

C O N T E N T S

Editorial: May 1, Signalling A New Leap
in the Workers' Movement p. 1

Aquino Regime Moves to Seal Bases Deal
with U.S. Imperialism p. 2

148 Weapons Seized, 200 AFP Troops Killed
in NPA First Quarter Offensive
in Mindanao p. 5

Taliba ng Bayan is Revived p. 6

A Hundred Thousand Activists
for a Thousand and One Tasks p. 7

Editorial

May 1: Signalling a New Leap in the Workers' Movement

The labor movement's choice of bases, land and militarization as the themes for this year's celebration of May Day is heavy with significance.

This decision represents the new level of consciousness, resoluteness and determination of the workers' mass movement in fighting for the basic demands of the Filipino people. It affirms and highlights the historic role of the working class -- to be at the head of the national democratic struggle of the people, a revolutionary struggle led by the party of the proletariat.

The recent Labor Day celebration marks a historic resolution not only to reaffirm a long-standing commitment to the basic anti-imperialist, antifeudal and antifascist issues but also to clearly place these demands on top of the agenda of the workers' tactical struggles.

Not that the labor movement is setting aside economic issues and struggles. These can never be set aside in the life-and-death struggles of the proletariat against the exploiting classes. In the face of the unabated economic crisis, the workers must continue to engage in fierce battles with the ruling class on the question of wages, prices and profits. But from this day on, economic issues and political issues will be tightly linked, and economic demands will be consciously carried according to the national democratic line and program.

The May 1 action is also a big blow to the reformism, yellow unionism and divisive schemes being sown within the workers' movement by US imperialism and local reactionaries through the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), Federation of Free Workers (FFW) and Lakas ng Manggagawa Labor Center (LMLC). The labor aristocrats and social-democrats lording it over these federations tried to sow anti-communist intrigues and to wave the flag of false democracy. On this point, they were in collaboration with the US-Aquino regime. They also sought to stem the rising tide of anti-imperialist and antifeudal struggles among the worker masses by giving too much emphasis to the wage issue.

But these forces failed in their attempts. Participation in their May Day "celebration" was meager -- in great contrast to the more than 200,000 workers who marched under the banner of basic change and militant struggle throughout the country.

By actively upholding and fighting for the demands of their own class and the entire nation, the workers firm up even more their unity with other oppressed classes in society, particularly the peasantry and other sections of the toiling masses. This also greatly amplifies the strength of the united front for national independence and democracy.

By actively standing up for agrarian reform and fighting against the total war ravaging the countryside, the working class tightens the bonds of the worker-peasant alliance, is brought closer to the armed struggle, and becomes a rich source of cadres and activists to the armed fronts in the countryside.

By militantly positioning themselves at the head of the patriotic and democratic struggles in the city, the workers' mass movement ensures the sharpness, depth and breadth of the popular struggles participated in by the intelligentsia, urban poor and other patriotic sections of the people.

May 1 signals bigger, more militant, heroic and earth-shaking struggles of the working class in the decade of the '90s.

Aquino Regime Moves To Seal Bases Deal with US Imperialism

The first stage in the "exploratory talks" between the Philippine and US governments on the fate of US military bases in the country has just been concluded. Despite all the theatrics, it is obvious from the course of the five-day talks that both sides are paving the way for an extension of the bases lease after its expiration on Sept. 16, 1991.

Manglapus made a grand gesture of handing over to the US panel a notice of termination of the US-RP Bases Agreement. But the Aquino government was quick to explain that it was still open to negotiations for a new bases treaty.

There was no clearer proof of the government's intention than what happened in the streets during the period of the "exploratory talks" -- anti-bases demonstrators bleeding from the blows of police truncheons; leaders of the anti-bases movement arrested and imprisoned; anti-bases demonstrations brutally assaulted and dispersed. A government that inflicts such violence on those opposed to the bases reveals what it really stands for.

The price of national sovereignty

During the whole course of the "exploratory talks," discussions centered only on one thing: money. The Aquino government kept on pressing the US to pay the \$200 million for 1990, which was part of the aid package promised under the Manglapus-Schultz Agreement in 1988. The regime was coyly hinting that it was willing to be bought, so long as the US was willing to pay.

What the Aquino regime wants is to wangle as big a compensation as possible from the US for agreeing to a new treaty prolonging the bases' stay in the country. And this is where some complications arose in the talks between the two sides. The US is determined to maintain its military bases after 1991 but, owing to its current financial and economic problems, it cannot afford to greatly increase its aid to the Aquino government. The latter's harping on the compensation issue led US chief negotiator Richard Armitage into saying that he does not engage in diplomacy with a "cash register" at his side. It was a dig at the mercenary character of the puppet regime.

Despite the insult, not a peep of protest was heard from the Philippine panel. Even more disgusting were the leaps of joy in Malacanang when the US promised to pay the \$200 million in the form of military and medical equipment and food aid. And in this manner, the talks ended.

The two panels set another round of talks, this time over a new treaty of friendship, cooperation and security between the US and the Philippines -- a cover-up for the formal conclusion of a new deal on the US bases.

Various formulae for bases' retention

Before and during the "exploratory talks," all sorts of schemes were floated by various personalities and political forces on what shape a new bases treaty should take.

There is the proposal for a five- to ten-year extension of the bases agreement, renewable after a defined period. Then there is the "gradual withdrawal" or "phase-out" scheme, to be carried out over a timeframe of five to ten years, which is favored by many members of the Lower House and the Senate. The latest is the "joint-use" formula being pushed by Fidel Ramos, which surfaced after his talks with US Defense Secretary Richard Cheney last February. For the US, any of these schemes is acceptable, for they all aim to legitimize the continued stay of the US bases by deceiving and dividing the masses.

All these proposals are a response to one undeniable fact: the growing strength of the anti-bases forces and the irresistible tide of popular sentiment for the dismantling of all US bases in the country. This is the reason why there is such a scramble to find an "acceptable" formula for the bases' retention.

As of now, the "gradual withdrawal" or "phase-out" proposal, in combination with "joint use," is the one that has received the most projection and the most support from people in government. Even some senators opposed to the bases may reverse themselves and take up this position.

"Mutual interests" of the US and local reactionaries

The US is doing everything in its power to ensure the bases' retention. It continues to insist that the bases serve the mutual interests of the US and the Philippines.

For the Aquino regime, the meaning is clear. Still casting a long shadow up to now are the "persuasion flights" which saved it from defeat in the hands of a militarist faction of the AFP last December 1989. The message to the ruling classes and especially to Aquino is that if they wish to guarantee their continued hold on state power, they have to rely on the US military bases and strength. As it turns out, the "mutual interests" continually being alluded to by the US government are the interests of US imperialism and the local reactionary ruling classes.

Thus, the US and its local puppets are going all out in their efforts and propaganda to weaken the anti-bases movement in the Philippines.

On the whole, no significant changes can be seen in the US strategic plan for the Asia-Pacific that indicates any US intention to withdraw from its bases in the Philippines. There has been no shift in the US "forward defense strategy" which provides the logic for maintaining military bases in the country to project its military power in the region.

Further gains in anti-bases movement

In the face of all this, the anti-bases movement in the Philippines is developing rapidly. The anti-imperialist forces took the initiative early on and has sustained its offensive in the debates on the issue and in the whole anti-bases struggle. The most zealous US puppets are forced to hide behind such arguments as: "we are not yet ready for the negative effects of removing the bases on those living near the base areas" and "base rentals can be used to pay for our foreign debt."

The anti-bases protest movement made further gains during the "exploratory talks."

First, it was able to assert the nationalist position through the slogan "Serve the notice of termination, dismantle the bases now!". This gained support from a wide range of people, such as those in media circles, the churches, the academe and professional organizations, as well as prominent business leaders.

Second, the Aquino regime was forced to issue a notice of termination to the US, though it was merely an empty gesture.

Third, the mass organizations and alliance in the anti-bases struggle acquired more vigor.

Fourth, the anti-bases struggle was placed on top of the agenda of the labor movement's tactical struggles. Last May 1, Labor Day, some 200,000 took part in rallies and marches in Metro Manila and other cities like Angeles, Cebu, Tacloban and Davao. In the face of violent attacks by state forces, one of the slogans they shouted was the dismantling of US military bases in the country.

Fifth, prominent Church and civic leaders and some members of Congress openly supported the NDF's anti-imperialist proposal for peace. Many sections of the people clamoring for peace welcomed the NDF's offer to declare a unilateral ceasefire upon a pronouncement by the Aquino government that US bases would be dismantled by 1991.

Sixth, military actions against selected and prominent US targets served to express the revolutionary movement's determination to overthrow imperialist rule and to project revolutionary armed struggle as the main instrument for achieving national liberation.

And seventh, the anti-bases movement in the Philippines drew broader support from various forces, institutions and organizations throughout the world. This was shown in the holding of "Crossroads 1991," an international conference held during the same period as the "exploratory talks." The conference focused on the theme of a bases-free, nuclear-free Philippines. Delegates from the US, Asia-Pacific and other regions declared their unity with the Filipino people's struggle against the US bases and nuclear arms.

Intensifying the anti-bases struggle

In the regions outside Greater Manila and Central Luzon, the anti-bases struggle still has to be developed further and greater effort needs to be exerted in pushing it forward. Even in the two key urban centers, a more thoroughgoing, vigorous and organized anti-bases campaign has to be waged among the masses in the urban communities, factories, plantations, mines and rural villages.

The legal machinery of the anti-bases alliance and mass organizations in the anti-bases campaign should be improved.

The use of more popular forms of propaganda such as pamphlets, visual works, films and cultural presentations, should be promoted in order to stir up the anti-bases sentiments of the broadest sections of the people.

More aggressive and more creative methods are needed to win the support of leaders in Congress, the churches, the business world and professions, the media and academe, and forces outside the country.

The efforts of the revolutionary movement in the anti-bases struggle have so far been mainly in the realm of propaganda and education. Since the "exploratory talks," the anti-bases struggle has entered the arena of tactical struggles that aim for specific goals or victories. Thus, there is now a need for a set of defined tactical objectives, and for effective combinations and coordination of various forms of struggle and organization.

During the stage of negotiations, anti-bases struggles must be intensified through effective and tight combination, coordination and synchronization of more advanced forms of mass struggle, military actions, struggles in the parliamentary front, alliance work and diplomatic work.

All this demands from every member of the revolutionary movement nothing less than all-out effort to advance the anti-bases struggle.

It is true that based on its present level of politico-military capability, the revolutionary movement and the anti-bases movement are not yet strong enough to effect a dismantling of the bases and, more so, the whole system of imperialist domination.

But it can cause the extreme isolation of US imperialism and the pro-bases position, weaken significantly imperialist power and influence, and by combining these with victories in other fronts, advance the people's war to a point where it can shift the balance of forces in favor of the revolution.

148 Weapons Seized, 200 AFP Troops Killed in NPA First Quarter Offensive in Mindanao

The New People's Army in Mindanao made big gains in the first four months of 1990, seizing a total of 148 high-powered arms and killing some 200 members of the AFP and CAGFU in 23 tactical offensives throughout the island.

AB correspondents sent reports on some of the NPA offensives from January to April this year:

SURIGAO SUR. The NPA wiped out half of a PC platoon in a 30-minute gunbattle in Bgy. Bayan, Marihatag last April 18. An NPA unit being chased by PC soldiers from the 426th COY succeeded in reversing

the situation and inflicting losses on their pursuers. The platoon leader, Lt. Orgunto Dirampaton, was seriously wounded.

Another PC unit under Capt. Elias Peralta, head of the 426th PC Coy, went to reinforce the beleaguered PC troopers but were ambushed along the way by an NPA blocking force. Many fascists were killed, including Peralta.

All in all, 22 soldiers were slain, and 25 high-powered rifles and a lot of ammunition were confiscated.

ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR. The NPA ambushed a company made up of combined forces of the 55th IB-PA and CAFGU in Tambulig on February 4. According to a report from an AB correspondent and spokesman of the Radio Monterosa in Western Mindanao, 14 enemy soldiers were killed and many wounded. Eight high-powered arms were seized (one M60, two M14s, three M16s and two Garands), rounds of ammunition, and 22 packs.

Smarting from their losses, the enemy vent their anger on the barriofolk. A few days after the ambush, the AFP rampaged through Tulwan, Lumana and Sibuyan in Tambulig. They burned down houses as well as the pigs and cattle raised by the farmers. CAFGU members tortured a number of civilians in the area.

These military abuses triggered widespread protests from the people of Tumbulig, who staged mass actions in front of the offices of government and military agencies.

DAVAO DEL NORTE. Red fighters ambushed a combined PC-CAFGU team in Tanguile, Boringot, Monkayo last February 12. Killed were two CAFGU members and a soldier detailed to the PC Yellow Detachment at the Boringot mine. Boringot is a gold-rush area owned by big foreign and local capitalists and guarded by the AFP.

DAVAO DEL SUR. The NPA ambushed a PA-CAFGU patrol in Bgy. Sanghay, Sta. Cruz last March 24. According to a report from Ka Benzar Sarabia of the NPA Merardo Arce Command, 14 enemy troops were killed and 18 high-powered rifles, captured. Three CAFGU members surrendered.

The masses who monitored AFP movements in the area supplied information which helped in the successful launching of the NPA operation.

Taliba ng Bayan is Revived

The whole revolutionary movement welcomes the revival of *Taliba ng Bayan*, the revolutionary people's newspaper in the Manila-Rizal region. It is now being published under the auspices of the National Democratic Front in Metro Manila-Rizal.

This is a heartening development in the revolutionary propaganda movement, in the face of the unrelenting intrigues and psywar campaign of the enemy against the Party and the entire revolutionary movement.

Taliba has a big contribution to make in the fight against counterrevolutionary thinking, as well as in the widespread propagation of the revolutionary message. This is underscored by the fact that the Manila-Rizal region is in the very heart of the battle of ideas.

"Now," says an editorial in the paper, *"there is a greater need for (Taliba) to wield the pen of struggle and make the message of the revolutionary movement flow to the broadest ranks of the people in the region."*

As a weapon of the revolution, *"Taliba will promote the thousand and one tasks of the struggle that the greatest number must collectively bear on their shoulders and bind together to achieve one powerful momentum of advance."*

The March 1990 issue of the publication gave attention to the all-important task of expansion and consolidation of the revolutionary forces and mass base in the urban center.

It stressed the need for all revolutionaries, especially the activists, to take up the fundamental task of rousing the revolutionary consciousness of the broadest mass of the population.

In line with this, the newspaper called for boldly expanding the ranks of revolutionary activists and developing thousands of them to shoulder the thousand and one tasks needed for the complete victory of the revolution. [Read article in pages 7-9.]

The newspaper also clarified a few basic points related to the partisan warfare being waged in Manila-Rizal mainly by the Alex Boncayao Brigade.

"The partisan warfare waged by the ABB is an integral part of the political struggle in Metro Manila and an extension of the people's war throughout the country. It is the task of the ABB to provide the armed strength of the open struggle of the masses in the region and to defend them against armed enemy repression."

The ABB will focus on *"selected, strategic targets,"* according to *Taliba*.

The ABB has set up a comprehensive machinery capable of sustaining partisan warfare in the capital region.

Proof of this advance is the launching of 26 partisan operations in the first quarter of 1990. *Taliba* reported that 33 enemies of the people were killed and 14 high-powered rifles and handguns were seized in these operations.

Partisans and sympathizers also staged lightning rallies on two occasions to mark important dates in the armed struggle. One was at the EDSA Central, Crossing, Mandaluyong on March 29, the anniversary of the New People's Army; and the other, at Avenida Rizal, Sta. Cruz on the night of March 23, the eve of the ABB's sixth anniversary.

The *Taliba ng Bayan* had a glorious history during the period of the US-Marcos dictatorship. During the darkest days of dictatorial rule, it was one of many revolutionary publications that broke the climate of fear spawned by fascist terror. Its publication stopped in 1986 due to several problems and limitations.

A Hundred Thousand Activists for a Thousand and One Tasks

This is a condensed version of an article published in the Taliba ng Bayan. We are reproducing it because of its timely message and calls. From time to time, we will feature similar "guest articles" in this paper. -- Editor)

The question and challenge of the '90s is whether we can arouse, organize and mobilize the people in their millions -- the great majority of the Filipino people -- under the banner of the people's democratic revolution.

This question and challenge faces all revolutionary activists. For on their shoulders mainly falls the whole weight of mobilizing the broad masses of the people for the Philippine revolution.

Our Tasks

We revolutionary activists are the closest and most direct links of the revolutionary movement to the masses -- the workers in their unions, the peasants in their barrios, the urban poor in their communities, the students in their schools, and the middle forces in their places of work.

We activists carry the message of the revolutionary cause, organize the revolutionary strength of the masses, and form the

machinery for the thousand and one tasks of the revolutionary struggle. We are the backbone of the revolution.

In order to win, how heavy are the responsibilities that we must take on? Let us show it in this way:

There are some 60 million Filipinos throughout the country. Minus those 15 years old and below, 30 million people face a choice between revolution and counterrevolution. At the minimum, half of this number, or 15 million, need to be actively mobilized for the revolution.

If 15 million need to be actively mobilized for the revolution, how many activists should be developed throughout the archipelago? Based on the ratio of 15 people to one activist, a million activists must emerge throughout the country in order to win the revolution.

Using the same estimate, we need one hundred thousand activists to win over the one and a half million people in the region. If starting today, we continue to double the number of revolutionary activists every year, we should reach this target in the first half of the decade.

Apart from this, extraordinary situations, such as those during the First Quarter Storm of 1970 and following the Aquino assassination in 1983, could produce big leaps in the revolutionary awakening of broad sections of the people.

Basic Standards for Activists

Conditions are once again ripening for a tremendous advance of the revolution. This time, it is important to ensure that the revolutionary movement can bring into its fold the new generation of revolutionary forces that will emerge from the situation developing in the present decade. The mass recruitment of activists is a central issue.

What we need today are not abstract, formalist and conservative standards for activists. This is one lesson that can be derived from the exceptional situations that arose in 1970 and 1983.

The spontaneous forces spawned by the First Quarter Storm of 1970, who upheld the "radical" position against the "moderate" position of the reformist forces, were immediately taken into the national democratic organizations and given tasks as activists of the revolution.

In 1983, the spontaneous forces that emerged from the flow of the antidictatorship movement and marched under the red banner of the slogan "Dismantle the US-Marcos dictatorship" instead of the yellow slogan of the anti-Marcos politicians, were immediately given tasks as activists in the revolutionary movement.

The decisive test for being a revolutionary activist is the readiness to accept clear and regular tasks for the revolutionary movement. Not the completion of any formal political course, not actual integration into an underground collective, not the formal expression of approval for armed struggle. All these are part of consolidation and the process of development.

Anyone who upholds the people's interest, fights against the people's enemies and knows that the people's basic problems are imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, is a revolutionary. Anyone who stands for these principles and consciously and actively works to end the fundamental social ills is a revolutionary activist. This is our basic standard for determining a revolutionary activist.

Overcome Weaknesses, Advance to Victory

How do we form battalions upon battalions of revolutionary activists? The key is to overcome our current problems in expanding among the masses and mobilizing and developing them.

The main problem in our mass work is that education, propaganda and political agitation among the people and our own mass base are inadequate.

It is absolutely impossible to rapidly develop the revolutionary forces on a large scale if we do not devote the greater part of our attention and time to revolutionary agitation, propaganda and education. To do this, we must raise the political level of activists who will take on such a responsibility.

Second, there is the problem of giving revolutionary tasks to the masses and unleashing their initiative. At present, only a few revolutionary tasks are assigned to the masses, and even these are concentrated in a few forces.

There are a thousand and one tasks in the revolutionary struggle. We have a force of a few thousands, simply waiting to have these tasks explained and entrusted to them. Each element convinced of the need for revolution has a skill or talent to contribute to the revolution. What is only needed is to recognize the various capabilities of the masses and give them appropriate revolutionary tasks.

Third, the urban revolutionary movement has been narrowed because of the perception that it is purely an underground movement. Thus, even the revolution is kept "secret" from the broad masses.

Such a perception has bred the tendency to set strict standards for activists, who are confined to the underground movement. Secret studies, formal acceptance of armed struggle, integration into clandestine groups become requisites before one is considered an activist.

The above mentioned problems have retarded the political development of the masses long under our leadership and influence. And these have also led to the slow recruitment of activists and the dampening of the revolutionary initiative of the masses.

If we wish to quicken the pace of advance of the revolution, the primary method of doing this is to quicken the pace of revolutionary awakening of the masses! They need not pass through laborious and step-by-step processes of consciousness-raising. Let us explain the revolution to the masses in bold and creative ways and fully trust in their capacity to make revolution.

