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# Black Autonomy Is Not Separatist

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin

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However, we also have differences with the Black (and other race) nationalists, although we may share many basic ideas with them on cultural autonomy. We also believe in and treasure many of the traditions and history of our peoples, but believe it must be 'demystified' and made into a culture of resistance, rather than personality cults or escapism from the reality of fighting racism. Further, we categorically do not believe in any "race nationalism", which demonizes white people and advocates some sort of biological determinism. We are not xenophobic; so do not entertain any race mythology about European peoples as either a superior species or as devils. And although we recognize the necessity of autonomous struggles in this period, we can work with white workers and poor people around specific campaigns.

Our major point of our differences is that we are not seeking a build a Black nation-state.

In fact, we believe the same class politics of "haves and have-nots" will show itself within any type of Black nation-state, whether it's an Islamic, secular New African, or African Socialist state, and that

this will produce an extreme class differential and economic/political injustice among those oppressed peoples of color. We can look at a succession of dictatorships and capitalist regimes in Africa to let us know this. We believe that a bourgeois class and political dictatorship is inevitable and that a people's revolution will breakout under such a Black Nationalist government.

Look at what is happening today under the former Apartheid government, now under Black rule, united with the White capitalist class. The Black bourgeoisie and business class have been elevated as the nominal ruling class, while the same economic forces are exploiting and oppressing the African working class and poor. Millions are homeless, unemployed, exploited at law, wage, labor, jobs, and are landless. Capitalist Black Power has not freed Black people even after apartheid has been defeated. Can the capitalist imperialist financial institutions any less control a Black nation-state in America? Sovereignty is not an option in such a world dominated by this system. A new Black nation-state on a North American land territory does not mean freedom any more than do the ones in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

We also believe that under the capitalist system that now exists, most manifestations of Black nationalism have never been a truly revolutionary doctrine, but rather such movements have asserted themselves most forcefully as a defensive doctrine for the protection of the Black middle class. It is not even a movement to fight white racism, but rather an interest group politics which can battle for equal political power for Black business people or the professional class under this system, not to remove it.

So, a Black nation-state is not the answer to our problems as an oppressed people, in fact it leads us back to slavery, just as it has not led to freedom for any of the world's people. Just flag independence. It replaces the white master for the Black master. We are not immune from the laws of social change; the state is an oppressive institution by its very nature.

In addition, those who argue for a Black state almost never tell how it will be obtained and many of their arguments that have been presented are intentionally vague and fanciful. Who really believes that America will just grant an Islamic state to the Nation of Islam, or give up five Southern states to the Republic of New Africa just because a small faction calling itself a “government in exile” exists and advocates for it? Who can even prove most people want it in the first place? Why, it would require years of a bloody struggle and a major organizing drive. And what are we to do until that great day comes (?); the Black Nationalist groups never tell us, but we can presume we are to blindly follow behind their leaders and pay our dues to their organizations. This is opportunism and treachery, leading us down a blind alley.

In addition, the only revolutionary nationalist group to even talk about conducting a plebiscite to find out what form African people in America believed our freedom should take was the Black Panther Party. They recognized that it was up to the masses to make such decisions, not vanguard organizations in their place. Like the Panthers, we believe that even before racism or capitalism are defeated, we can begin now to wage a protracted struggle against capitalism and its agents and that the only nation-state we should be concerned with is the corrupt American state still oppressing us and most of the peoples of the world.

In common with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the leading militant organization of the earlier civil rights period, Anarchists believe that the role of the organizer is not to lead people, but to empower them and let them take over their own local struggles. We also believe that such communities are virtual colonies or semi-colonies, which are under the military and political control of the state. But we do not believe that a national liberation movement alone can free us and that the real task is to dismantle capitalism itself. Our liberation struggle is part of a broader struggle for total social change.

Many middle class Black nationalist groups are tied to the Democratic Party or Ralph Nader's Green Party and do not offer any real radical alternative. Firstly, we do not believe in conventional or electoral politics in any form and reject coalitions led by liberals and social democrats. Finally, like the Panthers of the 1960s and contrary to today's Nation of Islam and the Afro-centric movement, we believe in a class analysis and understand that there were historical, socio-economic factors that accounted for both slavery and racism, not because whites are "ice people", "devils" or other such nonsense. The main motive was money, the enrichment of Europe and the "New World". This capitalist system produces racism/white supremacy. It is this capitalist system that must be destroyed to get rid of it.

Therefore, this is who we are, autonomous peoples of color, fighters for Anarchism, self-determination and freedom for our people and all oppressed people. The Panthers proved how dangerous Black revolutionaries can be to this system, now we will finish the job of putting capitalism in its grave. No freedom without a fight!