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Autonomy through Abolition of State Terror and its Matrices of Oppression

Anarchipelago Kollektive

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Las Filipinas — the imperialist project that began in 1521 with Spanish colonization still exists to this day: a *de facto* colorist caste system, the rule of billionaire *hacendero* oligarchs. More than five hundred years of plunder and conquest. Generational trauma. Grueling poverty. Violence. Violent repression. The legacy of empire. The Philippines is a neo-colony of the United States and continues to be exploited for military purposes, natural resources, and a market for U.S. transnational corporations.

The drug war in the Philippines is situated within this context.

For the United States, the Philippines has never been more than a strategic pawn in a global chess game. Duterte calls former President Obama the “son of a whore”, invoking the ongoing police terror in the United States to deflect criticism from himself. But the applause for his anti-imperialist statements cannot drown out his hypocrisy. As if a hierarchy of colorism and anti-Blackness do not exist in the Philippines. As if the vigilantism that he openly encourages is not its own form of terror against the Filipino people.

What is currently taking place in the Philippines cannot be decontextualized from hundreds of years of Spanish and U.S. imperialism. The fate of the Philippines is also interdependent on the liberation of all colonized peoples, especially Black and indigenous peoples in the U.S. and other western states. Imperialism is an extension of western empire, an appendage reaching outwards from the belly of the beast.

As autonomist leftists, we are working to deconstruct the matrices of violence that crush all people living in the margins. We draw parallels between the imprisonment and modern enslavement of Black and Brown peoples in the U.S. with the present reign of terror in the Philippines that has claimed more than thirteen thousand lives in the past year alone. Both states have used the veil of a “war on drugs” to legitimize the imprisonment and assassination of marginalized peoples. We are abolitionists in our rejection of the carceral state and its militarized prison industrial complex — both in the U.S. and the Philippines. There is no justice to be found in cages or in summary execution.

We honor the legacy of and the ongoing struggles for self-determination led by Black and indigenous peoples, the internationalist work of the Third World Liberation Front, and the almost 600 year-long fight of the Philippine archipelago against each wave of colonizers. We seek to identify and solidify the connections between each of these resistance movements.

We strive to dismantle capitalism, classism, white supremacy, anti-blackness, patriarchy, heterosexism, imperialism, ableism, and other violent hierarchies of oppression — not by climbing to the top, but by bringing the top down.

We understand the vast and encompassing nature of our struggle, but we do not accept that things are ‘just the way they are’. We do not have all of the answers, but we refuse to be sold the lie that our saviors are those who emerge victorious in a game of survival of the fittest.

We fight for the possibility of our own and each other’s existence as dark, femme, queer, sick/disabled, and poor: through collective care, mutual material aid, resource-building, skill-sharing, and self-defense.

We seek a world not limited to what we can see before us — a world beyond colonial occupation, imperialist exploitation, enforced binaries, and the violence of white supremacist ideology.

We do not pretend to claim ownership for the revolution. We are not the leaders of the people, we are the people.

So, we ask you: How might we envision a world where we are all allowed to live, where the most powerful do not dictate the fate of those they trample on their way to the top? How are we already moving towards and building that world?