

A black and white halftone photograph of a tree trunk. A sign is attached to the trunk, reading "END EMPIRE". The sign is tilted and has a rough, hand-drawn appearance. The background shows the intricate, branching structure of the tree's canopy, rendered in a halftone dot pattern.

From Redwood Trees the View of a New World Being Born

A Statement from the Tree Occupation at Cal Poly Humboldt

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There will be no end to these wars of empire if the struggles in “first world countries” don’t develop teeth and begin to embody solidarity and “land back” as more than symbolic gestures. We will not go back to normal. Normal means ignoring the genocide of Palestinians every day, while living miserable lives on a hamster wheel of labor that never made us happy in the first place. Normal means earning a paycheck and turning our backs on the 14,000+ Palestinian children murdered just since October 7. This occupation has shown that when you stop everything and get off the hamster wheel, what is waiting for you is community and endless possibilities.

We fight for the living, and we mourn the trail of dead that this empire of money and war has left in its path. We remember you, though there are too many to recount here, all of you who have died at the hands of this global empire—

Haya Sharif Bakr Al-Batniji. George Floyd. Ibrahim Amma Saad Al-Qara. Sandra Bland. Sham Abdul Karim Ibrahim Al-Hato. Treyvon Martin. Hosni Mohamed Hosni Muhareb. Toypurina. Musk Omar Kamel Abu Rahma. Tortuguita. Adam Youssef Muhammad Al-Hila. Josiah Lawson. Zeina Hossam Jamil Al-Zaanen. David Chain. Sondos Ziyad Mahmoud Al-Azaib. Rayshard Brooks. Malik Youssef Omar Sharaf. Avalon. Mansour Hamada Monsour Sobh. Berta Isabel Caceres Flores. Marie Ihab Darwish Gouda. Fred Hampton. Zakaria Imad Abd Muheisen. Nex Benedict. Khalaf Fawzi Muhamma Al-Sawarka. Rachel Corrie. Shireen Abu Akleh. Al-Jarrah mahmoud Misbah Al-Khor.

And so many more. We won’t let you down.

Today—Monday, April 29, 2024—there are encampments and building occupations in solidarity with Gaza in place at dozens of universities around the United States, and they are beginning to appear elsewhere around the world. Police have already carried out a number of brutal raids targeting them, but in many cases, the protesters have come back, undeterred, or even faced down the police. One of the fiercest occupations has taken place at Cal Poly Humboldt, where students took over a building, survived a massive police assault, and then forced the police to retreat off campus.

As of today, the occupation at Cal Poly Humboldt has held its ground for a week. The school has been shut down until graduation. Right now, local, state, and federal agencies are amassing forces to prepare to raid the encampment.

At this critical moment, we received a statement from people who have established a tree occupation to hold territory at Cal Poly Humboldt. We present it along with pictures from the occupied university and a video of a participant in the Cal Poly occupation calling to address participants in an encampment at another university across the country.

From Redwood Trees to Olive Groves, the Commune Grows

We have heard the call to escalate in solidarity with Palestine, and we are answering: we have taken to the trees.

From where I sit, in the branches of a redwood tree, I have the ocean to my right and the forest to

my left. Usually, it hurts to look at the cityscape, to see the colonial infrastructure remaking native lands according to its own ends. But today, I see these mission-style buildings covered in calls for a free Palestine and the return of Native homelands. I see a sprawling, ever-growing camp filled with people who are feeding and clothing each other, held by the protection of our barricades. I see medics keeping folks hydrated, kids playing, artists and musicians creating, gardens sprouting up, and everywhere the sense that a new world is being born. This vision is stoked by the militant flame of the brave occupiers, by the desire to defend it all—to push the cops out every time they attempt to harass us or pull down the barricades.

The success of our occupation thus far has come about as a consequence of our ability to adapt whilst refusing to back down. We learn from nature that diversity makes an ecosystem more resilient and vibrant, and the same is true in our movements. There is no one perspective, tactic, or voice in our camp. No one speaks for everyone. What brought us together was a shared revulsion for this genocide. What keeps us together is our commitment to escalation towards liberation, to upholding each other's autonomy, and to nurturing lifeways together amid this struggle.

We recognize that a diversity of tactics is crucial for maintaining an offensive position. To expand our tactics, we have turned to our personal history of struggle against empire here in so-called Humboldt. Judi Bari, an environmental activist who was car-bombed and framed for her activity with EarthFirst!, spoke about the need to end the global capitalist machine in order to halt planetary destruction and oppression of all kinds. We concur. This tree sit is a love letter to these connections, to all those

struggling to end this genocide, and to Palestinians worldwide. Among the great old trees, a tree sit is a sign of rebellious hope—hope as a way of choosing agency. It is an invitation to a new perspective on the world itself.

This tree sit is also a love letter to Tortuguita. Tortuguita was 26 years old on January 18, 2023 when Georgia State Troopers murdered them in the Weelaunee Forest. At that time, they were defending the forest from the Cop City project. Funded by the likes of Coca-Cola, Wells Fargo, Delta Airlines, UPS, Home Depot, Equifax, Georgia Pacific, so on and so forth, Cop City is a deforestation project designed to build a massive mock city in which US police will train in urban warfare; Israeli Occupying Forces will be contracted to train them in the art of imposing apartheid. This is just one of many proposed cop cities across the country. The fight to free Palestine and the fight to free ourselves are intimately intertwined. The military and police see these connections—and so must we.

This connection, in conjunction with a knowledge of history and with our own experiences over the last week, have shown us that any struggle to put an end to genocide necessarily includes a struggle against the police themselves, just as putting an end to genocide means stopping extractive colonial capitalism, halting the causes of climate chaos, and putting an end to the ongoing imperial nightmare we live in.

Police and the military are the ultimate threat wielded against anyone who fights effectively for a better world. We are inspired to see all the beautiful things that have flourished so spontaneously in just one week thanks to a few people being brave enough to create and defend a cop-free zone. We are not just