No Palestinian Ever Called Me Nigger

Support Chris Gatewood

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Chris Gatewood is the outspoken leader of the Durham, North Carolina branch of the National Asociation Advancement of Colored Peoples . He recently made "controversial", though truthful and courageous remarks denouncing the United States government for planning military retaliation for the Pentagon and World Trade Center attacks, and the use of Black males as cannon fodder and mercenaries in any front line attack.

At a September 15th monthly local NAACP meeting, he said that African Americans should not have to fight in any military action, and that a violent U.S. counterattack would be wrong. "Black males can no longer be used as sacrificial lambs at the time of war," he said in his three-page statement.

"Those black males who make it back home alive from war are likely to come home and be discriminated against by the [very] people whose businesses were headquartered in the World Trade Center, racially abused/profiled by an American police officer, killed on the streets in their crime-infested neighborhoods", or harmed by Bush administration policies, he said.

He also said that the U.S. government has oppressed Africans, Middle Easterners, and other people of color worldwide. Because Bush was selected president by a "right-wing Supreme Court", he said, the attacks were *not* "an attack on freedom".

Media reports of the remarks sparked threatening phone calls to the NAACP offices, according to an NAACP officer, Anita Keith-Foust. It also caused NAACP national President, Kweisi Mfume, to denounce the remarks and to apparently silence him from making other such comments in the future, similar to the fashion former Nation of Islam spokesperson Malcolm X was silenced by NOI leader Elijah Muhammad in 1963, when he spoke out about the assassination of President John Kennedy, calling it a case of "chickens coming home to roost"...

What should we make of all this? These comments by Gatewood certainly echoed my own, and I am sure those of many other Black people. We are supposed to, as Malcolm X put it over 35 years ago...bark when the white man says bark, and bite when the white man says bite!" He was referring to our being used as troops all over the world. Now we are supposed to fight and die for a racist corrupt government in yet another imperialist war, when it is the USA which has clearly brought on this attack. We are supposed to fight for a country where we still have limted social, economic and political rights, and where we are still subject to death by any racist cop or citizen, where there is widespread poverty, mass imprisonment of the youth, and massive

unemployment concentrated in the Black community. The obvious question is what the hell are we fighting for? To avenge America? To mourn America? Why, we don't owe this country anything, and what we do owe them, they don't want! They have killed and enslaved generations of our people, down to the present day. They have yet to pay reparations for those crimes they have committed against our people; they refuse to even discuss the matter at the recent World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa.

Our fight is *in America* and *with America* for full human rights and liberation, not in Kabul, Pakistan, Khandahar, islamabad, Algiers, or hundreds of places we know nothing about and have no beef with their people. It is this country which is *our* enemy, and which is depriving us of our human rights. This hypocritical country, which is bleeding us dry and subjecting us to continued oppression and servitude in numerous forms. We ain't got this situation straight yet, and now we are supposed to go galavanting across the globe to fight for this white racist government. Colin Powell may be a dog for Bush, but it don't mean the rest of us have to be!

Chris Gatewood just said something that all of us should be saying. We need an *independent political stance* away from military intervention, and to say *no you cannot just use Black kids for the next Vietnam.* However, shamefully, most of the Left, Liberal, and Black organizations (even so-called "radical", or "nationalist" groups) did not follow the lead of this courageous man, instead they mourned with America.

Well, our time of mourning has to be tempered with the cold understand that we have to look out for *our interest*, not the Pentagon's or Wall Street's. We regret the thousands of deaths of people who died in the process at the WTC, but we know it is Washington's fault this happened. We also know that if this happened in the Middle East by Israel or the US Army, hardly anybody in this country would say anything.

Clearly this country is not the "peace-loving, innocent country" that George W. Bush claims it is. This is the biggest gun runner in the world, and the biggest instigator of wars. This is a government of thieves and enslavers, and they have dominated the peoples of color of the world with military and economic force ever since its creation. We cannot jump like dogs to defend these people.

It is not the people in the Middle East or Africa who call us nigger, and keep us oppressed, it is the white government in America. If anyone on the face of the earth attacks the slavemaster's plantation, I ain't going to be standing out front growling to stop them from setting his house on fire. That his problem, and you reap what you sow. The real terrorists are in the Pentagon, the executive boardrooms on Wall Street, and in the White House, where they have always been. Hell, the United States secret intelligence services (CIA, military intelligence, DEA and others) created the Taliban as a government and Osama Bin Laden as a terrorist, if that is what he is. Do we now want to die and kill others over this cynical reality [?], don't be fooled by right-wing partiotism, which is nothing but American fascism.

So we should support Chris Gatewood, hold him up as an outspoken hero. We need to ask why all of the other Black and progressive organizations have not been as forceful in their comments, and we need to ask why they are not building an anti-war response to this military retaliation planned by Bush.

We need to all start to speak the truth to our people, and not curry favor for jobs or social approval. We need to do things which are considered unpopular in a hysterical climate, but have to be said and done nevertheless. George W. Bush is not our friend, Colin Powell is not our brother. They want to kill us off, either in war, in prison, or with a policeman's gun. We face

genocide from this government, always have. Now we need to get organized to build a movement which can put forth a progressive agenda on how to use military spending, so that money that they want to squander on war can be used for schools, hospitals, and to rebuild the inner cities of this countries which look like bombed out cities already.

Whatever organization you belong to, start to push them to come out against the war and to actively campaign against war in the Middle East or anywhere else. We have got to get our kids to say "hell no, we won't go!" and "no Viet Cong called me a Nigger" just like they did during the Vietnam war of the 1960's.

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