

***Freedom For
J20 Defendants!***



***Unrelenting
Solidarity!***

Freedom for J20 Defendants

We write this call, in the spirit of those who’ve struggled before us.

We ask that our reader(s) turn their attention to the J20 case, where our comrades are facing decades in prison for their resistance to the inauguration of America’s latest imperialist monster, Donald Trump. Inside one of the fiercest political-repression operations the US has seen in recent years. Fifty-nine defendants remain, having been held by the courts under highly coercive penal threats for over a year.

It seems the April trials have been delayed. The prosecution, not wanting to risk their already tenuous credibility, has decided to target those whom better fit into civil notions of ‘guilt’ and ‘criminality’. The May 14th trial comprises defendants alleged to have destroyed property.

While we believe our friends crafting narratives and support around the case have had good intentions, they’ve spent a great deal of energy honing disingenuous, liberal, reformist rhetoric. We acknowledge that advocating for the ‘1st amendment activity’ and ‘innocence’ of arrestees to have strategic implications. This being seen through the victories of the first trial’s full acquittal and over a hundred dropped cases.

Still, we must beg the question, is this strategy complete? Who does it ultimately benefit, and what are its limits? Are we content with pretending as if the most vibrant displays of resistance that day never occurred? Will we continue to cower away from the means of action we know are necessary to take? When will we say, “we were all there too”? To gain strength and to be effective in this moment require us to evolve with the situation and refuse the disassociation urged to us by the press and political class.

The aversion to militancy is shortsighted. The State kills, incarcerates, and degrades us, each and every day; and they do not need to be given additional reasons to do so. It may be inconvenient to defend actions explicitly outside the law, but we must hold reverence for the vitality of those who truly resist. And we must defend our friends from deference to the well-being of capitalist store-fronts and luxury vehicles. This world, and everything that belongs to it, is hideous and oppressive. And thus, we should be developing a path to depart from it *entirely*.

The case being drawn out has resulted in collective exhaustion. And the existing dominant narratives of ‘respectable protest’ have aided the prosecution in their attempts to divide and conquer. They’ve dropped charges against ‘innocent protesters’ and are now setting their sights on the ‘real criminals’. Popular opinion supports the idea that “peaceful protesters” mass-arrested on a sidewalk do not deserve to go to prison. But what about the angry, determined ones, daring enough to show up and tear away their chains? These are the reasonable ones, any who believe otherwise only deceive themselves. In this way, the prosecution is well-positioned going into the second round of trials.

Certain comrades have the impression that, on the judicial level, the gravity of the alleged deeds renders the defense of these comrades more difficult. On the contrary, we think that it is the gravity of these deeds that facilitates all well-calculated actions in their favor. Furthermore, attacking banks and other capitalist infrastructure is naturally a serious crime in the eyes of the capitalists, not in the eyes of their enemies, us. We say this is what is blame-worthy: theft of the poor, the humiliation of wage labor, and all the destitution a society based on inequality brings. Others who posit themselves as revolutionaries may think of this case as none of their business, due to disagreements about the efficacy of January 20th’s chosen actions or feeling like they have no means of effectively intervening. We seek to expel these objections and invigorate support.

Considering all of this, we believe the time for discourse and strategy around criminal culpability to be finished. *We are writing this call, because we desire the cancellation of the May 14th trial* or to have this and each subsequent trial come at a cost. This hostage situation cannot continue.

At a time when a revolutionary force is needed the most, the State has distracted a large portion of our movement for too long. Many of us already know that the process is the punishment; and it isn’t atypical for a trial to last a year or longer. But have we really reflected on the amount of time, opportunity, and meaning the State has taken away from us? The enormous amount of stress this case has put on revolutionary networks and communities across this continent? And how much it has tried our hearts and our love? If nothing else, we should exhibit raging indignation at how these villains have affected us over the course of this case.

Well after a year, *so many* of our comrades are *still* caught up in this despicable process. Can we, and what our movements aspire to, afford to give anything more to these greedy scoundrels? Can we let them imprison *any* of our comrades to then take away even more from us?

We say no. We say it’s time to sharpen our teeth to thirsty fangs. From Ferguson, to Standing Rock, to J20, various antifascist actions, and more. It would appear the social climate

in the United States is growing frequently more unstable. We say good. We already know what the future will bring, and we must not let ourselves or our enemies forget. The State’s legitimacy is on the decline, and the J20 case has thus far been a failure. We desire to further show them why it’s in their interest to completely let it go.

A Flint to a Spark

Here, we will demonstrate to *you*, our dear reader, our argument for why you should care and for why you should fight oh so very hard for the freedom of these friends.

On January 20, 2017 chauvinistic billionaire, Donald Trump was to be inaugurated as the president of the United States of America. When the election results initially came in, the whole world was shocked. Many were thoroughly afraid, while some of the more repugnant elements of the populace celebrated.

If Donald, a reality TV star with the mind of a disgruntled toddler, could be put into such a position of power, a seat traditionally thought to be reputable and prestigious, then *anything was possible*. Trump’s election tore the very fabric of reality as we knew it. A signal flare had embedded itself into the world’s eye.

We argue that this departure from reality and the imagination it provoked are precisely why the government was so concerned about the call for resistance on January 20th. Massive amounts of disapproval, outrage, and schism poured out from all sectors of the population. Inauguration day was to see gigantic, diverse showings of protest. The ruling class no doubt saw the precarity of their position and the power they’ve worked so hard to secure.

January 20th marked the potential of a revolt and dissatisfaction that could culminate into the creation of a *new world*. And, it proved to be a day of revolutionary action, and that time will come again. Thanks to the tone set by 2017’s counter-inaugural protests, the country was offered a solution, a break from the established order and the first of many blows to the rising fascist movement.

Afterwards, an impressive initiative to support over 200 arrestees from all over the country was put in place and has sustained itself since. But it is not enough. We very well cannot proceed with our revolutionary agenda if our movement is stuck playing around with the courts, and risking 59 of our comrades who were courageous enough to be there—and be dangerous.

Washington DC itself is a huge liability for the State. The city has a grueling history of protest. And, resulting lawsuits have mandated that the Metropolitan Police Department write mass-arrests out of their operating procedure. The state’s inability to lawfully issue a mass-arrest highlights an immeasurable weakness. Protesters pushing to exploit this weakness contributed to the unease of the ruling class and their enforcers. We believe an incentive of this heavy-handed repression is an attempt to keep this weakness from being exploited again. Doubling down, would serve to prevent Washington DC, the heart of the Empire, from being engulfed in mass-rebellion and righteous, benevolent flames. (A premonition, as much as an eventuality.) The cops had to close the opening before it could be fully exploited, in the face of mounting social unrest. MPD Commander Keith Deville admitted via police radio and trial testimony that he intended to give the mass-arrest order from the beginning. This suggests two things: that someone higher up the chain of command sanctioned the use of mass arrests, and that there was no dispersal order that day, *to set an example*. Defeating the J20 prosecution would enormously benefit the future of struggle by further taking away a tool the state has already lost. The next time they’re faced with a similar predicament, they will have to think much harder about how to contain it. Will they risk making themselves look like fools by issuing a mass-arrest again? Or will they reveal themselves to be the violent thugs they are? This is significant ground to take. We understand the American State to prioritize its legitimacy through a facade of civility and justice. To erode at that facade is to erode one of the glues that hold US governance together. Denying them authoritarian precedent in the J20 case would preserve and strengthen militant, street engagements/tactics for years to come.

Whether one believes in mass-movements, one cannot deny that since J20 anarchists have entered into American public consciousness. And the State has acknowledged us as an emerging threat. As they should. There are more anarchists in the US now than there were before, and there will be even more tomorrow. Our potency, in addition to the havoc Trump wreaks as he besmirches the reputation of the US government, points to the current and ongoing vulnerability of the State.

For the State itself, the J20 case is an issue of stability. For Trump, retribution. And for lead prosecutor assistant US attorney Jennifer Kerkhoff, we infer career advancement. Kerkhoff is a homicide prosecutor who aspires to become a federal judge. She was hoping to use the J20 case to ascend herself

into that position. And things are not going well for her.

The first trial was a flop, rife with unflattering moments for Kerkhoff. Including her deplorable attempt to vilify an oncology nurse, her disregard for ‘reasonable doubt’ in closing argument, and embarrassing remarks made by jurors post-verdict. Among her colleagues, Kerkhoff has a reputation as a mean-spirited, vile, human being, and DC attorneys shudder at the thought of having to work with “Judge Kerkhoff.” And, thus, practically all are rooting for her to lose. These reasons, alongside the annoyances of call-in campaigns, unfavorable media attention, everyday shit talk, and public doxxing may be why she is no longer planning to prosecute the case after the month of May. This should show to us that Kerkhoff is vulnerable and susceptible to pressure. For now she’s a key component to the case, and she should fall. Future solidarity actions should aim to pressure Kerkhoff’s superiors into placing the blame on her and to then cut their ties. Kerkhoff’s career should not be left intact. We are the ones to be setting precedents. Let’s set one, by showing the country’s prosecutors, not to fuck with us.

Rather than looking at this matter as a judicial one, we should see it as an issue of power relations. Through this lens, we can see the problem of how to defend these comrades does not need to be accorded by law, but by action. If there isn’t a movement to demand the freedom of these friends forcefully and with sufficient defense, then we should assume they’re headed behind bars.

Call to Action

To vanquish the J20 prosecution is to help topple the American State, by attacking them at a point where they are weak. Where we exploit the State’s weakness, we show our strength. And the strength of *all* revolutionary struggle and *every* liberatory movement. The rise and fall of empires have taught us that destabilizing events lead to more destabilizing events, catalyzing their demise. If we want to put an end to the nightmare of the world’s current affairs and put something better in its place, it’s up to us to encourage these ruptures. Imagine what it would mean to succeed in restraining this hyper-focused effort of repression.

The domain of struggle is our home. Let’s show each other what level of solidarity we can produce. From those of us hellbent on abolishing prisons, capitalism, borders, white supremacy, and patriarchy. To those of us who yearn to protect non-human animals, the earth, and more; this is *our* fight to win. The J20 case is a battle that the State and capital, the central dominating forces in all our lives, have invested countless resources into. It’s time we dedicate our resolve to freeing these unfortunate comrades and *winning* this fight.

We will not go over the risks, benefits, and possibilities of action, for you and your affinity groups to take. For that is for you to decide. We only insist that the demand for the liberation of these comrades be made clear and put front and center. All actions are good, but those that create the most scandal, are the best. By grouping ourselves according to affinities, we will, according to our tastes and opportunities, be able to discover or further develop any of the means of action that have been employed in other epochs or that still remain to be experimented with, except for falling into the baseness of respectful petitions, which are circulated everywhere, and vainly, by Leftist electoral parties. It is enough that our actions converge upon the same specific goal, proclaim it at all times and multiply with time. And when these precise goals are attained, an active revolutionary presence in the US will have made itself known. Launching a movement better suited to coordinate and attain an increasing range of goals.

The first goal from here is to make the entire country obsessed with this case, which is synonymous with declaring the existence of a revolutionary tide. Through shutting down workplaces, walking out of schools, marching in the streets, or the breaking of normalcy. We will oblige people to know about these defendants and the power of those who defend them.

We are calling for an unrelenting, diffuse, solidarity campaign until our comrades are entirely released from their present repressive situation. For an up-tick of visibility to pervade our movements worldwide, and for concentrated actions in the days ahead of the May 14th trial, and then more one or two weeks ahead of each subsequent trial if the trials persist.

If the words written here speak to you, reproduce this text, physically and digitally. And spread it everywhere. If they don’t, or you have critiques, discard this and create something better. It is necessary that the circumstance of these comrades be known throughout every country, wherever injustice resides. Shout it in the streets! In your workplace and in your homes! Keep it on the forefront of everyone’s mind. Let us give the State no room to breathe. Circulate uncompromising fervor for our friends, and prepare to let chaos ensue.

**For freedom and revolution,
Defend J20!**