

government policy, not merely intended to mollify US officials. Throughout the autumn, Enrile, echoing the US line, had been haranguing the government for «dealing with the communists.» However, Enrile's sacking marked no change in the government's approach to the talks. On the contrary, the January 22nd massacre exposed the government's anti-popular bent.

The NDF suspended the negotiations immediately, finalizing this with a statement on February 7th, entitled: «The Aquino government is not serious about negotiating a just and durable peace.» After reviewing the evidence of the government's bad faith, the statement concluded: «The NDF will only return to the negotiating table after the Aquino government shall have demonstrated its determination and its capacity to: (1) pursue programs that would attack our society's problems at their roots; (2) assert and effectively exercise civilian supremacy over the fascist AFP (the army), and thoroughly reform and reorient it; (3) give due recognition to the NDF as a political entity with a legitimate cause and a program supported by a considerable section of the population; and (4) work for a genuine settlement of the armed and political conflict.» The NDF called on the people's organisations «to wage militant and unremitting struggles on all fronts for their patriotic and democratic interests.»

NEW PHASE OF STRUGGLE

The armed struggle was stepped up immediately, especially in the four provinces where the NPA has long had

strongholds. On the background of the revolutionaries' determination to continue their just people's war, the government's efforts to deal with the NDF on the regional level failed. NDF organizations in the different regions rejected such talks. In Mindanao, the country's second largest island, a provisional council was established to coordinate recruiting, propaganda and organization for the liberation struggle. The council's vice chairman said that similar councils will be established in other areas by the end of the year. They will operate together in order to form an alternative to Aquino's administration. «Later, if we win, we will replace this government with a revolutionary government whose class content would have peasants and farmers who are not represented in the Aquino government,» he concluded. Moreover, the Moro liberation fronts have expressed their openness to cooperation with the NDF, should the government continue to reject their demands, or take military actions against them.

With the struggle in the Philippines entering yet a new phase, we have found it important to take stock of developments there for three main reasons. The first is obvious: The people of the Philippines, like all oppressed peoples, deserve the social justice and national sovereignty for which so many have fought and died. We like other progressive forces are following their struggle in the interests of international solidarity.

The second reason is that revolutionary forces everywhere can draw lessons from developments in the Philippines, especially pertaining to

how to deal with the new US strategy of trying to replace discredited dictatorships with 'moderate democracies' in order to halt the mass struggle.

The third reason is that the struggle for the national sovereignty of the Philippines has regional and even international implications in view of the massive US military presence there. The US bases there are some of the largest in the world. They were important for the US invasion of Vietnam and today hold a key position in the US global military network. Task forces from Subic naval base are regularly deployed in events such as the Iranian crisis, the Iraq-Iran war, and the conflict between North and South Yemen. A secret US document, leaked in March 1985, emphasized the importance of these bases to face what it called «expanded Soviet and Vietnamese threat in the region.» Truly these bases have an international role in US imperialism's war on the progressive forces of the world.

The Philippines are, moreover, involuntarily serving as a nuclear weapons storehouse for the US. The May-June 1985 issue of the NDF's English bulletin *Liberation* reported that Reagan had signed a secret memorandum authorizing the stationing of 467 nuclear bombs in other countries without notification of the local government. Of these, 227 were to be stationed in the Philippines, 32 each in the Azores, Bermuda, Canada, Iceland, Spain and Diego Garcia, and 48 in Puerto Rico. In view of all these facts, fighting US domination and military presence in the Philippines is an important part of the worldwide struggle for peace.

Peasants in Cayan march against militarization.

