

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

PROFILES IN COURAGE: FILIPINO WOMEN IN THE RESISTANCE DURING WORLD WAR II

Lesson 4 Human Rights through Social Justice Module

Warm-up Exercise Prompts (Ask 1-4 and proceed to 5-8 if there is time)

1. I would join a protest if a law that I disagreed with were passed about this issue.

Critical Thinking Questions: What does it mean to join a protest? Why might someone take this action? Are there alternative ways, other than protest, to communicate your disagreement with a law?

2. I would join a protest even if most people I know disagreed with my viewpoint.

Critical Thinking Questions: Why might it matter if people you know disagreed with your viewpoint? What could be a risk of publicly sharing your opinion if others in your family or friends do not agree with it?

3. I would join a protest even if it could cause a family argument.

Critical Thinking Questions: Why might a family member become upset about someone joining a protest? What reasons might a person have to join a protest even if it would lead to a family argument?

4. I would join a protest even if there were a chance that I might be injured.

Critical Thinking Questions: How might someone be injured at a protest? Protests often generate large crowds—would this possibly help or hinder your ability to get medical care? If people are hurt during a protest, how could that affect the strength of the group's message?



Proceed if the workshop is longer than an hour.



5. I would join a protest even if I saw police there.

Critical Thinking Questions: Why might police officers be present at a protest? What are the different roles that police could play during a protest?

6. I would join a protest even if I had to take a day off of work or school.

Critical Thinking Questions: What negative consequences could someone face for going to a protest instead of school or work? Could there be positive outcomes from choosing to attend a protest rather than going to school or work?

7. I would join a protest even if nearby property were being damaged.

Critical Thinking Questions: What types of property could be damaged during a protest? Could this include items on the street, buildings, or even personal property that people bring with them?

8. I would join a protest even if there were a large counter-protest in the same area.

Critical Thinking Questions: What does counter-protest mean? What added risks would you have as a protester, if a counter-protest were also taking place in the same area? What could be a benefit to having a counter-protest nearby?

Source: "American Experiments, Where do you stand? Protest", National Museum of American History, Behring Center, Smithsonian (www.HistoryExplorer.si.edu)

Reflection Questions from Warm-up Exercise:

What are the consequences of participation/non-participation?

- No opportunities to lead contribute to progress and change in society,
- no public life,
- deprived of learning and developing skills and leadership,
- as well as the power to influence others
- Overall, weaker social movements

Are the consequences the same for everybody?

The marginalization of a group poses consequences for a given society as a whole
Less participation represents a "democratic deficit"

Historical Significance of the Philippines/Philippine resistance during WWII,

Presenter's Notes

James M. Scott, Rampage (2018): "Few cities in World War II suffered as much as Manila, which endured three years of Japanese occupation that ruined the economy, triggered widespread starvation, and shredded the social fabric. The battle to liberate the city proved an even greater nightmare. Not only did the war rob the Philippines of its capital, but it also destroyed generations of families, the effects of which still ripple through lives even today."

Atrocities Committed by the Japanese Military in the Philippines

(1) Starvation, execution or massacre without trial and maladministration generally of civilian internees and prisoners of war;

(2) Torture, rape, murder and mass execution of very large numbers of residents of the Philippines, including women and children and members of religious orders, by starvation, beheading, bayoneting, clubbing, hanging, burning alive, and destruction by explosives ;

(3) Burning and demolition without adequate military necessity of large numbers of homes, places of business, places of religious worship, hospitals, public buildings, and educational institutions.

Reasons for the brutality

- 1) Perceived loyalty of the Filipinos to Americans;
- 2) Racism (The prevailing ideology of Japan and its Military at the time: The superiority of the Yamato race);
- 3) The Battle of Manila as the last stand (impending defeat by the Allied forces)

Prior to the Japanese occupation, the Philippines had been a colony of the United States for almost half a century. And prior to resisting the Japanese occupation, Filipinos actually fought a war of independence against the Americans.

Prior to the American colonization of the Philippines, Spain colonized the islands as early as 1521 and kept the country and its resources under its control for nearly 400 years.

Simeona Punsalan Tapang

She joined the Huk after learning that Japanese soldiers were notorious for kidnapping and raping Filipina women. To protect her fellow pinays, Punsalan spoke with Huk representatives in her village and joined their ranks.

Punsalan served in Huk Squadron No. 104 from November 1942 to December 1943, before being promoted to major in 1944 under the 1st Regiment, Second Battalion Staff, Regional Command No. 7.

As a political advisor and networking courier, Punsalan kept local villages informed of Japanese encroachment. She single-handedly secured the safety of local Filipinos and boosted their morale by regularly notifying them of victorious Huk raids that crippled Japanese storehouses and further entrenched the resistance.



Yay Panlilio

Yay's father was Irish-American, and her mother was Filipina. She worked in Manila as a reporter for the Philippines Herald before the war. Later, when the threat of invasion was imminent, she became sworn in as a U.S. Intelligence agent. When the war broke out in 1941, she requested to leave Manila and head with the army to Bataan. Her letters were denied their request and she was told to "stick around" in order to continue reporting any Japanese movement in occupied Manila. After consistent refusals from U.S. Intelligence chief officers like Captain Ralph Keeler, Panlilio decided she would practice her own style of resistance and declared herself a guerrilla.

Panlilio's initial guerrilla tactics involved her use of familiar news media positions to facilitate propaganda against the Japanese. She sent coded messages hinting at information about nearby Japanese activity to the newly forming resistance movement through radio broadcasts via KZRH Manila Radio.

Once her cover was blown, however, Yay had to escape. With a Japanese warrant for her arrest, she evaded capture and joined the Marking guerillas in the hills. She was given responsibilities – one of them taking command of the troops in training when the Marking guerillas were in the field.

Women in the resistance/anti-colonisation movements

Under Western colonization, the Philippines had become a predominantly Catholic and Christian nation, albeit it had a substantial Muslim population in the South. According to anthropologists, colonization displaced women from traditional and indigenous leadership positions as healers, warriors and priestesses. In accordance with the Catholic faith, women were relegated to the home and not usually considered qualified for leadership, let alone public life.

Nonetheless, several women joined the revolutionary movement against Spain and after that, the war against American colonization.

By the time the Japanese invaded the Philippines, Filipinos had already fought in 2 wars against colonization (Spanish rule and American). Once more, women joined the resistance.

4 Featured Profiles

- Simeona Punsalan "Tapang" a.k.a. Commander Guerrero
- Yay Panlilo
- Magdalena Leones a.k.a. Lioness of Agents
- Dr. Guedelia Pablan

In spite of their efforts and their contributions, these women faced opposition to their participation in the resistance from within the ranks of male resistance fighters.

Yay Panlilo, who often took over the task of training guerillas while Marking was in the field had to contend with resentment from the men of the resistance. Simeona Punsalan (a.k.a. Commander Guerrero) also encountered dissension from male guerillas and spoke of a time that even her second in command refused to obey her orders during a troop exercise. Commander Guerrero recounted later that she no choice but to issue her order while pointing her gun at her subordinate.

Not surprisingly, Yay Panlilo's memoirs drew more attention to Marking's guerillas on the cover. Yet the struggles that these women faced in the war resistance, particularly the fact that they often received less recognition than their male counterparts can be compared to the struggles of women in more recent history.

Unlike their male counterparts, especially those who received support (arms and supplies) from the US Military, many civilians, particularly female guerilla fighters and supporters did not receive honors or medals for their contributions. Of the four women mentioned here, only Yay Panlilo, whose father was an American of Irish descent, received a medal from the United States government. Simeona Punsalan, who passed away in 2014 received awards from the Philippine government only a few years prior to her death.



Magdalena Leones

In 1942, when the Imperial Japanese Army invaded the Philippines, Magdalena was captured and jailed by the enemy and placed in a prison camp. She was eventually released and witnessed the slaughter of civilians and the violence of occupation. Magdalena became a guerrilla. She headed to Manila and worked with a pocket resistance led by missionaries and leaders of the Emmanuel Cooperative Hospital in Manila that provided funding for the growing guerrilla resistance in the mountains to the north. Her various guerrilla exploits included everything from recording the names and numbers of Japanese ships coming into various ports, smuggling money, learning Japanese in order to misdirect Japanese soldiers and prevent them from attacking Filipino civilians and guerrillas, spending two years finding radio parts to establish a connection to the Allies in Australia, and destroying Japanese airplanes with strategically placed bombs.

Given all the trouble and danger of serving in the war resistance, why do you think these and many other women persisted?

Guedelia witnessed the untold cruelty of the Bataan Death March, where thousands of civilians and hundreds of American POWs were rounded up by the Japanese military and made to march for days without food or water. She stayed in Bataan, even after the Japanese defeated MacArthur and secured the Philippines, in order to continue to heal and protect wounded civilians and soldiers in hiding. After the hospital was burned down by Japanese troops, she and 2 nurses moved to a convent to continue their work. That convent was also destroyed, causing the Filipina led medical crew to make their own makeshift health center near fishing ponds, where they continued to aid in the recovery of malaria afflicted guerrilla troops. They also forged paperwork to secure quinine, which was smuggled to afflicted soldiers in the mountain camps via canoe across Manila Bay.



Dr. Guedelia M. Pablan

1) Women (particularly in the example given, black women) faced additional barriers to public participation on account of their gender. Apart from battling racism, they also had to contend with gendered expectations and norms. Yet just like the women in the previous historical example, women persevered in the civil rights movement.

2) Social barriers that restrict individual women's participation are only half the story. What we as societies mostly think about as "heroic" or as "important" contributions can also reflect gendered /racial norms.