



Global Nonviolent Action Database

Published on *Global Nonviolent Action Database* (<https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu>)

Filipinos protest against Bataan Nuclear Power Plant and U.S. military bases, 1983-1986

- Anti-Nuclear Power Movement (1960s-1980s)

Time period notes: It is unclear when the actions began.

October

1983

to: April

1986

Country: Philippines

Goals:

The activists initial goal was to stop the construction and operation of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant. Eventually, the campaign goal was expanded to include the ousting of US military bases as well.

“Its immediate main task was to stop the construction and the operation of the BNPP.”

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 025. Displays of portraits › burning of effigy
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 025. Displays of portraits › burning of effigy
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Methods in 4th segment:

Methods in 5th segment:

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 097. Protest strike

Methods in 6th segment:

- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 117. General strike

Notes on Methods:

There were also methods of media, lobbying, and nationwide organizing that were talked of in the articles, but specific details were never given.

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Defense

Cluster:

Environment

Peace

Group characterization:

- Filipino environmentalists
- students
- workers

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Senator Lorenzo M. Tañada, Nuclear Free Philippines Coalition

Partners:

Not known

External allies:

Not known

Involvement of social elites:

Senator Lorenzo M. Tañada

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

Groups in 2nd Segment:

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

Additional notes on joining/exiting order:

It is not clear when Senator Lorenzo M. Tañada entered the campaign.

Segment Length: *Approximately 5 months*

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

Marcos regime

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

Not known

Campaigner violence:

Not known

Repressive Violence:

The New People's Army killed seven protesters on September 20, 1985.

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

5 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

3 points out of 3 points

Notes on outcomes:

Although the campaigner's goals were eventually achieved, it took much longer than 2 years to come to until these achievements were finalized

In July 1973, then-Philippine president Ferdinand Marcos announced the decision to build the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) in response to the Philippines' economic crisis at the time. The Middle East oil embargo was putting incredible stress on the Philippine economy. For the Marcos regime, investing in nuclear power was the solution to their dependence on imported oil and energy demands. However, Bataan residents and Philippine citizens responded in fierce opposition to the new plant due to its threat to public health.

In January 1981, Philippine environmentalists established the Nuclear Free Philippines Coalition (NFPC). The activists' initial goal was to stop the construction and operation of BNPP. Under the organization of Lorenzo Martinez Tañada, a well-versed politician, the activists participated in a nationwide campaign utilizing lobbying, protest actions, media, and international solidarity.

Throughout the anti-BNPP campaign, the activists began to expand their goals to target the U.S. military bases as well. On October 26, 1983, over 200 protesters marched through Manila from the University of the Philippines to the U.S. Embassy, a trek of several miles. The total number of protesters at the Embassy was about 500. During this time, the activists also engaged in an anti-nuclear disarmament conference to rouse public opinion on the issue.

On June 13, 1984, approximately 2,000 activists rallied in front of the Embassy while burning an effigy of Uncle Sam, a symbol of the U.S. military. On October 6, about 2,000 activists burned an effigy of a skull in front of the Bataan Plant.

June 18, 1985, marked the beginning of a three-day protest called "Welgang Bayan Laban sa Plantang Nukleyar" ("People's Strike") in Balanga, the capital of Bataan. Then on June 20, approximately 33,000 activists and Filipino citizens from diverse walks of life participated in the largest protest action of the campaign. The action consisted of a march, rally, and a strike. This was the historic demonstration that forced the entire province of Bataan to stand still. Not only did it force the area to freeze, but it also mobilized 22 anti-nuclear organizations. During its climax it nearly immobilized the entire nation. On September 20, the

activists protested in the Bataan Peninsula for two days. During this protest the New Peoples Army killed seven activists.

In April 1986, as a result of the pressure of NFPC activists, Philippine citizens, and the political climate following the ousting of the Marcos regime by the People Power Movement (see “Filipinos campaign to overthrow dictator (People Power), 1983-1986”), the BNPP was postponed for use by the succeeding administration of President Corazon Aquino in the wake of the Chernobyl disaster.

It is unclear when the demonstrations ceased; however, in 1991, the Philippine Senate decided to remove tenure from U.S. facilities in the Philippines. By 1992, most US facilities had withdrawn, leaving tons of toxic waste of which the anti-nuclear groups had to dispose.

Research Notes

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Source URL (retrieved on 01/26/2020 - 02:46): <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/filipinos-protest-against-bataan-nuclear-power-plant-and-us-military-bases-1983-1986>

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