

Declaration of Autonomy

by Party Organizations

in the Visayas

We are hereby declaring our autonomy from the present 'Central Committee' of Armando Liwanag. We are cutting off our links from this illegal center. We reject its feudalistic and absolutist 'leadership.'

Declaring autonomy are the Party organizations in the Visayas: the new Regional Committee of the Central Visayas, the Regional Committee of Negros, the Regional Committee of Panay (Democratic bloc), and the Visayas Commission and its staff organs. Steadfastly joining them in the declaration are _____ Party members, and all the guerilla units of the New People's Army under their command.

Our Autonomy — An Assertion of Our Inherent Right

By invoking autonomy, the Party organizations in the Visayas are asserting the correct organizational principle of democratic centralism. We stand on our inherent right to make decisions as Party committees under centralized guidance. Since the national Party center has become illegal and the nature of its leadership has become feudalistic and absolutist, we are declaring our autonomy from the present 'Central Committee.'

By invoking autonomy, we are taking the initiative to preserve the Party spirit and Marxist-Leninist principles which are at stake. In our grave concern for the national organization and the whole Party, we reject the feudalistic and absolutist leadership of Armando Liwanag. We believe that it is our duty to stand by our responsibility to our constituency and to the Party conference and mass membership within the scope of our work.

The autonomy of Party committees is an integral part of the Leninist principle of democratic centralism. The Party, through democratic centralism, recognizes the imperative need to base the centralism of the national leadership on a dynamic democracy among the lower Party committees. It recognizes their inherent right to elect Party leaders and recall erring ones; their right to be consulted and to participate in deliberating major Party policies prior to their finalization by the Central Committee; and their inherent right to autonomy or to

formulate decisions according to the specific conditions prevailing in their respective areas of responsibility. All these are inviolably enshrined in our Party Constitution.

In declaring our autonomy, we remain a part of the whole Party and shall submit ourselves to the supreme leadership of the Party Congress. We shall respect and subordinate ourselves to the decisions of the Second Party Congress and to the central leadership it shall elect. However, this Congress should be convened on the conditions that:

1.) The opposition be cleared of the charges and organizational actions imposed by the illegal center in order to assure their right to attend and actively participate in Congress deliberations.

2.) The representation to the Party Congress be broad, democratic, fair, and just. A representation which is elected by the Regional Committees or Conferences, proportionate in number to the Party membership that they represent, and which includes the opposition groups. A representation of varied ideas, in order to allow for a truly democratic deliberation through a vigorous struggle of ideas.

3.) An in-depth, all-sided, and democratic deliberation of all matters on the agenda be done.

4.) The Congress agenda shall give primary importance to a 24-year summing up of the Party's existence, the refinement of our strategy and tactics, a new 5-year program, and the election of a new set of Central Committee leaders.

Our Autonomy — A Rejection of the Illegal and Feudalistic Center

We are invoking autonomy and independence from the illegal and bogus center of leadership which is not democratically elected and which has not earned its mandate from the Party Congress.

After the Congress of Re-establishment in 1968, the Party's Central Committee should have submitted itself to democratic elections through the Party Congress every five years. However, since 1974, the Party Central Committee conveniently abused the rule of 'cooptation' and appointed itself all the time. In fact, this rule had become most inappropriate since the late 1970s when we had already created our own freedom of action in spite of martial rule, and when the Party had also fully developed with stable areas in many regions which could allow the safe attendance of Congress delegates.

Furthermore, the present 'Central Committee' has reached the highest point of its illegality and trampled on the Party constitution by manipulating the bogus '10th Plenum.' In violation of Lenin's principle that Party Plenums should be attended by the entire membership of the committee, the '10th Plenum' merely convened an improvised quorum. At best, it was only 50 percent of the active

Central Committee members and at worst, it gathered even less than 20 percent of all its members elected by the 9th Plenum. Therefore, it is our responsibility to work for the setting up of a Party center that is truly legitimate and duly elected by the Party membership through the Second Party Congress.

We are invoking autonomy from the bureaucratic centralism of the leadership under Armando Liwanag. We are for democratic centralism, not hierarchical rule. Through the rule of Party officials in graded ranks, the present 'Central Committee' decides upon every important matter and reduces all the lower Party organs to mere implementors, allowing only an iota of Party democracy, if any at all.

As a result, the present leadership under Armando Liwanag is divorced from the mass members and from the practical struggle below. Having no close or dynamic interaction with the membership, it has no firm grasp of the flow of Party activities. Not to mention Armando Liwanag's directing the revolution from abroad, while relying on paper information.

This leadership has inculcated the Stalinist style and methods of leadership: bureaucratic in ruling the organization and intolerant of opposing views.

Following the steps of Stalin, the leadership under Armando Liwanag has committed a grave historical distortion of democratic centralism. Ever since, in practice and in theory, democratic centralism has been twisted to mean simply the subordination of the lower organs to the 'Central Committee,' the subordination of the individual to the organization. In short, the absence of democracy and the dominance of a few at the Party Center.

Moreover, Armando Liwanag's leadership has practically upheld Stalin's ruthless and anti-democratic method in handling opposing views such as:

a.) The use of 'surgical action,' ranging from organizational sanctions and arrests to physical elimination, instead of resolving issues through ideological struggle.

b.) The categorization of the inner Party struggle as that between 'revolution and counterrevolution' and the consequent branding of opposition Party cadres as 'enemies of the people,' 'enemy agents,' 'agents of imperialism,' and 'counter-revolutionaries' to justify their incarceration, exile, or execution.

c.) The use of demagoguery and intrigues to discredit and isolate Party opposition cadres from the membership.

As a result, Stalin's opponents hid their views out of terror. Party cadres who supported and implemented his purges turned out to be fanatics and gangs of blind followers.

These repressive methods have been adopted by the illegal center of Armando Liwanag.

In complete disregard of processes clearly stipulated in the Party Constitution, the 'center of leadership' under Armando Liwanag and their followers suppressed intra-Party debates, banned or burned opposition papers, and arbitrarily meted to all oppositionists 'surgical action' or organizational sanctions. Since late last year, Armando Liwanag disenfranchised whole party units and even chapter organizations of the National Democratic Front abroad, while the Liwanag faction in the KTKS placed under 'preventive suspension' a number of leading Party Committees and cadres in the country without due process. Like Stalin, Armando Liwanag publicly hurled baseless accusations against opposition Party cadres calling them 'renegades,' 'enemy agents,' and 'counter-revolutionaries' to smear their credibility in the Party and pave the way for more drastic measures.

By so doing, Armando Liwanag and his faction of followers have monopolized the Party Center by eliminating the oppositionists from the Central Committee. This faction has arrogantly claimed its monopoly of the correct line, correct ideas, and correct policies. They have utterly disregarded collective leadership and constitutional processes in the name of 'defending the correct line' and have imposed themselves above the Party and its Constitution. Since the onset of the ideological debate, all piercing criticisms on Armando Liwanag and his illegal Party Center had been vehemently declared as 'anti-Party' and 'counter-revolutionary,' as if Armando Liwanag is the Party and the Party is Armando Liwanag. What we have now is a reign of absolutism in a supposedly proletarian Party.

What the present center wants is a party organization that is feudal, monolithic, and slavish; a party that worships Armando Liwanag as the all-knowing and all-powerful 'ideological guardian'; a party that distorts unity of action by imposing centralism from the top which commands uniformed thinking and blind discipline.

We strongly oppose and firmly resolve to rectify this. We want a Party whose unity of action emanates from the prior completion of the democratic requirements, from the dynamic participation of Party cadres and lower Party Committees in the formulation of major policies. A Party that practices democracy and adheres to its constitutional processes. A Party that upholds collective leadership and the collective wisdom of Party committees.

We stand for active ideological struggle. We do not want a phlegmatic Party of blind, deaf, and dumb followers. We want a militant Party of dynamic cadres and Party Committees.

We are not for anarchy nor for liberalism nor for a 'free market of ideas' within the Party. However, we are not for Armando Liwanag who claims to have

a monopoly of truth and the correct interpretation of Marxism-Leninism, and who is regarded by his followers as the 'ideological guardian' of the Party.

Our Autonomy — A Rejection of Armando Liwanag's Idealist and Metaphysical Ideological Leadership

We are rejecting Armando Liwanag's ideological leadership which is imbued with idealism and metaphysics, and his dogmatic application of theories which goes against the very essence of Marxism-Leninism.

We seriously question Armando Liwanag's capacity to lead and we reject the metaphysics of his ideological leadership.

Metaphysics, in affirming that the Protracted People's War strategy and tactics are unchanging dogmas, provides that they must be accepted with blind faith. Neither are we allowed to entertain any other strategy nor modify the strategic line to conform to the particularities of Philippine conditions. Even if the basic elements of the Chinese Protracted People's War have been proven to be unattainable in the local context. Even if new significant developments and particularities have already emerged in our country.

Metaphysics, in attempting to mechanically duplicate the EDSA uprising without concrete analysis of the time, nature, and place of the struggle, as shown by Liwanag's directive "Lead the Masses, Launch the Offensives."

Idealism, in forcing concrete realities to conform to his preconceived framework and conclusions, as manifested in his one-decade summing-up in "Reaffirm..."

Idealism, in acting like a 'theoretical systematizer' or 'ideological guardian,' defining patterns of advancing the revolution and disregarding the primacy of practice, objective development, and dynamism of class struggle. This is clearly confirmed in Liwanag's concept of accumulating 25,000 rifles as critical mass, as the basis (however unfounded and mechanical) to effect the strategic stalemate.

Armando Liwanag's "Reaffirm..." violates dialectical historical materialism in totally denying our positive experiences.

"Reaffirm..." unduly emphasizes the "unprecedented loss," blaming these to "insurrectionism cum premature regularization," while covering up the "unprecedented advances." We know for a fact that our battalions and companies were borne out by our attainment of a new and more advanced level of people's war and had succeeded in weakening the enemy through countless tactical offensives and in defending our guerilla bases.

"Reaffirm..." conveniently forgets that there is always fluidity in guerilla warfare especially in the strategic defensive. That there shall be war losses, which

cannot be avoided, is precisely because of the current balance of forces, where the enemy has the absolute superiority and our forces are still weak.

"Reaffirm..." one-sidedly views internal 'errors,' totally denying the interrelation of all factors on both sides, ours and that of the enemy forces. Armando Liwanag's pessimistic view is not helped by the fact that the center had not come up with a national plan to counter "Gradcon" and to recover lost areas. He dismisses "Gradcon" as a mere repetition of past enemy tactics, arrogantly claiming that the Party had already successfully overcome this in the past.

Armando Liwanag's "Reaffirm..." violates dialectical materialism in assuring us of a smooth upward development of the revolutionary forces in a "solid, all-rounded, and sustained" way after the "rectification movement."

Whereas Mao Zedong spoke of unevenness in the political and economic development such that the process of revolutionary struggle always confronts the phenomenon of "rising here, and subsiding there," Lenin, for his part, spoke of "flows and ebbs" of the revolution until the eve of final victory.

"Reaffirm..." is nothing but the worst manifestation of the idealism and metaphysics of Armando Liwanag's leadership. In gross violation of the Marxist theory of knowledge, of testing the correctness of theory through practice, our ten years of experience was instead judged based on the dogmatization of the Chinese Protracted People's War. Worse still, "Reaffirm..." which is a mere hypothesis, is venerated as the "higher level of synthesis."

Armando Liwanag's brand of ideological leadership does not uphold the living practice of Marxism-Leninism. It can never advance the interest and aspirations of the masses nor lead the revolution to victory.

Our Autonomy — A Rejection of Armando Liwanag's Political Leadership

Armando Liwanag's political leadership is characterized by his dogmatic interpretation and application of the Chinese revolutionary strategy to the Philippine revolution.

"Reaffirm..." is a mere reassertion and dogmatization of the old Protracted People's War strategy of the Chinese model, without the benefit of a thorough summing-up of our 24-year experience.

This fixation on the Chinese Protracted People's War strategy has emasculated and tied up our strategic stage and its substages.

Armando Liwanag, through his writings, failed to recognize the more essential particularities of the Philippine situation that are so utterly different from the Chinese experience, namely:

1.) The narrow terrain of the Philippine countrysides, which is made even narrower by the country's archipelagic character, coupled by the fact that the Armed Forces of the Philippines is a modern armed force capable of long range mobility and air superiority, are concrete factors which limit our capability to build and sustain armed independent regimes in revolutionary base areas. These compel us to use guerrilla warfare as the main form of warfare for the longer span of our revolutionary struggle. This situation can only emphasize the need to maximize all the other forms and arenas of struggle to complement the people's armed resistance in the countrysides. Our two decades of armed struggle only proved the unattainability of armed independent regimes in our countrysides and the fluidity of guerrilla bases and fronts, the non-viability of regular mobile warfare in most regions, and the inestimable significance and potency of the political mass movements and uprising.

Armando Liwanag's simplistic reaffirmation of the Chinese Protracted People's War model could only mean that our revolutionary struggle would advance 'wave upon wave' from revolutionary red bases in the countrysides and mainly through the conduct of regular mobile warfare. This also necessarily asserts the principality of armed struggle in the countrysides and relegates to a very secondary role all the other forms of struggle regardless of the prevailing political situation.

2.) The leadership under Armando Liwanag's guidance confused revolutionary strategy and tactics for military strategy and tactics. The formulation of the urgent tactics in a given period was primarily determined by the prevailing military balance of forces and the corresponding requirements of that substage, rather than the concrete political situation and the general temper of the masses. So much so that we failed to maximize certain nodal points for the general advance of the revolution such as that in 1978 and in 1983-85.

This is so because of the Armando Liwanag leadership's persistence in the Chinese strategy of a Protracted People's War. The Chinese Revolution advanced under conditions of incessant wars among warlords and because of the outbreak of the anti-Japanese war in 1935 which permitted the building of a large and regular Red Army and revolutionary red bases in the wide countrysides. The Chinese Revolution necessarily took the form of a national war for liberation and military war strategy was decisive for attaining victory for the revolution.

3.) Up to now, the Armando Liwanag leadership has not conducted a deeper and more open study on the current changes in the Philippine countrysides, which greatly differ from the Chinese countrysides, in relation to the need to make adjustments in strategy and tactics.

The population in the interior and frontier part of our countrysides are continuously waning due to the low productivity and marginalization of upland

farms. There is a mere difference of 6M between our urban (28M) and countryside population (34M), with the bulk of the population being found in the urban and town centers and in the rural plains.

In many regions, there are significant increases in the number of farm workers coming from the peasantry. More and more peasants are leaving the less productive uplands and are concentrating in the plantations in the plains and around the town centers. There are also indications of changes in the forms of exploitation through high interest rates, underpricing of crops, and wage slavery, in spite of the prevalent semi-feudal and semi-colonial character of the over-all economy. The extent of these changes has to be constantly monitored and studied, so that adoption of new forms of organization and struggle in the rural mass movement may be had if need be.

Should not these particularities be a basis for giving emphasis on legal political struggle *vis-a-vis* guerilla warfare and guerilla base building? That in the conduct of revolutionary struggle, guerilla warfare and legal political struggles should be part of the overall strategy, stressing one or the other at different time periods, depending on the prevalent political situation?

4.) Different from that of the Chinese situation, the Philippines has a long tradition of bourgeois elections and bourgeois parliamentarism since the Commonwealth period. Due to this, bourgeois reformism through elections has been deeply ingrained in our people's consciousness. The people's enthusiasm in the 1978, 1984, and 1986 elections to express their anti-dictatorship sentiments, only proved that they still consider bourgeois elections as a viable means of change.

We need to consider parliamentary struggle as a major political arena, complementary to armed struggle and revolutionary mass movement, with the ultimate aim of rendering bourgeois reformism politically obsolete and leading the people towards the violent overthrow of reactionary rule.

However, the Armando Liwanag leadership has continuously expressed doubts on the wisdom of taking advantage and participating in the parliamentary struggle. It has always been considered as bourgeois reformism and its significance in the revolution was downgraded. This led to our historical default from the 1978, 1984, and 1986 elections and eventually from the political uprising at EDSA. This stigma of 'reformism' continued to haunt us even in our conduct in the post-EDSA elections.

5.) Has the center under Armando Liwanag's leadership seriously considered that the accumulation of revolutionary strength and the weakening of the enemy's economic and political rule can be achieved both in the countryside and in the cities?

In the past, the potentials of the urban political struggles, with their own dynamism, had been largely underrated and hindered. By dogmatically applying

the strategic line of "encircling the cities from the countryside," urban political struggles were considered as merely secondary and supplementary to the armed struggle in the countryside. As a result, the Party center had missed the favorable situations and opportunities in the cities time and again, such as that in early 1986.

6.) The EDSA uprising of 1986 proved that the Filipino people are capable of mustering revolutionary strength through the urban mass movement and concentrating it into a political uprising against the ruling system. The phenomenon of the EDSA uprising practically enriched the people's political arsenal with a new effective weapon which the people could again wield under conditions of intense crisis and social polarization or under conditions of a revolutionary crisis.

Political uprising has thus emerged as a complementary weapon in coordination and combination with guerilla warfare in the countryside.

However, due to our past fixation with the Chinese Protracted People's War strategy, we never considered the possibility and viability of political uprising within the strategic defensive. This is the very reason why we lost our leadership in the final battle of the anti-dictatorship struggle after more than one decade of active and incessant resistance.

We believe that the center should have a correct appraisal of the political situation at all times and define the appropriate and timely calls and the corresponding forms of struggle. Instead, the center had lagged behind the significant political events in many instances. The center has failed to grasp the nature and significance of emerging political developments and processes and their potentialities for the general advance of the revolution. It has further persisted in a mechanical assertion of the old forms of struggle according to the Protracted People's War model.

Lenin has this to say about the question of forms of struggle:

Marxism [does] not bind the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It recognizes the most varied forms of struggle...

Mass struggle...continually gives rise to new and varied methods of defense and attack. Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle possible and in existence at the given moment only...

Marxism demands an absolutely historical examination of the question of forms of struggle...

At different stages of economic evolution...different forms of struggle come to the fore and become the principal forms of struggle; and in connection with this, the secondary auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in their turn. (V. I. Lenin, "Guerilla Warfare," Vol. II)

Our Autonomy — A Rejection of Armando Liwanag's Theory of Anti-Modern Revisionism

We are invoking autonomy against Armando Liwanag's dogmatic theory of continuous intensified class struggle (anti-modern revisionism). Armando Liwanag authoritatively points to modern revisionism as the reason for the downfall of communist parties in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe and the USSR.

On our part, we see the need to deepen the study of Marxism-Leninism and review Stalin's errors. We are beginning to see beyond the dogmatic, mechanical, and simplistic way with which Armando Liwanag explained the demise of communist parties in Eastern Europe and the USSR.

We see the need for an in-depth study of the complex developments and actual situations prevailing in Eastern Europe and the USSR before and after the tragic events.

We have to review Stalin and his emphasis on political voluntarism as opposed to historical materialism; his stress on the role of Party and State, using its power and 'intensified class struggle' in order to force an abrupt change in the economy; his disregard for the "imminent laws of economic development" and the objective development of productive forces (thus leading to the Great Purges in Soviet Union and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China); Stalin's vulgaristic presentation of the three stages of communism; and Stalin's role in forming a 'new class' of political bureaucracy.

We also criticize Armando Liwanag's dogmatic and shortsighted view which led the Party to a long period of self-imposed limitation in the conduct of international relations under the influence of a pro-China and anti-Soviet stand.

As a result, the Party was denied valuable political and technical support from the then socialist bloc which other liberation movements had enjoyed.

The Party failed to access the wealth of experience and theorizing by the international communist and national liberation movements.

The Party likewise failed to seriously consider the trends in the international situation as factors in the analysis of the national situation and determination of our tasks.

Our Demands and Calls

1.) We demand and call for the summing up of the 24 years of revolutionary experience. A summing up that is comprehensive and thoroughgoing. A summing up that, unlike the "Reaffirm....," involves the active participation of the regional committees and threshes out the real problems. A summing up that should become the basis of formulating strategy and tactics which are more accurately adapted to the Philippine situation.

2.) We demand and call for the practice of the correct (Leninist) concept of democratic centralism as opposed to the feudalistic and absolutist leadership of Armando Liwanag.

We demand the holding of the Second National Congress of the Party. We call upon the mass membership to assert their democratic will through the Second Party Congress. We reiterate the conditions for the holding of this Congress, which were earlier enumerated.

We demand the practice of the system of election, recall, and accountability.

We demand the institution of concrete measures in order to enliven internal democracy within the Party; the promotion of Party debates in Party committees; the transformation of the Party's theoretical journal as a venue for active ideological struggle; and the dissemination of the necessary information to Party members to enable them to participate in formulating important decisions.

3.) We call on the mass membership to ensure and promote a living and accurate practice of Marxism-Leninism as opposed to the vulgaristic presentations of Armando Liwanag.

4.) We demand a review of our international relations with our anti-imperialist and Marxist-Leninist comrades abroad so as to expand our international linkages with all socialist and progressive forces.

Onwards with the Revolutionary Struggle

We shall hold on to autonomy until the Second National Congress. As we continue the struggle against the feudalistic and absolutist rule of a few within the Party, we shall pursue the revolutionary tasks vigorously.

If ignored -- as is being done by the illegal center-- we are open to, and are prepared for, the reestablishment of a new party. A new party that upholds Marxism-Leninism, not as dogma, but as a guide to action. A new party with a new set of strategies and tactics. A new party that shall lead our people towards the revolutionary seizure of state power (smashing the bureaucratic-military machinery through armed means). A new party that shall struggle for the establishment of a national democratic society and a socialist transformation. A new party free of Stalinist imprints. A new party free of the feudalistic and absolutist style of leadership of Armando Liwanag and his 'Central Committee.'

Our people have long suffered from the shackles of underdevelopment and imperialist domination. The Armando Liwanag leadership failed to fulfill our people's aspirations after more than two decades of struggle. We take this path of reforming the Party, with the people's interests at heart,...that victory and freedom be finally theirs.