

# African Inter-Communalism

Black Autonomy Federation

December 2, 2012

The Black Autonomy Federations / Anarchist ideals lead logically to internationalism or more precisely trans-nationalism, which means beyond the nation-state. Anarchists foresee a time when the nation-state will cease to have any positive value at all for most people, and will in fact be junked. But that time is not yet here, and until it is, we must organize for inter-communalism, or world relations between African people and their revolutionary social movements, instead of their governments and heads of state.

The Black Panther Party first put forward the concept of inter-communalism in the 1960s and, although slightly different, is very much a libertarian concept at its core. (This used to be called “Pan Africanism,” but included mainly “revolutionary” governments and colonial or independence movements as allies). Because of the legacy of slavery and continuing economic neocolonialism, which has dispersed Blacks to every continent, it is feasible to speak of Black international revolutionary solidarity.

Here is how African / Black Anarchists see the world: the world is presently organized into competing nation-states, which through the Capitalist Western nations have been responsible for most of the world’s famine, imperialism and exploitation of the non-white peoples of the earth. In fact, all states are instruments of oppression. Even though there are governments that claim to be “workers states,” “Socialist countries” or so-called “Revolutionary governments,” in essence they all have the same function: Dictatorship and oppression of the many over the few. The bankruptcy of the state is further proven when one looks at the millions of dead over two world wars, sparked by European Imperialism, (1914–1918 and 1939–1945), and hundreds of “brush wars” incited by the superpowers of the West or Russia in the 1950s and continuing to this day. This includes “workers’ states” like China-Russia, Vietnam-China, Vietnam-Cambodia. Somalia- Ethiopia, Russia-Czechoslovakia and others who have gone to war over border disputes, political intrigue, invasion or other hostile action. As long as there are nation-states, there will be war, tension and national enmity.

In fact, the sad part about the decolonization of Africa in the 1960s was that the countries were organized into the Euro-centric ideal of the nation-state, instead of some sort of other formation more applicable to the continent, such as a continental federation. This, of course, was a reflection of the fact that although the Africans were obtaining “flag independence” and all the trappings of the sovereign European state, they instead were not obtaining freedom. The Europeans still

controlled the economies of the African continent, and the nationalist leaders who came to the fore were for the most part the most pliable and conservative possible.

Entire countries of Africa were like a dog with a leash around its neck; although the Europeans could no longer rule the continent directly thorough colonial rule, it now did so through puppets it controlled and defended, like Mobutu in the Congo, Mengistu Haile Mariam, leader of the Derg in Ethiopia, and Kenyatta in Kenya. Many of these men were dictators of the worst sort and their regimes existed strictly because of European finance capital. In addition, there were white settler communities in the Portuguese colonies, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, who oppressed the African peoples even worse than the old colonial system. This is why the national liberation movements made their appearances in the 1960s and 70s.

Anarchists support national liberation movements to the degree that they struggle against a colonial or imperialist power; but also note that in almost every instance where such liberation front's have assumed state power, they have become "State Communist" parties and new dictators over the masses of the people. These include some who had engaged in the mass epic struggles, but also include many based on the most obvious military dictatorship from the start.

They are not progressive and they tolerate no dissent. For instance, no sooner had the MPLA government been in power in Angola, than it began to arrest all its left-wing ideological opponents (Maoists, Trotskyites, Anarchists, and others) and began to forcibly quell strikes by workers for higher pay and better working conditions, calling such job actions "blackmail" and "economic sabotage." And with the Nito Alves affair and his alleged coup attempt, (Alves was a hero of the revolution and a popular military leader), theirs was the first party purge of opponents in the new government. Something similar to this also took place when the Sandinista National Liberation movement took over in Nicaragua in the 1980s. None of this should seem strange or uncharacteristic to Anarchists, when we consider that the Bolshevik party did the same thing when it consolidated state power during the Russian Revolution (1917–1921).

Countries such as Benin, Ethiopia, the People's Republic of the Congo and other "revolutionary" governments in Africa, are not in power as the result of a popular social revolution, but rather because of a military coup or being installed by one of the major world powers. Further; many of the national liberation movements were not independent social movements, but were rather under the influence or control of Russia or China as part of their geopolitical struggle against Western imperialism and each other. This is not to say that revolutionary movements should not accept weapons and other material support from an outside power, as long as they remain independent politically and determine their own policies, without such aid being conditional on the political dictates and the "party line" of another country.

But even though we may differ with them politically and tactically in many areas, and even with all their flaws after assuming State power, the revolutionary liberation fighters are our comrades and allies in common struggle against the common enemy — the U.S. imperialist ruling class, while the fight goes on. Their struggle releases the death grip of U.S. and western imperialism or as Anarchists more precisely call it Capitalist world power), and while the fight goes on we are bound together in comradeship and solidarity.

Yet we still cannot overlook atrocities committed by movements like the Khmer Rouge, a Marxist-Leninist guerrilla movement in Cambodia, which just massacred millions of people to carry out rigid Stalinist political policies and to consolidate the country. We must lay this butchery and other crimes committed by State Communism bare for all to see. We do not favor this kind of revolution, which is just sheer power seeking and terrorism against the people. This is

why Anarchism has always disagreed with how the Bolsheviks seized power in Soviet Russia; and Stalin's butchery of the Russian people seems to have set a model for the State Communist movements to follow over the years.

The national liberation front's made one basic mistake of many nationalist movements of oppressed peoples, and that is to organize in a fashion that class distinctions are obliterated. This happened in America, where in the fight for democratic rights, the civil rights movement included Black middle class preachers, teachers and others, and every Black person was a "brother" or "sister," as long as they were Black. But this simplistic analysis and social reality did not hold for long, because when the Civil rights phase of the American Black struggle had spent itself, "class distinctions" and class struggle came to the fore. They have been getting sharper ever since. Although there are Black mayors and other bureaucrats, and now Obama; they merely serve as pacification agents of the State, "Black faces in high places."

This neocolonial system is similar to the type of neocolonialism which took place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> World, after many countries had obtained their "independence" in the 1960s. Europe still maintained control through puppet politicians and a command of the petty bourgeois class, who were willing to barter the freedom of the people for personal gains. These people merely preside over the misery of the masses. They are not a serious concession to our struggle. They are put in office to co-opt the struggle and deaden the people to their pain.

So while Black revolutionaries generally favor the ideas of African inter-communalism, they want principled revolutionary unity. Of course, the greatest service we can render the peoples of the so-called "Third World" of Africa, Asia and Latin America, is to make a revolution here in North America — in the belly of the beast. For in freeing ourselves, we get the U.S. imperialist ruling class off both our backs.

We wish to build an international Black organization against Capitalism, racism, colonialism, imperialism, and military dictatorship, which could more effectively fight the Capitalist powers and create a world federation of Black peoples. We want to unite a Brother or Sister in North America with the Black peoples of Australia and Oceania, Africa, the Caribbean and South America, Asia, the Middle East, and those millions of our people Living in Britain and other Western European countries. We want to unite tribes, nations and Black cultures into an international body of grassroots and struggling forces.

All over the world, Black people are being oppressed by their national governments. Some are colonial subjects in European countries, and one or another of the African States exploits some. Only a Social revolution will lead to Black unity and freedom. However this will only be possible when there exists an international Black revolutionary organization and social movement. An organization which can coordinate the resistance struggles everywhere of African peoples; actually a network of such organizations, resistance movements, which are spread all over the world based on a consensus for revolutionary struggle. This concept accepts any level of violence that will be necessary to enforce the demands of the people and workers.

In those countries where an open Black revolutionary movement would be subjected to fierce repression by the state, such as in South Africa and in some Black puppet dictatorships in other parts of Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia, it would be necessary to wage an underground resistance struggle. Further, the state has grown more and more violent, with widespread torture and executions, prisons and maximum police controls, spying and deprivation of democratic rights, police brutality and murder. Clearly such governments-and all governments-must be overthrown. They will not fall due to internal economic or political problems, but must be defeated and dismantled.

So we call for an international resistance movement to overthrow governments and the system of Capitalist world government.

But even in the Western imperialist countries, we must recognize the legitimacy of revolutionary violence. When such forms of revolutionary action are required, however, a clear difference should be seen among revolutionaries between simple terrorism without popular support and coherent political program and guerrilla warfare arising out of the collectively felt frustrations of the common people and workers. The use of military methods would be necessary in a case where the violence of the state made it imperative for Black revolutionaries to defend themselves by taking the armed offensive against the state and the ruling class, and to expropriate the wealth of the Capitalist class during the Social revolution.

The Black liberation movement needs an organization capable of international coordination of the Black liberation struggle, a world federation of African peoples. Although this would not just be an Anarchist movement, a federation like this would be made effective than any group of states, whether the United Nation or the Organization of African Unity, in freeing the Black masses. It would involve the masses of people themselves, not just national leaders or nation states.

The military dictators and government bureaucrats have only proven that they know how to spend money on pomp and circumstance, but not how to dismantle the last vestiges of colonialism in South Africa or defeat Western neocolonialist intrigues. Africa is still the poorest of the World's continents, while materially the richest. The contrast is clear: Millions of people are starving in much of Equatorial Africa, but the tribal chiefs, politicians and military dictators, are driving around in Mercedes and living in luxury villas, while they do the bidding of Western European and American bankers through the International Monetary Fund. They are part of the problem, not part of the solution!

Our ideas about the importance of inter-communalism are based on a firm belief that only a federation of free Autonomous peoples will bring true Black power to the masses "Power to the people" does not mean a government or political party to rule in their name, but social and political power in the hands of the people themselves. The only real "people's power" is the power to make their decisions on matters of importance, and to merely elect someone else to do so, or to have a dictatorship forced down their throats is not freedom. True freedom is to have full self-determination about one's social economic and cultural development. The future is Anarchist Communism and Autonomy, not the nation-state, bloody dictators, Capitalism or wage slavery.

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