Reframing the Filipina as a Militant:
The Ongoing Revolutionary History of the Philippines

By: Nicole Reyes
Thesis Advisor: Dr. Tabitha Espina
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WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE PHILIPPINES?
600 MILES SOUTHEAST OF MAINLAND ASIA
JUST ABOVE THE EQUATOR
THE PHILIPPINES
ARCHIPELAGO: A GROUP OF ISLANDS
WHAT IS THE TOTAL POPULATION OF THE PHILIPPINES?

A. 10 MILLION
B. 20 MILLION
C. 100 MILLION
D. 250 MILLION
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WHERE DO THE MAJORITY OF FILIPINOS LIVE?

A. URBAN CITIES
B. COUNTRYSIDE
C. OVERSEAS IN OTHER COUNTRIES
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A. URBAN CITIES
B. COUNTRYSIDE
C. OVERSEAS IN OTHER COUNTRIES
25% URBAN CITIES
25% “Urban Dwellers”
- 15% Workers
- 8% Petty Bourgeoisie
- 1% National Bourgeoisie
- 1% Comprador Big Bourgeoisie and Big Landlords

75% Peasant Farmers
- Most are landless, living in the countryside of the Philippines
- A result of the feudalistic systems brought by Spanish colonialism
Figure 1. Age-Sex Pyramid of the Philippines: 2020 and 2015

Sources: Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020 Census of Population and Housing and 2015 Census of Population
And how we have viewed them so far?

The colonial and imperial lens versus the ongoing revolutionary history
Maria Clara

• Jose Rizal’s main protagonist in his novel *Noli Me Tangere*

• Embodies the New Filipina: obedient, submissive, beautiful (Spanish standards), and religious

• Feudalistic family structures viewing women as property
Fed up with Spanish rule and treatment of women as objects and property

1763 Diego was assassinated, Gabriela took on role as leader

First female leader for Filipino Liberation
Filipino Comfort Women

- WW2 Japanese imperialism
- Abducted between 1942-1945 and forced into sexual slavery
- Rampant commodification of sexuality promoted by Hollywood and Western media presenting women as sex objects
WOMEN’S RESPONSE TO THE JAPANESE (WW2)
WOMEN’S RESPONSE TO THE JAPANESE (WW2) TODAY
“The new woman, the new Filipina, is first and foremost a militant.”
Why is, “The new Filipina first and foremost a militant?”

The conditions that prime a woman for revolution
Philippine Society and Revolution: Jose Sison

US Imperialism

Feudalism

Bureaucrat Capitalism
Maria Lorena Barros

- Founder of MAKIBAKA

- “The new Filipina is one who can stay whole days and nights striking with workers... she is a woman who has discovered the exalting realm of responsibility, a woman fully engaged in the making of history”
“The new Filipina is one who can stay whole days and nights with striking workers, learning from them the social realities which her bourgeois education has kept from her. More important this means she has convinced her parents of the seriousness of her commitment to the workers and peasants cause, a commitment which requires all sorts of behavior previously way beyond the bounds of respectable womanhood. She is a woman who has discovered the exalting realm of responsibility, a woman fully engaged in the making of history.”

-Maria Lorena Barros-
(March 18, 1948—March 24, 1976)
Adds that Filipino women experience a fourth oppression, male authority
BUREAUCRAT

CAPITALISM

FEUDALISM

US

IMPERIALISM

IMPERIALISM

MALE

AUTHORITY?

benefits from

enforces

SEMI-COLONIAL

SEMI-FEUDAL

FEUDALISM

BUREAUCRAT

CAPITALISM
Global Connections

Why is reframing the Filipina in this framework and lens significant?

Deconstructing the colonial and imperial frameworks
THE MILITANT WOMEN’S MOVEMENT IS ALIVE

- Diaspora of Filipino women: Overseas Filipino workers
- GABRIELA: How MAKIBAKA continues to persist in the modern day
- Active participations to achieve transformative justice and restoration through community

“Abante babae, palabang militar!”
LIBERATORY PRACTICES ON A GLOBAL LEVEL

- The experiences and roles of women in resistance and revolution should be recognized as valid
- Other women’s activist movements and their impacts on the global society
- Anti-colonial, imperial feminism
Conclusion

- Deep historical analysis is necessary to understand pre-existing frameworks and oppressions that shape the experiences of the Filipina.

- The contributions of MAKIBAKA is not only significant in women’s revolutionary history but the ongoing revolutionary history of the Philippines.

- Reframing the Filipina as a militant provides a basis for analyzing other women’s movements across the globe.