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An Anarchist Opposition to the Anti-Terror Act and the Terrorism of the State

Bandilang Itim

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A joint statement from several anarchist collectives in the
Philippines on the recent anti-terrorism law passed in the
Philippine congress.

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As anarchist, autonomous, and anti-authoritarian collectives in the archipelago, we declare our opposition to the Anti-Terrorism Act recently passed in Congress.

The Anti-Terrorism Act has already been passed in the Senate with only two votes in opposition and was also adopted on the committee level in Congress. Since both versions are now identical, the Anti-Terrorism Act will not require a bicameral conference to be voted upon—this means that once the Anti-Terrorism Act is passed in Congress, it will directly be forwarded to the Office of the President to be signed.

The way the Anti-Terrorism Act was deliberated is highly suspicious. Debate and interpolation in Congress was held during a pandemic, a time when the public at large would be unable to protest publicly. This is nothing less than the Shock Doctrine in action, where controversial laws are passed quickly during times of crisis when people are unable to resist. As is often said, “a crisis is a terrible thing to waste,” and the State

is using the pandemic as an opportunity to expand its policing and surveillance powers.

The Anti-Terrorism Act seeks to expand the powers of State agents to conduct policing and surveillance. Anyone the State deems as “terrorist” can be subject to surveillance and warrantless arrests. We oppose such measures to expand surveillance and policing by the State. We do not doubt this will be used to abuse the people.

The wording of the Anti-Terrorism Act effectively illegalizes the distribution of revolutionary literature, both leftist and anarchist. Distributing either Marx or Malatesta risks making one a “terrorist” in the eyes of the State. This is reminiscent of when Marcos made revolutionary literature illegal, leaving thousands of people without the insights of the past. By banning revolutionary literature, the State is banning revolutionary education. Education is one means of understanding our own power and the State fears it.

Some are opposing the Anti-Terrorism Act because it is unconstitutional. Our opposition to the Anti-Terrorism Act is not predicated on that it is supposedly unconstitutional. The Law is drafted by and for the privileged, for Capital, for the rich. The constitution is no exception; was it not the privileged and wealthy who also drafted the constitution? So what if the Anti-Terrorism Act is unconstitutional? Ultimately all laws are the domain of privilege, of the political dynasties that rule our archipelago and their corporate collaborators. Even if this Anti-Terrorism Act was constitutional we would oppose it because we oppose all authority and especially measures that seek to expand authority and policing.

We also see people saying things to the effect “remember who voted for the Anti-Terrorism Act and do not vote for them in the next election.” Such sentiments misunderstand how power is maintained in our society. Power is not maintained by electing candidates. Power is maintained by use of violence, passively by the threat of abject poverty and homelessness

at the hands of Capital. Power is maintained by the active violence visited upon the people by the police and military. Elections are not exercises of power over government, it is a mere *image* of power, a spectacle of fools. “Representatives” only represent themselves, not the people. They have the resources to maintain their power as well.

As anarchists we are opposed to the Anti-Terrorism Act because we are lovers of freedom and of free will. We hate the State and authority and we curse the police. The anarchist is dangerous to the *tuta* of the State, for we are forever contemptuous of their authority. We know authority is a flimsy thing, for when people learn that they have their own power, the house of cards upon which their power rests comes crashing down. The uprisings currently raging all over the so-called United States are evidence of that.

We oppose not only the State’s grab for more police power, but also the concept of *policing* itself. The murder of George Floyd in the so-called United States mirrors that of the police murder of Winston Ragos during the quarantine in the Philippines and of the police murder of Kian delos Santos and of other innumerable victims of the police in the evil “war” on drugs. All murders perpetrated by the police, regardless of where it happens in the world, are all State-sanctioned killings. The violence against the common person is part of policing itself. These people the police beat down and kill are only fighting for the chance to live better lives, in some cases, fighting just to survive. We have seen workers, students, indigenous peoples, and urban poor constantly harassed by the police. The police were never here “to serve and protect”; they are the dogs of the State, the armed gang of the ruling elite.

Policing is founded on violence against the common person in defense of the violence of the status quo. There are no good police because you cannot be good while upholding structural violence. Thus the anarchist mantra: All Cops Are Bastards: ACAB.

Yet, the police are only one part of the larger system of violence the state perpetrates on our society. The military whether it be the National Guard in the so-called United States or the Armed Forces of the Philippines are used by the State as tools in their chaos and bloodshed when their threats can only be neutralized by large-scale firepower. Across the world, governments fund intelligence and surveillance operations within the military to crush “terrorist” organizations from inside and out. Here in the Philippines, the military work hand-in-hand with the police in harassing, assaulting, and massacring farmers and activists for their sympathies. They unduly tag anybody with inkling against the state as “communists” and “terrorists,” putting their lives at risk of harm and even death.

By the position of police and military in society as an armed group upholding the structural violence of the State and Capital, these organizations cannot be reformed at all. In the so-called United States, the police also uphold the violent institution of racism and whose policing was founded on slave catching. Here in the Archipelago, there is an unbroken line from the the Spanish Guardia Civil and American-organized Philippine Constabulary that upheld colonial violence to the PNP and AFP which protects the violence of the current State and Capital. The colonial masters Spain and America used the police to crush independent thought and action and the post-independence elites merely inherited it. We have seen how these forces upheld the Marcos dictatorship, later inherited by Cory Aquino to uphold her own rule by committing the Hacienda Luisita Massacre. With the long and violent history of “counter-terrorism” in the archipelago we can conclude the police and military and the State are the real terrorists who terrorize the people into submission. The State is the real terrorist and the PNP and AFP are its terrorist organizations!

Just as the institution of police brutality is global, so is its resistance to it. From the Philippines, to Hong Kong, to Japan, and to the so-called United States. It is the task of the freedom-loving people of the Archipelago to resist the State’s attempt to expand policing, including opposing the terrorism of the Anti-Terror Act.

RESIST STATE TERRORISM!

ALL COPS ARE BASTARDS!

OPPOSE THE TERRORISM OF THE POLICE!

OPPOSE THE EXPANSION OF POLICE AND SURVEILLANCE POWERS!

OPPOSE THE ANTI-TERRORISM LAW!

Signed,

Bandilang Itim

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