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Anarchism must not be criminalized

Statement from 12 of the 61 people indicted on
RICO charges in Atlanta

Various Authors

November 2023

This statement was written before the Al-aqsa Flood, during which Palestinian fighters broke through the fence around the open-air prison known as the Gaza strip in 29 locations. We condemn Israel in the strongest terms, & support the liberation of the Palestinian people. We know that the same weapons and tactics that have been and continue to be used to colonize Palestine have been and continue to be used to colonize Turtle Island, as we can see in the GILEE Program (Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange) where the IDF (Israeli Defense Force) soldiers share “best practices” with police in Georgia. The proposed Cop City [in Atlanta] will be the military base from which the occupation of Atlanta is furthered, and we oppose their progression of the genocidal project known as the United States.

This RICO indictment is an attempt by the state to not only criminalize dissent, but a specific set of ideas which leads to dissent and offers an alternative framework to the state and

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capitalism. Anarchism, solidarity, mutual aid, and collectivism are specifically named in the indictment to make people afraid of these ideas, when the only people who are actually afraid of these collective ways of organizing are the politicians, cops, and corporations who seek to preserve their absolute power over humanity. If we had ways of living more collectively, satisfied our needs through mutual aid, and had solidarity with each other, people may realize they don't need the state or capitalism, and they may realize that the greatest causes of human suffering and barriers to freedom and security are the state and capitalism. The state wants us to be atomized consumers who cannot survive without selling ourselves to someone wealthier than us, who rely on alienating, impersonal judicial systems and violence from a gang of armed outsiders to resolve our conflicts, who outsource the production of our food to invisibilized, mostly non-white, non-citizen laborers, and who outsource our decisions to a corrupt, unaccountable politician class. The state wants us to be terrified and paralyzed into allowing the continuation of its sordid legacy through the land grab, the plantation, and the prison farm which haunts the Weelaunee forest and all the state's territories to this day. This critical analysis of the state is an important part of anarchism, and it is what the state and corporate media want to scare us away from and criminalize.

Acting autonomously and directly to shape our world is a good thing. Solidarity means seeing our siblings in the human species as people with the same intrinsic value as ourselves. A society which depends on endlessly competing, undercutting, exploiting, dominating, and selling each other out is going to be scrutinized and resisted by anyone who believes in solidarity. Mutual aid means providing for each other and collectively gaining from the construction of mutually beneficial interpersonal/inter-community relationships. A society which depends on depriving us of the ability to meet our needs for food, water, shelter, and healthcare and then selling them back to us

is going to be seen as unjust and worth changing/rejecting by anyone who believes in mutual aid. Fowler's description of collectivism is a bogeyman meant to imply that anarchists intend to force everyone to give up their personal autonomy and sacrifice their needs for the collective, but in fact a core goal of anarchism is to empower people to have more autonomy, and a core goal of the state to force everyone to sacrifice some or all of their autonomy for the continuation of systems which enrich a shocking few and are making the Earth uninhabitable. Do you feel free when you go to work? When you pay taxes? When you pay rent? When you pay for health insurance? When you pay for groceries? If people had more solidarity maybe they wouldn't allow the US to invade and exploit other countries with impunity. Maybe they wouldn't allow the US to imprison millions of people, tear apart families at the border, or let people starve to death while throwing away half of all the food. If people learned about mutual aid maybe they would start to solve these problems themselves, start to mitigate the damage done by the state, and demonstrate that none of it is necessary.

If the state succeeds in prosecuting this case it will do lasting harm to all of us. Just as the RICO law was ostensibly written to take down the mafia and has expanded to taking down anarchists, it will expand to take down any social movement which demands substantive change from the state. The law does not need to find you guilty of any crime, only of "conspiring" with people who are, with "conspiring" now meaning as little as sharing beliefs or goals. If you believe the state is doing something wrong or have a goal of making it stop doing that thing, you could be guilty of conspiracy, even if you never met anyone who committed a crime in furtherance of that belief or goal.

There is no "Defend the Atlanta Forest" or "Stop Cop City" organization, only the goal of defending the Weelaunee forest from destruction and opposition to the construction of a military base for police. People have chosen a myriad of ways

of achieving these goals, but nobody was receiving orders, nobody was initiated into any group, and there was never a singular plan. The fascism of the Georgia RICO statute lies in its enclosure of free social relations into its definition of an enterprise, to include “any unchartered union, association, or group of individuals associated in fact although not a legal entity.” By this logic, a group of friends can be a criminal enterprise — or a group of strangers. “Governmental as well as other entities,” “licit as well as illicit”? Anyone and anything, then, can be demarcated as existing within the Georgia police state’s cage of “the enterprise” — it just depends on what the state wishes to domesticate. Under the Georgia police state, “it shall be unlawful to participate,” “directly or indirectly,” in the fight for life, shoulder to shoulder, hand in hand, with those who share our fight inextricably. We cannot be disentangled, and we won’t be. Mutual aid and solidarity are intrinsic to how our Earth and its inhabitants survive — in spite of systems of permanent suffocation, we all breathe the same air — a conspiracy with the trees. Loving one another is how we live and fight in tandem. We don’t need a centralized “organization,” “entity,” or “enterprise” for our fight, because it belongs to all of us. We are all forest defenders.

The struggle that each of us is taking part in is the struggle against imperialist, white supremacist, cis-normative heteropatriarchy. This struggle may feel chosen, depending on the privileges each of us has. To stand tall in solidarity is to contend with the history of this struggle. The state is attempting to equate any individual’s personal actions and definition of anarchy, collectivism, mutual aid, social solidarity as either domestic terrorism or racketeering. By doing so the state intends to sow division among individuals that all desire to stop cop city for whatever personal reason each of us has. This strategy has been used time and time again by oppressors.

Instead of lying low & keeping our heads down in hopes that the state will, “go easy on us,” we are choosing to stand tall

in our solidarity with each other as well as the idea, lifestyle, & practices of anarchy, & life-supporting actions of mutual aid.

Mutual aid is what we do & solidarity is how we relate.

Fear is the mind-killer.

“Solidarity is our shield, anarchy is our sword.”

Solidarity From so-called Atlanta to Palestine