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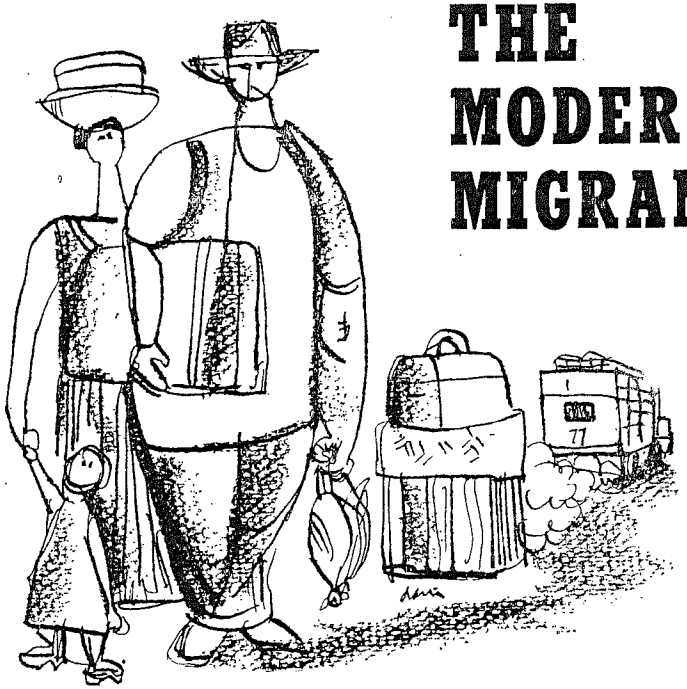
THE MODERN MIGRANT



WORLD WAR II unleashed chaos and great change upon the world. It tore millions of people up from their roots. It set in motion mass migration across the world. After the war people continued to move. In the new nations, the move was from the countryside into the city. By 1961, the countries of Asia had 37 metropolitan areas each with over one million inhabitants compared to only seven areas of this size in North America.

MIGRATION INTO THE CITIES

GROWING CONCERN OVER the tide of migration within Asian countries in the post war period prompted the United Nations to hold a UNESCO Seminar on Asian Urbanization in Bangkok in 1956.

The Seminar listed five factors responsible for rural-urban migration, chief among which were low productivity and the scarcity of land.

1) The seminar placed at the top of its list the population pressure upon land resources. The trek to the city began as more and more people saw the impossibility of making a livelihood on the land. Added to the burden was the use of obsolete methods of production which only reinforced the problems of subsistence income and increased indebtedness.
2) A second factor was the disruption of normal life by the war and the subsequent movement of peoples to the cities for security reasons. Civil war and social unrest created conditions which made life precarious in the rural areas, but it swelled urban population out of proportion to the city's ability to provide for the people.
3) The city itself became a third factor in drawing people into its vortex. Many of those who had visited it as a result of military service decided to return to the city and make it their home.
4) Another factor in the rural-urban flow was the depletion of natural resources in certain areas which forced people to look elsewhere for their livelihood.
5) The fifth factor cited by the seminar was the problem of underemployment in rural areas. The seasonality of rural work encouraged the flow of rural workers to the city in search of more permanent employment.

The weight of the seminar findings pointed to the growth of urbanization in Asia as largely due to the deep-rooted poverty of the rural areas rather than to the attraction of people to cities by jobs in industry. This particular factor is borne out by Philippine experience where migration has not only been to urban centers but to promising rural areas. Agricultural Mindanao, the Cagayan Valley of Luzon, and southern portions of Luzon have shown high rates of population growth. Evidence indicates that migrants will move where there is a fair chance of making a living.

It is, nevertheless, toward the cities that the greatest migration has taken place. The rural sections of the country have shown a decrease from 73.5 per cent of the population in 1918 to 63.2 per cent in 1960. The urban areas have shown the greatest increase during the last intercensal period. During the period between the census of 1948, and that of 1960, the population of the country increased by 40.8 per cent, while the population of 305 towns and cities increased by an average of 89.25 per cent. One of the areas of greatest increase in population was Rizal province, which includes a good part of the metropolitan area of Manila. Rizal province increased by 865 per cent between 1903 and 1960. The Manila metropolitan area represented nearly 3 per cent of the total Philippine population in 1903; but it grew to 7.8 per cent in 1960. Today one out of every ten Filipinos lives in the environs of Manila.

ATTRACTION OF MANILA

MANILA HAS A MAGNETIC EFFECT upon the provinces of the Philippines. It draws to itself people from all over the Philippines. They come to Manila from the Ilocos provinces — tired of eking out a living on

By the Rev. **Richard P. Poethig**, program director, Committee on Industrial Life and Vocations, United Church of Christ in the Philippines.

fifth and sixth class land. Children from the sugar haciendas of Pampanga come seeking to escape the fate of their fathers. Families arrive from Leyte and Samar fleeing the destructive typhoons which destroy homes and farms every year. Young girls from the Bicol and Visayas are among the newcomers recruited by labor contractors. Some come to Manila to work in homes, some to become hostesses in nightclubs, and others slip into prostitution. Students are sent forth by parents to make a mark for themselves in the university life of the city. All people come to the metropolis with hope — some succeed, others hold on doggedly, while others are crushed by city life.

Migrants who fail to make the grade in urban life are a great burden to the city. They come to Manila full of hope but soon find themselves living a hand-to-mouth existence. Many of those who come do not have the skills necessary to meet the job requirements of urban industry. Older men find it even more difficult, since the over-supply of labor gives factory managers the opportunity to choose their workers from among "trainable" young men. The unskilled rural migrant must compete for less desirable work on the docks or in construction gangs. The more unfortunate men become part of the "floating" population, doing odd-jobs when available, never settling down, always moving on.

Every year 6,500 families migrate to Manila. The greater majority find their way into slum sections, or join the squatters that inhabit the city. Over the years squatting has become a highly developed means of existence in the city. Six varieties of squatters have been listed: the owner squatter (the most numerous); the squatter tenant (the poorest); the squatter landlord (the long-time ex-resident); the squatter speculator (the dentist and the doctor); and the semi-squatter (one who comes to terms on private land as a tenant). Usually the new migrants are squatter owners, who camp illegally on someone else's property. Their barong-barongs crowd together along the railroad tracks or hover over some fetid estero. Still other squatters pay to live in someone else's squatter shack—perhaps in the dock area of North Harbor, or in some area already blighted by slum housing. In 1946, there were 23,000 squatters living in Manila. By 1963, the number had increased to 282,730. These were in addition to the 80,000 slum dwellers. If the continuous flow of squatters into Manila is not stemmed, it is predicted that by 1973, thirty per cent of the population of Greater Manila will live under slum and squatter conditions.

EFFECTS OF MIGRATION:

THE RAPID GROWTH OF THE CITY, beyond the city's ability to meet the basic needs of the people, has been called over-urbanization. Over-urbanization shows itself in two factors: unemployment and poor housing.

UNEMPLOYMENT

OVER-URBANIZATION MEANS THAT SOME people will be continually unemployed. Chronic unemployment forces people to live in below-subsistence conditions. This is most evident among the squatter families living in urban areas. In a 1963 United Nations survey of squatters living in Manila, only 20 per cent had an income above the subsistence level. The deprived conditions of the other 80 per cent gives rise to the crime, medical and housing problems which over-tax the limited welfare resources of the city. Tondo, the most heavily populated area of Manila, shows the highest rate of crime in Manila. Further evidence shows that a high proportion of the offenders have migrated to Manila within the last five years.

Urban unemployment is a major result of the too-rapid growth of the city. A survey of urban areas in the Philippines in May, 1965, showed that the cities accounted for 42% of the unemployed — a total of 400,000 people. And 40% of these lived in Manila.

In his Five-Year Integrated Socio-Economic Program, former president Diosdado Macapagal gave indications of the employment dilema which the Philippines would face in the 1960's. Looking ahead to 1967, he estimated that the Philippine labor force would expand to 12.3 million persons. The number of jobs available, part-time or full-time, however, would be only approximately 11.6 million. This would mean that 700,000 persons would not be able to find jobs in 1967. Of the other 11.6 million working, about 1.4 million would be working part-time or less than 40 hours a week.

An unemployment survey released by the Bureau of Statistics and Census in early 1966 was even more foreboding than the predictions of the former President. Statistics for May, 1965, show that out of a labor force of 11.5 million, unemployment had reached close to 1 million persons. Out of the 10.5 million employed, some 2.8 million indicated the desire for additional work. This figure included some 1.5 million full-time workers who worked 40 or more hours a week and 1.3 million part-time workers who worked less than 40 hours. For the purpose of the survey the Bureau classified 28% of the employed labor force as underemployed. It held this view on the ground that the desire for additional employment among full time workers indicated a low level of income.

The lack of skills among the squatters makes them especially vulnerable in a period of high unemployment, coming as they do from the underdeveloped and poorer rural areas of the country. They have neither the schooling nor the practical training required by the new industries developing in the city. A survey in one of the squatter areas of Tondo showed that 40 per cent of the family heads interviewed had no skills and 63 per cent had below a high school education. The plight of the squatter is further

magnified by the fact that a high school diploma is the basic requirement of most Manila industry. A job applicant must be a high school graduate before he can become an apprentice.

Another limiting factor in the Manila labor picture is the lack of employment facilities. The Bureau of Labor presently has only one Manila Employment Office for job placement. Considering that 160,000 of the 400,000 urban unemployed are in Metropolitan Manila, this office is hardly sufficient to meet the growing complexity of the Manila labor market. Besides the placement of workers there is the growing need for a system of vocational guidance and counselling geared to the manpower needs of the country. A corollary to this is the provision for obtaining better labor market statistics so that both government and private business can more effectively utilize and channel the manpower resources at hand.

POOR HOUSING

THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNEMPLOYMENT are most obvious in the housing conditions prevailing among urban squatters. Without a steady job and steady income (and 87 per cent of the family members in the Tondo study were unemployed), a family is forced to find shelter wherever it is available. In the case of the rural migrants this usually means a one room shack hastily built of plywood scraps and discarded G.I. sheets. The barong-barongs cluster together in the inner city on government land or on disputed private estates. The living conditions are both primitive and hazardous. The squatter communities lack the basic sanitary needs of running water and toilet facilities, and face the constant threat of fire.

In a survey of urban squatter colonies throughout the Philippines a PHHC United Nations survey team provided the following profile of squatter communities:

1) Overcrowding of families — as many as 50% or more of the families are sharing accommodations with other families usually in one room shacks.
2) Sanitation — the great majority of squatter shacks made no provision for sanitation. In some squatter colonies about half of the families provide open pit sanitation.
3) Water supply — in most cases water supply in a squatter colony comes from a well, pump, a spring or a public faucet at intervals of 100 meters with usually one faucet for every 100 to 150 families.
4) Densities of settlement — the density of urban squatter population averages about 300 to 400 persons per hectare.
5) Site conditions — in practically all squatter colonies more than 50% of the squatters had built in waste swamp areas, river banks or offshore area in and around the cities.

6) Sickness — because of the living conditions practically all of squatter occupants were annually effected by one or more of the following: gastro-intestinal disorders, cholera, respiratory sickness, pneumonia and tuberculosis.

In a rapidly expanding metropolis, inadequate housing is not only the bane of the squatter population, it is a problem of growing proportions for both city and national governments. Housing in the Greater Manila area has not kept pace with the population growth. In the period from 1948 to 1960 in the city of the Manila there was a 14 per cent increase in population, but only a 4.5 per cent increase in housing units. In the same period in Rizal province there was a 117 per cent increase in population, but only 87 per cent increase in housing units.

It is estimated that 100,000 new housing units must be built every year in urban areas to keep pace with the increasing urban population. In 1964, however, 13,183 new dwellings were built in urban areas, only 13 per cent of the annual requirements. With each passing year the need for new dwellings increases and the problem becomes cumulative. The backlog of housing needs presents a frightening picture of the urban housing situation in the Philippines. As one is confronted by the mushrooming urban squatter settlements and deterioration of older neighborhoods throughout the city the magnitude of the problem becomes clear.

SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT

IN CONTRAST TO THE SQUATTER COLONIES are the new suburban subdivisions being built on the edge of the city. As the inner city faces the influx of squatters, many of the inner city residents begin their exodus to the outlying areas. Some of the new suburban residents are the children of old time residents in the downtown areas who want to raise their children away from the congestion of the city. Others are recent migrants from colleges in the southern Philippines who prefer to live in the new suburban communities among people of their own professional status. In the process of the movement, the suburban communities become socially and economically homogeneous colonies of people on the various levels of the rising middle class. As more people move into the middle class, the demand for suburban housing pushes property values in the suburbs upward. In the favored Makati district, the annual rate of price increase in real estate has been 15 to 30 per cent. Lots in a Makati subdivision selling for ₱60 per square meter in 1962, sold for ₱90 to ₱100 1965. Only families with regular and rising incomes can afford to move into these new areas.

High real estate values and people with low incomes are the two ingredients in the urban housing problem in the Philippines. These factors

have made a low cost housing program imperative. The greatest need for low cost housing is among the urban families who earn below ₱2,500 annually. Excluding the cost of property a decent house costs ₱4,000. At this figure approximately half of Greater Manila families and three out of four families in other urban areas would not be able to pay the price of building a house. The 1961 survey of household incomes showed that families with less than ₱2,500 annual income constitute 43.7% of Metropolitan Manila, 72.6% of those living in other urban areas and 91% of those in the rural areas. Private building industry does not have the resources, nor would it be willing to take the risk of meeting the needs for urban housing. This throws the responsibility to the government.

NATIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM

IN DEVELOPING HOUSING for low income people, the government is faced with two distinct groups: the recent migrants from the rural areas who make up the greater proportion of the squatter colonies, and the low income people who have acclimated to city life. Housing authorities have suggested a two-pronged program to meet the specific needs of these two groups of people.

In relation to the rurally-oriented squatters, the government is planning a relocation and re-training program to resettle urban squatter families in new communities outside of urban areas. A step has been made in this direction with the relocation of Manila squatters in Sapang Palay, a government-owned area 40 kilometers north of Manila. This program envisions the training of former squatters to prepare them to cope with the demands of rural life. Part of the course will provide training in self-help housing construction as well as skills necessary for modern farming. Other areas of resettlement which are now available are in the provinces of Quezon and Cagayan.

For the second group of people, those regularly employed or low-wage earners, the government is planning a low-cost urban housing program. One aspect of the program is the construction of multi-storied urban tenements on government land throughout the city. The future occupants of the tenements will be squatter or slum dwellers with some regular source of income. The government has begun this program with three tenement projects located in Vitas, Tondo; Punta, Sta. Ana; and Fort Bonifacio, Makati. Altogether these tenements will only provide for 1,500 families. Both the rural resettlement and the multi-storied tenement programs only scratch the surface of the Philippine urban housing problem. But they will provide guidlines for the government as it seeks long range answers to a problem which it will face for years to come.

THE MODERN MIGRANT

The modern migrant has become one of the major characters upon the stage of contemporary history. The tide of migration to Asian cities will be difficult to stem in the foreseable future, and it can spell the rise or fall of the Asian city. The ability to provide for creative development and productive use of the new labor force is an imperative facing all developing nations. Since the seat of national power centers in Asian cities, great resourcefulness is called for in turning the modern migrant from a potential threat to stable government into a useful participant in national development.