

Sexual Exploitation in a Third World Country

In the Philippines, the political and economic systems pave the way for exploitation which, in the case of women, assumes a double proportion.

Two and a half percent of the 44 million population control the means of production. Foreign control of the economy hampers economic development and succeeds in widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Martial law is applied for the suppression of human rights in the name of national safety.

Prostitution and Tourism

According to the latest statistics, the tourism industry in the Philippines has been, since 1970, the largest dollar earning industry. As 75% of the tourists come for pleasure and 70% of them are male, they have brought about an enormous increase in bars, hospitality girls, hostesses, club waitresses, sauna bath attendants and prostitutes. Thousands of girls from the provinces are herded to Manila and other urban centers where they are exposed to systematic exploitation and at the same time contribute to the spread of venereal disease.

Prostitution and Military Bases

The presence of foreign troops in the country creates another area for women's exploitation. There are two military bases, Angeles and Olongapo, where most of the foreign troops spend their rest. In Olongapo alone, there are 16,000 prostitutes and several thousand illegitimate children. The club girls receive no salary but depend for their living on ladies' drinks for which they receive 50% commission. If a man desires to take a girl out, he pays a bar fee of 60-200 pesos. It often happens that prostitutes become

exploiters themselves. Customers become victims of theft and robbery, other crimes may also occur.

Opening of Foreign Firms

Incentives to foreign investment have favored the mushrooming of industrial establishments bringing both ecological and moral pollution. For 300 pesos per month, young girls become maids and prostitutes. Few formal complaints are made because the fear of expulsion causes them to hold their tongues.

Imposition of State Control

Quoting from Susan Brownmiller's book *Against Our Will* (N.Y. 1975), the author of this article says: "In time of war, the power of the gun provides men with a tacit license to rape... and with perfect psychological backdrop to give vent to their contempt for women."² In some way similar to this phenomenon is the sexual exploitation of women in the imposition of state control when it is threatened by dissent or actual subversion. Torture is used for extracting information and, in the case of women, torture may be physical or sexual.

The author says in conclusion that her article gives only preliminary information on the dehumanization of the economically and politically dominated. She hopes that it will invite further research and investigation of the areas briefly touched. Documentation is sadly lacking because of the reluctance of victims to talk about their experiences.

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1. Condensed from a paper sent to the Institute by sister Mary John Mananzan, (OSB) Feb. 25, 1980.
 2. Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will*, Penguin Book. N.Y. 1975, p. 14.

Women as Peace Makers

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Elise Boulding, in *Women in the Twentieth Century World*,² thinks that militarization of the world is a side effect of the centralization of national economies and of the increasingly tight organization of regional alliances, associated with the world arms trade. Centralist dominance should be replaced by a decentralized, participatory, non-bureaucratic model of social organization in a still interconnected and interdependent world.

As women's resources for peace work she recommends:

1. Closer cooperation between women scholars and activists; effective network skills; collaboration intended to develop new networks and learn new skills from Asia, Africa, etc.

2. Encouraging women's engagement as futurists whose strength lies in their commitment to a different future. Every profession, every community, every non-government organization needs women futurists. The

Institute of World Order finally, in 1975, added women futurists to its team.

3. A necessary sex ratio has to be achieved in any group for women's more nurturant, interactive styles to alter the behavior of a predominantly male group. In the family, in school, and in the community, women should play an equal role with men and try to create a new group of androgynous leaders, joining the nurturing qualities of women and the self-reliance of men.

Women in the United Nations

Since women have as a rule been absent from the top echelons of the United Nations, there is substantial scope for reconceptualization regarding woman's role. Helvi Sipilä is the first woman assistant secretary general of the U.N. Another indicator of the new trend has been the celebration of the International Woman's Year in 1975, and the elaboration of the World Plan of Action which should be carried out over a span of ten years. The plan requires the participation of all states in implementing world peace and calls for the participation of women, as groups or as individuals, as employees or as volunteers, in all efforts to promote and maintain peace.

2. Elise Boulding, *Women in the Twentieth Century World*, Wiley, N.Y. 1977.