We appeal to the participants of this Conference to also support KMU's bid to develop fraternal links and relations with various international workers' organisations.

Specifically, we ask the participants the following:

1. Request your unions to lobby the ILO into taking

- up decisively the complaint filed by the KMU against the Philippine government's continued violations of Conventions 87 and 98.
2. Request your unions to help the KMU gain entry into the ILO as a legitimate representative of the Filipino workers.
  3. Request your unions to help the federations under KMU to develop ties with their respective international trade secretariats (ITSS).

D. We also appeal to the participants of this Conference to help us in the KMU strengthen our organisation as a long-term effort for the Filipino workers to participate in the formation of a democratic and just society in the near future.

Specifically, we ask the participants to:

1. Support KMU's educational campaign by hosting and providing all necessary recourses to

enable us to establish a Workers' Institute in the Philippines.

2. Support our plan to undertake an educational tour in Europe aimed at meeting various unions and developing solidarity ties.
3. In a bilateral move, to ask your unions to undertake an educational tour in the Philippines to observe and study KMU's operations, and to help us out in certain educational courses where the European union's expertise is needed.

E. Lastly, we appeal to the participants of this Conference to provide material, technical, and financial support to sustain and develop KMU's organizing, education, and mobilizing work for the Filipino workers.

I hope this meeting will enable us to concretise the meaning of workers' solidarity. **Maraming salamat at mabuhay kayong lahat!**



# KMU support activities

## Reports

The chair invited participants to inform the meeting with a summary of the support work for KMU in their own organisations

### 1. Ireland

The Irish delegate reported on early union solidarity actions against Irish government's aid to the building of a hydroelectric project in the Philippines. The ICTU had received KMU delegations, had sent delegations to KMU's May Day rally in Manila, and had signed a bilateral agreement of fraternal relations.

The ICTU had set up a trade union committee for solidarity with the Philippines. This committee had an exhibition stand at the last ICTU congress. ICTU officials have a deduction taken from their salaries which goes to an ICTU Third World fund. Part of this is used for Philippines' support. Individual unions were planning to 'twin' with similar unions and organisations in the Philippines.

### 2. New Zealand

The NZ delegates spoke about fact-finding missions sent to the Philippines. Ken Findlay of the Meatworkers Union had made a report to the New Zealand Federations of Labour's annual congress in 1984 after his visit. The FOL Congress had passed unanimously a resolution condemning TUCP as a government-controlled body, and giving recognition to the KMU. The president of the FOL had been pressing the ICFTU to give the KMU recognition.

Various unions in NZ, especially the Hospital & Hotel Workers Union and the Meatworkers Union, had given extensive coverage to Philippine union struggle in their union journals. They had also sponsored a successful conference for Philippines.

### 3. France

The French delegate reported that the CFDT had received KMU delegations over the past years. Last week, the CFDT had given recognition to KMU, and signed an agreement of cooperation.

### 4. Italy

The CGIL delegate reported that they had received KMU delegations. As a union independent of

international affiliations, they have no restraint on recognition of KMU and this is de facto for them. They intend to send a CGIL delegation to the KMU international solidarity affair in Manila in May 1986. The KMU have been invited to address the CGIL's congress this year.

The delegate from FLM reported her union had recognised KMU some time ago. In Italy, there was still a good internationalist spirit. There had been KMU exhibition inside a factory, and unions in Milan were active on solidarity question.

### 5. Netherlands

The Dutch delegate from the European Labour Desk (ELD) spoke about the establishment of ELD to facilitate KMU's solidarity work in Europe. He reported that in the Netherlands, FNV has warm relations with KMU. FNV has agreed to support some KMU education projects.

### 6. Greece

The delegate from the Greek Confederations of Labour reported that their organisation existed only since 1981, but is interested in solidarity matters. They hope to develop better cooperation with KMU in the near future.

### 7. Belgium

The delegate from the International Textile, Garments & Leather Workers Federation, an ITS based in Belgium, reported that their own affiliate in the Philippines is a member of TUCP. However, they are aware that KMU is a genuine union, but their hands were tied and they can do little unless KMU is recognised by ICFTU. In the meantime, they have decided to maintain contact with KMU. They hoped eventually that they could have full cooperation with KMU.

### 8. Sweden

The delegate from SAC reported that their organisation had published articles on Swedish multinationals in the Philippines, and had received a KMU delegation. Recently, there had been union seminars about South-east Asia. They wish to send a delegation to the Philippines this year. SAC would also raise the issue of the KMU with the other Swedish federation, the LO.

## **9. United Kingdom**

The TUC delegate reported that they have friendly contacts for some time with KMU. For TUC, there was no need for formal recognition, in as much as strong regular contacts constitutes recognitions in itself. He reported that the TUC members on an ICFTU delegation to the Philippines in 1984 had visited the KMU, and that one of the interesting features of the delegation's report were the faults it found in the TUCP. He also reported that the TUC had been active giving support to KMU in the ILO, by helping with complaints.

The NUPE delegates reported that their organisation had affiliated to the Philippine Support Group (PSG), and had supported a PSG trade union delegation to the Philippines for the KMU May Day international solidarity affair in 1985. They had also sponsored a delegation report.

The NUJ delegate reported that NUJ had recently reorganised its international committee, and priority was given to develop support to the Philippines. The NUJ would press for KMU recognition through the International Federation of Journalists. The NUJ was seeking bilateral links with media workers' organisations in the Philippines. There was concern about press freedom in the Philippines and that several journalists had been murdered. They were planning a joint print and media union campaign on this issue.

The TGWU/Region 6 delegate reported that their organisation has bilateral relations with KMU, and is a member of the PSG. The Region had regular dialogue with the KMU and visits from KMU delegations since 1983. The union had also sent its own fact-finding mission to the Philippines. He said the Region recognised KMU as the legitimate union organisation of Filipino workers. The Region would raise recognition of KMU at the next national executive meeting of TGWU.

According to another delegate, local TGWU work included organising a visit of a worker in the Bairds Textile plant in the Philippines, who was received by the National Union of Tailors & Garment Workers. Practical company information had been supplied to the workers in the Philippines. The Philippines' workers were currently on strike.

The head of the PSG Trade Union Committee in UK presented the position paper of the organisation. This gives the history of the committee, the types of campaign being promoted, and future objectives.

## **Actions for the future**

The meeting was marked by lively and active discussion on the issues of solidarity support. The following action plans were some of the major points raised in the discussion:

### **1. On ILO**

The KMU should persevere with its ILO complaints. By receiving the complaints, ILO was giving de facto recognition to KMU. The KMU should inform ILO Committee on Experts that there has been no improvement in the union situation. The KMU and other unions should press the ILO to send a fact-finding mission to the Philippines.

The TUC delegate stated that British TUC will ensure the ILO issues are highlighted and will report the development to its own congress.

The NUPE delegate presented a paper on the progress of KMU complaints to ILO and expressed dissatisfaction at ILO responses so far. KMU's request for ILO to send a fact-finding mission to the Philippines has not been acted upon yet.

There was a wide exchange of opinion regarding the nature of ILO. It was stressed that ILO is a tripartite body and does not have a machinery to enforce its decisions. It is best to persevere but not to expect much from the ILO. Real fight for trade union rights is to be fought inside the country.

### **2. On ITS**

The KMU should get its unions to join ITS. It should identify two or three ITSs and get affiliations to these. This increases credibility and facilitates union support for KMU.

### **3. On proposals raised by CFDT delegate**

a. Building a fast response information network on trade union repression.

b. Tailor-made information on an industry basis. Develop direct flows of information.

c. Develop direct worker links with workers in European multinationals in the Philippines. List of these companies are needed.

d. Mutual information on union rights, social benefits, and health and safety between European and Filipino workers.

e. On education, a joint project should be undertaken. Experts should be sent to help on KMU training programmes.

f. A programme of social rights' education should be attached to the EEC Convention with ASEAN (of which the Philippines is a member).

g. There should be a network of projects in Europe to assist KMU.

There was active response on the need for fast information network. The suggestion was raised about KMU sending telegrams to unions asking for help on specific issues. These issues could be taken to the ICFTU even if the KMU was not a member.

KMU delegates also raised the plan to post a KMU person in Europe to follow up all the contacts and develop fast communications with unions. There

was a need for European unions to assist the plan by helping out in the accommodations and in setting up a tour program for the KMU person.

A suggestion was made to set up a European steering committee to carry out the above mentioned proposals. The committee could be composed of major union participants in the conference. Other participants, however, stressed the need to consolidate first, rather than aim for a European coordination. Basic information campaign about the KMU should be undertaken in each of the European countries. The ELD could help in coordinating this work in the meantime.

On projects for KMU, the KMU delegate asked for help in developing its educational work in the Philippines. Support could be in terms of material, technical and financial aid, e.g. with courses, publications, printing equipments, etc.

The FLM delegate responded by proposing that the Italian Metalworkers and the British TGWU, for example, set up a project in the Philippines. In order to do this, she asked for concrete projects with costings.

#### 4. On the recognition of KMU and the ICFTU affiliation

An observation was made that the KMU's recognition by national centers was not much of a problem, in as much as KMU had been accepted everywhere it made contact. On the other hand,

ICFTU recognition was seen as important, but it entailed a decision by KMU to apply for membership in the body. KMU sees the prospect as yet unclear because TUCP is the affiliate of ICFTU, and the American unions, which have a large say in the body, will block such move.

The consensus of the meeting is for the KMU to continuously press for union recognition on the national center level.

#### Summary

Paul Donaghy presented a summary of the day's meeting, on the basis of consensus reached among participants. The following set of points and recommendations are made to enable participants to press them within their own organisations:

1. To give recognition to the KMU and support its attempts to gain international recognition.
2. To send union fact-finding missions to the Philippines.
3. To provide financial and material support to KMU projects in the Philippines, especially the establishment of a workers' educational institute.
4. For unions to affiliate to the Philippines support group in their own countries or give them more support.

The meeting ended by wishing that another such European conference could be undertaken in the future.



## List of participants:

Roberto T. Ortaliz	Secretary General KMU	(Phil)
Cleofe Zapante	Secretary General KMK	(Phil)
Sergio Tolentino	International Affairs Dept. KMU	(PHIL)
Paul Donaghy	NIPSA	(Ireland)
Michael Walsh	BTUC International Department	(UK)
Rodney Bickerstaff	NUPE Secretary General	(UK)
K.R. Raja Gopal	International Textile, Garments, Leather Workers Federation	(Brussels)
Jonathan Pickering	Miners International Federation	(Brussels)
Spyros Staryon	Greek Confederation of Labour	(Greece)
Silvia Boba	CGIL International Department	(Italy)
Audi Raiga	CFDT International Department	(France)
Luisa Morgantini	FLM	(Italy)
John Mitchell	IDATU	(Ireland)
Marie Wayde	IDATU	(Ireland)
Frank Canavan	Communications Union of Ireland	(Ireland)
Ulf B. Anderson	SAC	(Sweden)
Vernon Jones	NUM International Department	(UK)
Alan Quinn	TGWU Region 6	(UK)
Mike Taylor	NUPE	(UK)
Dave Spooner	NUJ International Committee	(UK)
Jenny Webber	NUPE/Chairperson Phil. Supportgroup	(UK)
John Sherrington	Secr. T.U. Committee, Phil. Supportgroup	(UK)
Stuart Howard	International Labour Reports	(UK)
Evert de Boer	European Labour Desk for the Phil.	(Neth.)
Elizabeth Truell	Hospital & Hotelworkers Union	(NZ)
Mike Freeman	Asian Workers Solidarity Links	(NZ)

Apologies: SOGAT (UK) and DURHAM (UK)



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# Solidarity Messages

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FNV-statement to the KMU — European Trade Union conference on Trade Union Repression and Struggle in the Philippines



federatie nederlandse vakbeweging

Dear Colleagues,

*This Conference is timely and focuses on a subject which is too often neglected in the news reaching us daily from the Philippines. The socio-economic rights of working people and trade union rights are part and parcel of any process leading to real democracy in the Philippines, as much as civil and political rights are. We strongly support the activities of the Filipino workers and their trade unions to defend these individual and collective workers' rights. The KMU has its own, important role to play in this struggle. The Netherlands Trade Union Confederation once more expresses its solidarity with the KMU, hoping that our practical cooperation in the field of trade union training and education will contribute to the well-being of their membership.*

Yours sincerely,

Tom Etty  
International Department

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Ceard Chumann Cumarsáide na hÉireann  
COMMUNICATIONS UNION OF IRELAND

Dear colleague,

*On the occasion of the European Trade Union Conference on Trade Union Repression and Struggle in the Philippines, I extend, on behalf of the National Executive council and myself, sincere greetings and best wishes for a successful conference.*

Yours sincerely,

Seamus DePaor  
General Secretary



## GREEK GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF LABOR

MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS

60. 28TH OF OCTOBER ST.  
ATHENS - GREECE

### Greeting of the Greek delegate

*On behalf of the President of the Greek General Confederation of Labour I convey his cordial, fighting and fraternal greetings and I welcome the works of your Conference, which we will attend with great interest, looking forward for the conclusions of this great effort, since we believe that the question of the safeguarding and protection of the trade union and human rights is one of the most critical and substantial issues of the International Labour Movement.*

*Also, we consider particularly positive the effort of your Committee, which aims at the international projection of the problem of oppression of the Philippine Workers and at the sensibilisation of the workers throughout the world, so that everyone from his own part and within his possibilities contributes to this effort. My presence today here shows the consistent will and decision of the GSEE to offer its services in order to resolve successfully all questions related to the achievement of your target.*

*Therefore, our Confederation sets at your disposal its legal advisory service and in this case in cooperation with you, we will contribute to the best possible safeguarding of the Filipinos, who legally live and work in our country. At the same time, we are at your disposal to write down the existing problems, to document and to propose solutions, which will guarantee the trade union rights and the principle of equal treatment between the Greek and Filipino Workers.*

*This symbolic and substantial proposal of ours expresses the consistent devotion and faith of the GSEE in the principle of protection of workers, independently of race, creed and nationality, as well as our particular sensitivity on matters of trade union rights.*

*This sensitivity we have is the result of the long, fighting course of the trade union movement of our country and enables us to show understanding to the problem of oppression of workers and to contribute by all means to the elimination of the conditions which doubt and limit the trade union rights and human freedoms. Today, in Greece following the election of the Democratic Socialist Party since 1981, favourable conditions have been created for the development of the activities of the Greek trade union movement. Therefore the progressive roots of the labour class of our country find fertile earth to be developed and to be led to prospects of justification of our struggles, among which is the struggle for equality and human conditions of work for the migrant workers. Your struggle is, also, our struggle and you can always consider our solidarity as given.*



**CISL**

# confederazione italiana sindacati lavoratori

Dear Brother Tolentino,

In reference to sister Cristina Mendoza's and your visit here to us on November 29, 1985 and to the kind invitation we then formally received to attend the London conference on trade unions in the Philippines (February 8 and 9, 1986), I regret to inform you that it will unfortunately be impossible for us to be present in London on those dates.

At the same time, I beg you to give all Filipino delegates and the leadership of the KMU our warm, fraternal good wishes for the good work; altogether we deem it not only useful but necessary at this point in time for the development of a democratic system in your country in the near future.

On another, separate matter, we also received your December 23, 1985 letter regretting the delay in receiving our invitation to the KMU for the 1985 CISL 10th National Congress. We also regret your absence. But our good relations will go on for the future in spite of this unfortunate episode.

Thank you again, with our best wishes. Fraternally

Angelo Gennari  
Director International Affairs.

*Angelo Gennari*  
(Angelo Gennari)

# Norsk Kjemisk Industriarbeiderforbund



On behalf of the Norsk Kjemisk Industriarbeiderforbund - The Norwegian Chemical Workers Union - I herewith extend my most sincere greetings to your conference in London.

We - in our union - have followed the development in the politics of your country and have most definitely gathered the opinion that there is a lot amiss. We do support your struggle against the suppression of - among other groups - the trade union movement.

There will be no free Philippines until the people has been able to take power. The oppression of the Marcos government - is at the time of writing still in power - must not be allowed to continue.

With most solidarity wishes,

*Arthur Svensson*  
Arthur Svensson  
President



**ICFTU** international confederation of free trade unions  
**CISL** confédération internationale des syndicats libres  
**IBFG** internationaler bund freier gewerkschaften  
**CIOSL** confederación internacional de organizaciones sindicales libres

RUE MONTAGNE AUX HERBES POTAGÈRES 37-41 - 1000 BRUXELLES, BELGIQUE

TELEGR.: INTERCONFED BRUXELLES - TELEX: 26785 ICFTU BRU

Dear Friend,

We thank you for your invitation to the European Trade Union Conference on Trade Union Repression and Struggle in the Philipines, which will be held on 8-9 February in London.

We regret that we are unable to attend the Conference, but would like to extend to the KMU our best wishes for a fruitful meeting. We would appreciate receiving the conclusions and recommendations of the Conference in due Course.

Yours sincerely

General Secretary



Centre for Alternative Industrial  
and Technological Systems  
Polytechnic of North London  
Holloway Road  
London N7 8DB  
Telephone 01.607 7079  
01.607 2789 ext.2498

Dear Colleagues,

We have received copies of your February 8th Conference leaflet, and will mail them out to our UK trade union contacts.

At the moment we are not sure if anyone is free to come to the conference, but we will try.

In the event that we cannot send a representative may we take this opportunity to wish the conference well, and to remind you that we support your endeavours.

We would like to remind you that we can carry out fast research on any companies of any size operating in the Philippines - through our new computer-based information searching facilities. However, due to the demise of the GLC we are forced to charge for this service - though not much above cost price. Please contact Nick Longman here for details.

If any fraternal greetings or support messages derive from the confernce, please add our name to it.

Yours fraternally,

Mike George.

A solidarity message from SAC in Sweden

**SAC**

SVERIGES ARBETARES CENTRALORGANISATION

SYNDIKALISTERNA

We are very glad for your initiative to arrange this European Trade Union Conference on Trade Union Repression and Struggle in the Philippines. The struggle of Trade Unions all around the world is ONE struggle. In a time when the capital has been international the international solidarity between workers must develop and strengthen. In a country like the Philippines, the multinational companies (including the Swedish companies) use the low wages and the political repression to increase their profits.

Through contacts with KMU, the latest one in September 1985 when Cristina Mendoza of KMU visited Sweden, we have been informed of the repression against the genuine trade union struggle and we hope that the conference in London 8-9 of February will deepen the European support for the struggle against the repression and exploitation of the Filipino workers, a struggle that has grown during the years of the Marcos dictatorship.

From the Central Organisation of Swedish Workers, the SAC, we express our full support for the demands of KMU for release of all Trade Unionists imprisoned. We also condemn the murder of striking workers on picketlines and the killings of peaceful demonstrators (like the massacre in Escalante in September 1985).

Through our press we have tried to inform about KMU and the Trade Union struggle in the Philippines and during the winter of 1985 we arranged a 3-days course for SAC-members about the ASEAN-countries where one afternoon was devoted to the Philippines.

We believed that Trade Unions, free and independent from State and Government, is the workers best weapon in the struggle for liberation. We wish this conference all success in its important work to spread knowledge about the Trade Union struggle in the Philippines and we hope that it will lead to a near co-operation - to show that practical Solidarity is above the barriers of nations, race, religion or sex.  
In Solidarity,

SAC-executive committee  
Stockholm 27 January 1986

## ASIAN WORKERS' SOLIDARITY LINKS NEW ZEALAND

LINKS, Box 13-367, Johnsonville, Wellington

Dear friends,

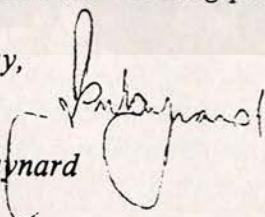
We wish to extend our greetings in International Solidarity to your Conference in London on February 8 and 9.

Over the last few years genuine links of solidarity have been built between the workers of the Philippines and our country as never before. We continue to place great importance on further strengthening these links - we have to do yet!

We look forward to hearing more news of your Conference, and of further successes of the Kilusang Mayo Uno and the working people of the Philippines.

In solidarity,

John P. Maynard



Dundee Trades Council sends fraternal greetings and best wishes for your conference in this, our centenary year.

We recognise the KMU to be the genuine Trade Union organisation of the Philippines and give full support to their heroic struggle against the repression of the Marcos regime.

We join with you as comrades in a common struggle to establish and maintain the right to independent Trade Unions and free collective bargaining.

These rights have been increasingly threatened in Britain during the six years of Thatchers rule, most significantly in the present dispute at Wapping, which is itself the culmination of the Thatcher onslaught, carried out against the NGA, the staff of GCHQ, and of course the Miners in their historic struggle.

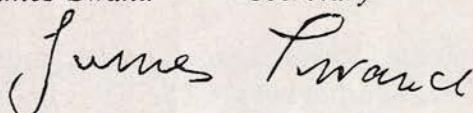
We are aware, however, that the Thatcher government, has not confined itself to attacks on our movement in Britain, but has sought to aid the Marcos regime, both morally and financially, whenever possible.

We therefore welcome this opportunity to talk and listen to our Filipino comrades, to discuss how we can best assist their struggle at this crucial stage.

Throughout our 100 years history, we have always sought to unite the local trade unions in the fight against capitalism, at local, national and international level. We are proud to join with the KMU and the people in the Philippines to assist them in their fight for freedom.

The present is struggle, but the future is ours.

James Swand      Secretary



Dundee Trades Council

2252 Puna Street  
Honolulu, Hi. 96817  
Phone: (808)595-7362

## Philippine Workers Support Committee



Dear Sister and Brother Unionists of Europe and fellow supporters and friends of the Kilusang Mayo Uno and Philippine workers!

Our solidarity from Hawaii and from our PWSC chapters on the U.S. mainland who may also be contacting you and expressing solidarity directly!

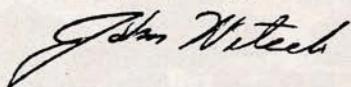
Our best wishes to you for every possible success on this significant conference you are holding in London. It will be an inspiration to our own efforts, which received quite an uplift during the KMU's tour of some 22 cities in Hawaii, the U.S. and Canada last September through November, 1985. We hope, within the next few years, to achieve something on the order of what you are doing by your conference, bringing together significant European trade union forces in order to intensify and expand support for our sisters and brothers in the KMU in the Philippines.

We are very interested in your deliberation and in the decisions and results of your meeting this February, so please share with us the outcome. We intend to have our own national meeting of the PWSC this summer, a month or two after the KMU's April 23-May 2 program in the Philippines, which I hope to attend. We look forward to meeting some of your delegates this April-May in Manila. We hope to have at

least 10 delegates from U.S. labour and from Canadian unions and perhaps 3 to 5 unionists from Hawaii. The Canadian national union federation we understand may recognise the KMU in the near future, so their delegation may be even larger. It will take us somewhat longer, to say the least, to change the stance of the AFL-CIO on the Philippine situation; they presently recognise the TUCP, the Marcos-oriented, collaborationist labour federation which receives AAFLI funds and is probably CIA-linked. We have, however, made breakthroughs with U.S. labour leaders and local unionists and support is growing throughout the U.S. and Canada for the KMU and the efforts of Philippine labour.

Again, our best wishes to you on your efforts in support of the Philippine workers movement which will no doubt help to inspire greater efforts on our part, and provide even more legitimacy for our campaign to gain U.S. trade unions' recognition of the KMU and the demands of Philippine labour.

In solidarity and support,



John Witeck, acting national coordinator  
Ph. (808)847-2631, at United Public Workers, AFSCME, AFL-CIO

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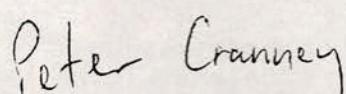
Dear comrades,

On this occasion of the KMU European Trade Union Conference we New Zealand Trade unionists would like to send our strong expression of solidarity and best wishes for the success of your conference.

Growing numbers of people in our country are aware of the continued violations of human and trade union rights in the Philippines. We are aware that efforts by the workers to better themselves are invariably met with force and deception by a government which holds no interest in answering their basic needs.

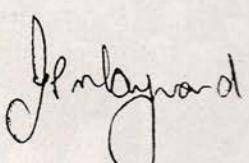
We hope your conference will further build international recognition of genuine Trade Unionism in the Philippines and so hasten the isolation and downfall of the dictatorship.

In solidarity,



Organizer

Wellington Taranaki  
Cleaners Union



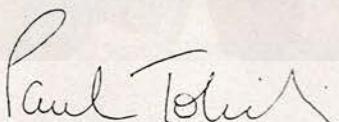
President

N.Z. Ice Cream Workers



Secretary

Hotels Hospital  
Workers Union



President

Wellington Branch  
N.Z. Tramways Union

# Appendix

## Speech of President Cory Aquino on Labour Day — May 1, 1986

My fellow workers in the work of national reconstruction, I greet you on the occasion of Labour Day.

You in the labour force and we of the former Marcos opposition have been marching side by side for longer than we realise.

From the hundreds of thousands at Ninoy's wake, through the millions at his funeral, to democracy's triumph last February, we were one. We prayed as one. We struggled patiently and peacefully as one. We dreamed, as one, of becoming a freed nation. There were no rich or poor among us in the struggle. No Pampanguenos, Tagalog, Ilocanos, Visayanos. No workers and no employers. We were all then one single labour force labouring for freedom and a fresh start. We worked together and we were victorious together. We were people's power. We were Filipinos without distinctions to divide our resolve. As a result, we were distinguished from all the world by our unprecedented peaceful revolution.

Now the country is back in our hands. The revolution of freedom is over. Another revolution is about to begin. The economic revolution that will lift us from poverty, underdevelopment, and economic injustice. And again, only the power of a united people can make it succeed.

There will be no flags, no speeches, no marching in this revolution. It will be a quiet revolution. One that will take place inside factories and offices, in government offices and private enterprises, on the farm and in the city. It will be a nation of Filipinos going back to work but fired with the zeal of one victory and confident of the next. Once again, it will require that we forget our differences and work as one. We must forget again whether we are workers or employers, provincianos or city people. We must work to increase productivity and efficiency so we can feed and educate ourselves and raise a stronger race of Filipinos. We must work so we can pay the \$27 billion debt left by Marcos and his wife, and their cronies, and so that we can hold our heads higher still in the community of nations.

I made a promise to you during the campaign and I repeat that promise. I shall ask for no greater sacrifice than I myself am prepared to make. I shall impose no heavier burden on our people than they are willing to carry. But sacrifices and burdens there will be, as I warned, but shared equitably by all for we shall be rebuilding from the ruins left by Marcos.

I ask you to respond now as you responded when I called on you to defy Marcos and win our freedom

— without fighting, without envy, and with shared purpose and sacrifice. People's power can put our economy back on its feet, put food on our tables, shirts on our backs, roofs over our heads, and pride in our hearts. We must now work hard to regain or rebuild what Marcos stole or destroyed. We must prove that, while he stole our patrimony, he did not break our will, that all the sufferings he inflicted has only made us stronger.

During the campaign I promised to provide for the welfare of labour in three ways. There were: to revise or rescind the laws that repress the rights of workers and their trade unions; to ensure that labour shall equitably share in the benefits of our developments efforts; and to create the conditions for the full human development of the labouring poor.

Today, I come before you on this day of celebration for labour to redeem my pledges. I have also come to plead for your patience, understanding and support for specific policies and programmes which may not immediately benefit your sector but will in the long run give us a country and an economy strong enough to fulfill the cherished dreams of labour.

My administration shall honour our commitment to ILO convention 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to organise and to ILO Convention 141 on Rural Workers' organisation.

My government shall promote and protect the rights of workers and employees to establish and form organisations and unions of their own choosing, with a minimum of government interference. Security guards in the private sector, employees of government corporations organised under the Corporation Code are hereby allowed to unionise and bargain collectively with their respective employers.

I now repeal LOI 1458 that allows management to replace striking workers who defy return to work orders. Your government will not pursue the 'one-union one-industry' policy that has caused so much dissension in your ranks. I leave to you completely the discretion to combine as you may deem fit and necessary.

In representation issues, we shall now pursue a policy of automatic certification election during the freedom period of collective bargaining agreements, where the majority status of the incurrent union is questioned.

In cases of non-unionised establishments, a petition for certification election or to register a union supported by 20 percent of all employees will be enough.

I hereby remove the 13th month pay ceiling for all rank and file employees.

The apprenticeship programme was used under Marcos to exploit the Filipino workers. I hereby direct the Minister of Labour to immediately review the existing list of apprenticeable jobs and limit them strictly to highly technical industries. In no case shall the period of apprenticeship exceed 6 months.

I am today repealing the following requirements for valid strikes:

- The  $\frac{2}{3}$  strike vote requirement under BP 130 is hereby revised to a simple majority vote.
- In case of dismissal of union officers, constituting union busting, where the existence of the union is threatened, the union can ignore the 15 day cooling off period and take action immediately. In all other respects, however, violations of collective bargaining agreements will still be dealt with in accordance with the existing laws and procedures.
- Unless actual violence or other criminal acts occur in the picketlines, I am ordering the police forces to keep out of the picketlines.

Under this government there will be justice for the workers under the laws, and the laws will be just. But I hope that labour and management will respect the final adjudications of their disputes. We must cooperate to reduce the uncertainties that have paralysed economic activity in our country.

It is part of my minimum programme of government to assure labour's meaningful participation in decision-making at all levels of our society. I shall soon appoint representatives of your unions in all policy-making bodies of government. I ask you to submit your recommendations to these positions.

As my machinery for consultation with workers and employers groups and to boost collective bargaining as the primary means of promoting your economic interest and settling disputes, I hereby direct the Ministry of Labour to call a National Tripartite Conference consistent with the agreement signed last Monday by the Labour Advisory Consultative Council and the Employers Confederation of the Philippines to negotiate a Code of Industrial Harmony. This code will be the policy framework of my government in pursuing programmes and prospects beneficial to all sectors.

In this forum I shall propose to the three sectors to agree on the following:

- Amendments to BP 130 and 227 to sanitise them of their restrictive and oppressive provisions.
- Removal of exemptions from present wage decrees and the integration of COLA into the basic pay.
- Explore all mechanisms for profit sharing consistent with my policy of equitable distribution of wealth.

To speed the resolution of cases in order to minimise causes for strikes and facilitate their right to seek redress for legitimate grievances, the Ministry of Labour shall professionalise the dispute settlement machinery. The NLRC shall be cleansed of sectoral interests by appointing men of probity, honesty, and

integrity into the Commission.

I know the plight of the worker and that his or her basic needs cannot be delayed. I shall therefore continue to work for lowering the prices of commodities, energy, and gasoline. I hereby suspend contributions to PAG-IBIG. My government shall explore other means to undertake a massive low-income housing programme. We shall also give serious thought to the re-channeling of a substantial amount of government loans to existing workers' and peasants' cooperatives and those yet to be formed.

I shall continue to redeem all my pledges to you. And now I issue a challenge to you.

Purify your ranks of racketeers, kingpins and minidictators. You are not only the backbone of industry but the vanguard of democracy as well. Freedom and dignity for our nation starts with you. How can we be strong, if you are weak? How can we be proud as a free nation if you will not stand up for your rights within your own sector.

Assert our independence and show to one and all that you are not mere transmission belts of politicians and political forces.

You are the elite 10 percent of the labour force. You are the privileged by your organised strength. It is your obligation to spread the benefits of organisations to farmers, fishermen and other workers.

Finally, I appeal to you, in this period while the country is trying to recover from the tyranny and theft of the Marcos regime, to exercise restraints in exercising your right to strike. Use it as a last resort and only after exhausting all other means of resolving your disputes with management.

Make me prouder, my workers, of this second revolution to make our country free, not only of a tyrant in the palace but of tyranny everywhere: the tyranny of poverty and underdevelopment, as of the tyranny of political power. Make the world wonder again at how a country reduced to beggary by reckless debts and a people reduced to penury lifted themselves and their country from humiliation to the greatest pride.

Let the second revolution start now.  
Maraming salamat po.



President Cory Aquino

*Kilusang Mayo Uno* (KMU or May First Movement) is an independent labour center promoting genuine, militant and nationalist trade unionism in the Philippines. It is genuine because it upholds the basic legitimate interest of the working class; militant because it positions itself at the forefront of the workers' struggle defending trade union and democratic rights; and nationalist because it educates workers to participate in democratic struggle to free the country from domination and control by foreign monopolies and big Filipino capitalists.

At its founding in 1980, the KMU had about 50,000 members belonging to seven labour federations. It now counts to include 530,000 members from different territorial and industrial alliances and over 100 independent unions.



## **KILUSANG MAYO UNO**

(MAY FIRST MOVEMENT LABOR CENTER)

TAGAPAMANDILA NG TUNAY, PALABAN AT MAKABAYANG UNYONISMO

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