



## BIOGRAPHIES

### **Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin, 1947- A Biographical Sketch by Andrewism (2021)**

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin joined the Panthers in 1967 after being involved with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. In 1969, while on the run for attempting to kill a Ku Klux Klan member, he hijacked a plane and fled to Cuba. But instead of lending support, the Cuban authorities jailed him, then deported him to Czechoslovakia.

He then escaped to East Germany before being captured, smuggled into Berlin, tortured for a week, and brought back to the States to be drugged through his trial and handed two life sentences by an all-white jury in a redneck town.

While in those so-called socialist countries, he became disillusioned with what was clearly a dictatorship, not some “dictatorship of the proletariat.” And while in prison, although involved in prison struggles, he took time to reflect on his life and sought out an alternative method to Black revolution. Around 1973, he began receiving Anarchist literature, became inspired by Peter Kropotkin, and eventually became a Black Anarchist. His case was adopted by the Anarchist Black Cross and a Dutch Anarchist group called Help A Prisoner Oppose Torture Organizing Committee. They coordinated an international campaign petitioning for his release.

Of course, he took issue with middle class hyperindividualism of many white American anarchists at the time, but he still worked with anarchists around the world who continued to support him and write to him while in prison. He began writing *Anarchism and the Black Revolution* and published it in 1979. It remains one of the best and most widely read works on anarchism today. Linked below. His prison writings garnered him a following in Europe, Africa, and among Australian Aborigines. He was finally released nearly 15 years after his sentence, in 1983.

In *Anarchism And The Black Revolution*, Ervin emphasized that Anarchism is “the most democratic, effective, and radical way to obtain our freedom, but that we must be free to design our own movements, whether it is understood or “approved” by North American Anarchists or not. We must fight for our freedom, no one else can free us, but they can help us.” He firmly believed that Black people, and other

