THE RED NATION STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH NATIVE HAWAIIANS AGAINST THE THIRTY METER TELESCOPE AT MAUNA KEA, HAWAI‘I

In the last two weeks on the island of Hawai‘i, large equipment and machinery crept to the summit of Mauna Kea, a sacred mountain to Native Hawaiians (Kānaka Maoli) known also as Mauna a Wākea, with the intent to violently develop lands for the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) project. The TMT is backed by the Thirty Meter International Observatory (TIO), Goodfellow Bros, the University of Hawai‘i (UH), the Office of Mauna Kea Management, the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, and the Hawai‘i State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)—with funding from the University of California, California Institute of Technology, National Astronomical Observatories of China and Japan, and other international institutions. The project aims to construct an 18-story high industrial complex telescope, which would be the world’s largest. The TMT would also be among thirteen other telescopes that currently blemish Mauna Kea.

On October 7, 2014, the TMT groundbreaking ceremony was interrupted when it met peaceful protest from Native Hawaiian (Kanaka Maoli) cultural practitioners, activists, environmentalists, and protectors. On April 2, 2015, in similar opposition, more than 300 protectors gathered to physically block the path of the TMT vehicles. After previous cautions by county police, agents from the DLNR’s Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement alongside county police officers egregiously arrested thirty-one protectors, including young people and elders. Kealoha Pisciotta, a representative of Mauna Kea Anaina Hou, astutely suggests that the “arrests are hewa—a grave wrongdoimg” because of legal rights protecting Kānaka Maoli and their sacred sites like the Mauna Kea.

Because of these events and the histories as well as contemporary conditions of settler colonization, capitalistic domination, ecological genocide, and criminalization of Kānaka Maoli and their lands, The Red Nation stands in solidarity with Native Hawaiians against the TMT at Mauna Kea, Hawai‘i. The TIO’s internationally funded project, which has been wrongly granted access by the UH, DLNR, and other accomplices, contributes to interconnected efforts around the world to steal Indigenous lands and eliminate Native peoples’ self-determination, sovereignty, and life. In particular, the TMT demonstrates that the pursuit of westernized scientific knowledge, such as astronomy-industry development, conjoined with institutionalized racism against Native Hawaiians perpetuate the insidious, ongoing elimination of Indigenous communities worldwide. Therefore, The Red Nation demands (1) the overall repatriation of Native lands and lives and the protection of nonhuman relatives and (2) the end of capitalist-colonialist violence—which are two integral principles and values of our Indigenous coalition as outlined in our “10 Point Program.” More specifically, we demand that state governor of Hawai‘i, David Y. Ige, halt TMT construction, stop
arrests of those protecting Mauna Kea, revoke the conservation district use permit that was wrongfully provided for the TMT, and protect Mauna a Wākea from further development, desecration, and destruction. Finally, we demand that all partners, associates, and affiliated entities of the TMT project divest from it. The Red Nation agrees with UH spokesperson, Dan Meisenzahl, when he says “if the university only had a heart, it would be broken.” We also agree that the TMT project should be immediately shutdown, Kānaka Maoli should be protected from criminalization, Mauna Kea should be defended against capitalist-colonialist violence, and Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i (The Hawaiian Nation) should be liberated from its illegal occupation by the United States of America.

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