

The Anarchist Library  
Anti-Copyright



# How We See The World In This Period

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin

2013

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin  
How We See The World In This Period  
2013

Retrieved on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2020 from  
blackautonomyfederation.blogspot.com  
*This is an excerpt from the book Anarchism and the Black  
Revolution (2013).*

**theanarchistlibrary.org**

Here is how Anarchists of color (specifically we within Black Autonomy) see the world: It is a situation presently organized into competing nation-states, in military and political alliances. Through international institutions like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization, the Capitalist Western nations have been responsible for most of the world's famine, imperialism and exploitation of the economic resources of non-white peoples of the earth. But in fact, Anarchists hold all nation-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 as a fascist or capitalist regime: dictatorship and oppression of the many by the few.

The bankruptcy of the state is further proven when one looks at the millions of dead after 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 by Russia in the 1950s and continuing to this day. These include wars between not

only the West, but between “workers’ states” like China-Russia, Vietnam-China, Vietnam-Cambodia. Somalia-Ethiopia, Russia-Czechoslovakia and others over the last 40 years, 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. Shared political ideology, racial characteristics, or similar cultures will not prevent it.

In fact, the sad part about the decolonization of Africa in the 1960s was that the countries were eventually organized into the Euro-centric ideal of the nation-state, instead of some other formation more applicable to the continent, such as a continent-wide free 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 in fact were not obtaining freedom. The Europeans still controlled the economies of the African continent and nationalist leaders who came to the fore were, for the most part, as pliable and conservative as possible.

Oh, there was an occasional radical like Patrice Lumumba of the Congo, who demanded full rights and freedom for African peoples, but he was quickly (and brutally) silenced in a CIA-Belgian colonial plot. The 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 power, it now did so through puppets it controlled and defended, like Mobutu in the Congo, Selassie in Ethiopia and Kenyatta in Kenya. Many of these men were dictators of the worst sort and their regimes existed strictly because of the support 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 they struggle against a colonial or imperialist power; but also note that in almost every instance where such liberation fronts have

assumed state power, they have become “State Communist” parties or 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. Their governments are not progressive and they tolerate no dissent.

For instance, no sooner had the MPLA (Movement for the Popular Liberation of Angola) government been in power in Angola, than it began to arrest all its left-wing ideological opponents (Maoists, Trotskyites, Anarchists and others) and to forcibly to 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), there 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). It provided the model for all such later regimes.

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 because of a military coup or being installed by one of the major world powers. In addition, one or another of the African States exploits some other country perceived weaker; for instance Sudan, an Arab-controlled country, still has African slaves, which are powerless Blacks from the Southern part of the country. Thus, they have been fighting a civil war for 20 years.

Further; contrary to many of the romantic reports which dominated Western news reports, 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 (the people in arms as opposed to the vanguard organization) are our comrades and allies in common struggle against the common enemy — the U.S. imperialist ruling class. Their struggle releases the death grip of U.S. and Western imperialism (as Anarchists more precisely call it “Capitalist world power”) and while the fight goes on we are bound together in comradeship and solidarity. The movement in Chiapas, Mexico, by the Indigenous people there who found the EZLN, a revolutionary liberation movement, is one that we and many Anarchists support.

Yet, in analyzing national liberation movements, we 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, when it took over in the 1980s. We must lay this butchery and other crimes committed by State Communism bare for all to see, right at the feet of world communism and state socialism. We do not favor this kind of revolution, which is just sheer power seeking and terrorism against the people to install a so-called Left-wing ruling class.

This is why Anarchism has always disagreed with how the Bolsheviks seized power in Soviet Russia. They created a police state and Stalin’s butchery of the Russian people seems to have set a model for the State Communist movements all over the world to follow throughout the years. Now the Soviet state is gone, along

Building an autonomous movement of peoples of color, based on Anarchist principles is different than Pan-Africanism or concepts of La Raza, or even socialist internationalism. It means building a movement that goes beyond skin color, language, or even shared history of a people, to build the strongest movement of international solidarity. Most solidarity movements are built around identification with a particular struggle. But either giving useless statements about race unity, or vague statements of support, or subordinating one's own struggle to that of another is not what autonomy is about. What we need is an international movement based on shared oppression and commitment to a common struggle.

This has to take us past the primacy of narrow nationalism, or regional struggles and back to the idea of revolution as worldwide social change, an international civil war of poor and oppressed peoples against the capitalist system. I am not referring to just development of a socialist state in one country as happened with the old Soviet Union, regional struggles with African anti-colonialism, or the old 1960s concept of Black Power.

The old ideas of political socialism and Pan-Africanism have been lost with nation-statism and Stalin-ism. Even the ideals of joint forms of oppression have been lost so that many believe that only the United States of America has an internal Black population subjected to racist oppression and that forms of oppression based on caste, ethnicity, or other peoples of color are not racism in the same sense. This is a grave mistake and cuts us off from many allies around the world.

with most of the Eastern European governments, but the legacy of authoritarian socialism lives on with their movements in a variety of disguises.

WE believe that the national liberation fronts make one basic mistake of many nationalist movements of oppressed peoples and that is to organize in a fashion where class distinctions are obliterated. This happened in America also, where in the fight for democratic rights, the civil rights movement included Black middle class preachers, teachers and others in the leadership 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.

Poor people are demanding to organize in their own name and class interest, because although the rich Blacks and professional class may have prospered since the 1960s, the poor and oppressed have just sunk deeper into poverty and prisons are being used as a social tool to lock up millions.

Although there are Black mayors and other bureaucrats now holding positions in the government, they have no power to change things for their people, they merely serve as pacification agents of the State, what we call "Black faces in high places." Their symbolic representation is supposed to inspire hope or keep the masses of people believing in the system. They are not even a serious concession to our struggle. They are put in office to co-opt the struggle and deaden the people to their pain.

This American neocolonial system is similar to the type of neo-colonialism that took place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> World in the 1950s-1980s, after many countries had obtained their "independence." Europe still maintained control through puppet politicians, economic domination and a command structure of petty bourgeois agents, who were willing to barter the freedom of their people for personal gain. These people have no real power to improve the lives of the masses;

they merely preside over their misery. In Africa, some of the most corrupt leaders are/were colonial subjects for the European countries and enjoy no local popularity at all; they just inspire fear through military control and passive acceptance by the masses of people.

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 all our backs.

As Anarchists of color, we wish to build an international 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, a commune. We want to unite a brother or sister in North America with the Black peoples of Australia and Oceania/S.W Asia, 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 cultures into an international body of grassroots and struggling forces.

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 neocolonialist Black puppet dictatorships in other parts of Africa,

the Caribbean and even parts of 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, maximum-security prisons and massive 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 governments.

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 West 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 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 in rigged elections, or to have a dictatorship forced down their throats, ain’t it. True freedom is to have full self-determination about one’s social, economic and cultural development. The future is Anarchist Communism, not the nation-state, bloody dictators, Capitalism or wage slavery.

**Building an Autonomous Peoples of Color Movement:**