

UPRISINGS CONTINUE FROM MAY 26TH INTO SECOND MONTH

read all about it



We are making the future as well as bonding to survive the enormous pressures of the present, and that is what it means to be a part of history. -Audre Lorde "Learning from the 60s"



As uprisings continue well into July, we are seeing calls to defund police departments across the country. Defunding of course with the goal to abolish them entirely. While some of these calls are met with efforts to defund departments we are also witnessing tactics that are offered with the hope to placate our demands for abolition with minor aesthetic alterations to the face of our subjugation. Symbolic efforts such as re-naming streets named after confederates, painting BLM in major roadways, or various police reform efforts are individual solutions to systemic issues. As we see the parameter for leftists' political beliefs shift we also see, in real time, abolition get co-opted by various non profits and career activists who simply want to co-opt our efforts for their personal gain. This was clearly seen in the 8cantwait campaign which switched gears to include watered down abolitionist talking points following the release of the 8toabolition campaign. It is our responsibility to keep our demands on track to abolition and to ensure that neoliberalism does not sink its nasty claws into our movement. The country's mishandling of the pandemic, allowing for massive unemployment and civil unrest, cannot be understated for creating the conditions that have allowed the uprisings to continue into their second full month. As they continue it is important to ground ourselves in the work of those who came before us while also recognizing the innovation this unique moment allows for. As Black Lives Matter becomes a phrase that most are now comfortable saying we must ask ourselves: what are we grounding ourselves in? Should our efforts be focused on showing the White public that we have humanity or should we be focused on building Black Power? Our work needs to center those who are still on the margins of the larger Black Lives Matter movement such as incarcerated folk, women cis & trans alike, the queer community, disabled folk, non citizens and many others. As those living within the American empire we also need to ensure our efforts include all colonized people, especially those for which imperialism is a harsh reality. Abolition is a global project. Thus the domestic and international struggles are inextricably linked. Efforts to support our communities through the uprisings and the pandemic are efforts we need to sustain after this moment. We need to build autonomy through mutual aid, jail support, community pantries and other efforts that will allow communities to sustain radical movements.



"Our revolution is not a public-speaking tournament. Our revolution is not a battle of fine phrases. Our revolution is not simply for spouting slogans that are no more than signals used by manipulators trying to use them as catchwords, as codewords, as a foil for their own display. Our revolution is, and should continue to be, the collective effort of revolutionaries to transform reality, to improve the concrete situation of the masses of our country." -Thomas Sankara

#8toAbolition

While communities across the country mourn the loss of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Jamel Floyd, and so many more Black victims of police murder, Campaign Zero released its 8 Can't Wait campaign, offering a set of eight reforms they claim would reduce police killings by 72%.

As police and prison abolitionists, we believe that this campaign is dangerous and irresponsible, offering a slate of reforms that have already been tried and failed, that mislead a public newly invigorated to the possibilities of police and prison abolition, and that do not reflect the needs of criminalized communities.

We honor the work of abolitionists who have come before us, and those who organize now. A better world is possible. We refuse to allow the blatant co-optation of decades of abolitionist organizing toward reformist ends that erases the work of Black feminist theorists. As the abolitionist organization Critical Resistance recently noted, 8 Can't Wait will merely "improve policing's war on us." Additionally, many abolitionists have already debunked the 8 Can't Wait campaign's claims, assumptions, and faulty science.

Abolition can't wait.

The end goal of these reforms is not to create better, friendlier, or more community-oriented police or prisons. Instead, we hope to build toward a society without police or prisons, where communities are equipped to provide for their safety and wellbeing.

To build an abolitionist world that prioritizes the lives of Black people, we have drawn upon decades of abolitionists' work to compile this list of demands targeted toward city and municipal powers. Honoring the long history of abolitionist struggle, we join in their efforts to divest from the prison industrial complex, invest in our communities, and create the conditions for our ultimate vision: a world without police, where no one is held in a cage, and all people thrive and be well.

#8TOABOLITION

**A WORLD WITHOUT PRISONS OR POLICE,
WHERE WE CAN ALL BE SAFE**

**DEFUND THE
POLICE**



**DEMILITARIZE
COMMUNITIES**



**REMOVE POLICE
FROM SCHOOLS**



**FREE PEOPLE FROM
PRISONS & JAILS**



**WE BELIEVE IN A WORLD WHERE THERE ARE
ZERO POLICE MURDERS BECAUSE THERE ARE ZERO POLICE.**



**REPEAL LAWS
CRIMINALIZING
SURVIVAL**



**INVEST IN
COMMUNITY
SELF-GOVERNANCE**



**PROVIDE SAFE
HOUSING FOR
EVERYONE**



**INVEST IN CARE,
NOT COPS**

ABOLITION CAN'T WAIT.

source: www.8toabolition.com

Caught In De Blasio's Curfew, Essential Worker Spends Week In Jail
After NYPD Mass Arrests Bronx Protesters
BY JAKE OFFENHART June 11, 2020

It wasn't yet curfew when the cops trapped Devaughnta Williams. After clocking out at his job as a janitor at a city social services building on Thursday evening, the 27-year-old Bronx native planned to take the subway to his grandmother's to get a few hours of sleep, before starting the graveyard shift at Family Dollar. The exact time shouldn't have mattered — as an essential worker, he was permitted to be out past 8 p.m. — but he was still hyper-aware of the hour. "I'm walking up the block and I bump into a crowd of protesters at 7:24 p.m.," Williams told Gothamist. "I said, 'You know what, I have time.'"

Williams said he had been marching with the South Bronx group for only a few minutes when the NYPD cornered them. Moments before curfew, officers in riot gear charged from both sides, refusing to let the crowd disperse as they beat protesters with nightsticks and choked the air with pepper spray. More than 250 people were arrested in the attack, Williams among them. "I am an essential worker," Williams (who also goes by China) pleaded, as he was loaded onto a Department of Correction bus with dozens of other cuffed protesters. The arresting officers, he said, refused to acknowledge the piece of paper indicating his post-curfew privileges.

A week later, Williams is still incarcerated. He was initially taken to an NYPD holding cell in Queens, where he said he did not receive water, food or phone access for eighteen hours. On Friday afternoon, he was transferred to the Manhattan Detention Complex in Lower Manhattan.

For his brief participation in the protest, Williams was charged with multiple parole violations. According to the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS), he allegedly "failed to obey the 8:00 p.m. Mayoral Executive ordered curfew." He was also accused of ignoring law enforcement directions and gathering with a group that was allegedly "throwing plastic bottles with unknown liquid while screaming and yelling."

Speaking to Gothamist by phone from the Manhattan jail on Wednesday night, Williams said he witnessed no destruction or bottle-throwing during the protest — confirming multiple firsthand reports that stand in stark contrast to the NYPD's claims of imminent violence. He added that he would never have joined a protest that wasn't peaceful, especially while out on parole. This past March, Williams completed a nine year prison sentence stemming from his conviction for a robbery as a teenager.

"I'm just thinking about staying out of jail," he told Gothamist. "I

got three jobs. I got two kids. I'm trying to be an upstanding member of society." The swelling movement against racist policing is deeply personal for Williams. Growing up in the Bronx, he said, his best friend was Ramarley Graham, the 18-year-old Bronx teenager who was fatally shot in his own bathroom by an NYPD officer in 2012. "Ramarley used to sleep at my house. This was like my brother," Williams said. "I was in prison when he died. My daughter was born 15 days later. I still remember the name of the officer who shot him: Richard Haste"

Officer Haste ultimately resigned from the police force after he was found guilty during a department trial. Federal prosecutors declined to bring charges against him, and he faced no criminal penalty for the killing.

For Williams, his own re-incarceration has served as a bitter reminder of the racist double-standards inherent in New York's criminal justice system. "It's stressful to be back here, especially when I know I was doing everything correctly," he said. "I'm a black man with dreads so automatically I'm pointed out as a criminal."

A recent report from Columbia University's Justice Lab found that black city residents are jailed for parole violations at a rate 12 times higher than white people. Overall, New York State re-incarcerates more parolees for technical violations — such as breaking curfew or smoking weed — than any other state except Illinois.

"His situation is a classic example of what people face every day in the Bronx — people get violated on bullshit here all the time," said Chino May, an activist with the group Take Back the Bronx, which is planning a rally calling for Williams's freedom on Friday.

"This parole violation, like many others, underscores just how counterproductive New York's parole violation system is to the purported goals of parole supervision: to support successful re-entry," echoed Laura Eraso, a staff attorney with the Legal Aid Society. "A violation like the one Mr. Williams is facing undermines the critical bonds that serve to empower his successful reentry back into his community."

With her husband locked up, each day has brought more challenges for Tashana Perkins, a welfare case worker with the city's Human Resources Administration. On top of her job, she's raising two children, ages 3 and 8, who are currently enrolled in remote learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Even though he works all night, he'd go into their room in the morning in straight dad mode," Perkins told Gothamist of her husband. "It's really heartbreaking because the kids keep asking for him. That's the hardest part, telling the kids he's going to come home, but I don't know when he's going to come home."

In an unattributed statement shared with Gothamist on Thursday, a spokesperson for DOCCS defended the week-long detainment of

Williams, claiming that he was cited by an arresting officer for being out past curfew. A subsequent investigation by DOCCS, however, confirmed that Williams was not involved in throwing objects or other destruction.

"Therefore, given the investigating officers' findings, as well as the totality of the circumstances regarding the event, a decision was made to vacate the warrant," the statement read. "He is expected to be released today."

DOCCS did not respond to inquiries from Gothamist about why an essential worker like Williams was jailed at all. The spokesperson also did not say how many other parolees were re-incarcerated for alleged violations of de Blasio's curfew.

The Mayor's Office, the NYPD, and the Governor's Office all did not respond to requests for comment. As of Thursday afternoon, Williams still had not been released.

UPDATE: Williams was released from custody at 11:30 p.m. on Thursday, more than twelve hours after DOCCS completed their investigation. He is now at home with his family.

I Saw My Friends Beaten by Police. This Is What Happens When Cities Prioritize Property Over Black Lives.

Todd St Hill
June 14 2020

As city after city began to rise up demanding an end to racist police brutality particularly toward Black people, I knew — as everyone with eyes and ears knew — that it was only a short matter of time before Chicago had its own explosion in response to the horrific murder of George Floyd. The Chicago Police Department is no stranger to police murder of Black people, racism, or corruption; it is the model for corruption and racist policing in the U.S., making national and international headlines for its historic crimes against humanity, racist murders of unarmed Black youth, use of black sites, and its ability to garner government oversight.

On May 31, the third day of protests, I woke up to a city entering what felt like full lockdown. The news was reporting that the bridges connecting downtown Chicago with the north side of the city had been raised, cutting off the city from scenes of destroyed property. By the end of the day, the mayor would announce via tweets that the city's downtown would be under restricted access to "free up resources and allow supplemental support into neighborhoods." However, that morning the "resources" and "supplemental support" came in the form of hundreds of police on foot and in SUVs and helicopters circling above. The National Guard would be called in next to set up checkpoints.

After listening to nonstop sirens and helicopters from the window of my Southside apartment for 30 minutes, I decided to take a walk. As I headed up 47th — a street that is littered with local businesses — I saw two storefronts had been broken into. Police were everywhere, aggressively moving neighborhood residents off of their own block. It was not at all like what I had seen in news reports: police roaming the city's wealthier and whiter downtown loop rounding up "vandals" and "looters." Later that day, I attended an organizing meeting with other activists and organizers from surrounding neighborhoods, the vast majority of whom had been involved in grassroots organizing for the Black Lives Matter Movement. We heard about a march nearby. As it approached, a few of us decided to join the peaceful protest as it made its way east, through Hyde Park and toward the lake.

It ended peacefully, just shy of Lake Shore Drive: the major artery that runs along the lakefront. As the protesters attempted to head back west, to their cars and to public transit, the police formed a line preventing us from dispersing. When protesters insisted, still nonviolently, the police began to push us back with their batons. As I turned, I saw police beating and tossing one of my friends around as

my friend was pleading with him to calm down. As protesters were being attacked by police, others attempted to pull them out of harm's way. This would not be the last time this group of police would attack us.

After about a 90-minute standoff with the CPD, they finally let down their line. But as we approached a corridor of storefronts on 53rd Street, the police, who had themselves been dispersing, began to turn one by one and run toward us. As I approached the intersection I saw our friend tripped by a police officer. Within seconds, he was being beaten relentlessly by a group of five or six officers. More police showed up, as bystanders and protesters shouted at the police to stop. Two others from our group jumped on top of our friend, using their bodies to shield him from the melee of baton hits and receiving their fair share of the beating in the process. Another member of our group jumped on top of her fiancé in an attempt to shield him from the baton blows.

In total, five Black people were beaten into hospitalization by the Chicago Police Department officers. The four who were arrested all suffered concussions, broken bones, cuts and bruises. One person needed immediate medical attention for his head wounds and was released to the custody of the street medics who attended the march. A protester was pepper-sprayed for filming the attack by police. A friend was pushed in front of a moving police cruiser by a CPD officer, and I was also pushed to the ground as I ran to pull her from in front of the SUV. This is only a fraction of the thousands of protesters who have no doubt been assaulted; beaten; made to endure sexist, homophobic, and/or transphobic slurs; and had their rights to legal aid denied all for simply being willing to defend Black life from the ongoing violence from the police. That night, into the following day, news began to spread quickly that protesters in Chicago were being disappeared into the jails, unheard from for many hours, their right to a lawyer and phone calls withheld and their requests for masks denied — despite the fact that many jails are Covid-19 hotspots. Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot lauded the protesters' anger as righteous on social media and has said the restrictions and National Guard checkpoints were there to protect Chicagoans. In actuality, the municipal restrictions went hand in hand with police violence and impunity. The restrictions, which included the mayor's decision to end the grab-and-go lunch program provided to public school students amid the Covid-19 lockdown, coupled with overwhelming presence of police resembled a form of collective punishment more than a strategy for protection of protesters — and an effort to protect the property of the rich downtown. The surge of police in Black neighborhoods and debilitating restrictions evoked disturbing memories of the scarcity that existed in Black com-

nities around the time of the 2008 recession and some many times before that. Lightfoot's derision of so-called rioters illustrates a repug- nance of the equation of property — of buildings, of brick and mortar — to Black life. To us, it only reinforced what is at the root of the anti-Blackness that the country has risen up to protest against: racial capitalism. After all, one cannot amass the wealth of a billionaire without engaging in and upholding racism.

As the demand to defund police departments spreads across the country, the contradictory response from liberal and cen- trist mayors professing progressive politics is becoming more and more visible. Lightfoot deployed hyperaggressive police in riot gear, particularly in Black neighborhoods, to violently clamp down anti- racist protesters of police violence even as she praised them. Pro- test and uprisings — like the vote, like the strike — are tools that belong to the people. They are just as important to a democra- cy as any other political tool at the disposal of the peo- ple, and for Black people uprisings and protest have been powerful tools in the fight for Black liberation.

In lock step with proposals from Democratic Party leadership, May- or Lightfoot's proposals for police reform are an evasion of the demands for defunding of the Chicago Police Department, offering a "wellness" program and more funding for police as opposed to relief for Black communities and communities of color terrorized by law enforce- ment for generations and who most recently bore the brunt of the U.S. government's failure to contain the Covid-19 outbreak.

What the mayor fails to realize is that the calls for defunding the po- lice are not only about reining in their overwhelming authority, pow- er, and resources. The demands to defund the police flow from a now undeniable fact that Black people continue to be abused and exploit- ed by a system that uses policing to violently contain, con- trol, and concentrate that brutality on Black communities and other communi- ties of color. Moreover, the demands to defund and even disband po- lice departments are a call to divest from institutions that harm Black people, chief among them police and prisons. The demand to defund the police is also a call to invest in the resources, institutions, and practices — new, more effective practices — that actually rebuild his- torically neglected communities and people. To reallocate the exorbi- tant amount of money and resources given to law enforcement to the communities that have been directly im- pacted by racist and violent policing for generations. Right now, it is not up to politicians to dic- tate to the masses of people fed up with this country's inability to ad- dress its racist history with any lasting or meaningful intent. Their role — if any — is to listen and act in defense of Black lives.

Black, Indigenous solidarity rally met with violent police force in Chicago by Shabbir Manjee July 19 2020

On July 17, protesters gathered at Buckingham Fountain in Chicago to denounce colonialism and call for the abolishment of the police and the redistribution of funds back to the people of Chicago. The rally, which drew more than 1,500 people, was organized by Chi-Nations Youth Council, Black Lives Matter Chicago, BYP1000 and several other organizations.

The event kicked off peacefully with Indigenous drumming and chants of solidarity with the Indigenous cause. Speakers called for the abolition and defunding of the police, with chants from the now famous line-turned-song "You about to lose your job!" A popular sign and slogan of the event could be seen throughout the crowd: "#DecolonizeZhigaagoong" [Decolonize Chicago]. A Chicago hip-hop artist performed and was met with loud cheers and dancing from the crowd.

Soon after, some 1,000 people, directed by some of the speakers, began to march down Columbus Drive toward the statue of Christopher Columbus. As they marched they chanted, "I am on stolen land, built by stolen people!"

Chicago police surrounded the statue and would not let the protesters through. They began swinging nightsticks and batons.

While local media focused on the protesters throwing bottles and firecrackers, it was clear that the police instigated the violence. "CPD can't be satisfied with a peaceful resolution," said Drake Stewart of the Party for Socialism and Liberation of Chicago.

Police also stole the protesters bicycles and used them against the crowd. "Us throwing bikes at cops never happened, in fact cops snatched our bikes and threw them at us, while clearing us out. They took the bikes and stole them, yes stole. Because that's what they are, they are leeches and thieves," protester Anna Burgos told Liberation News.

Some protesters ensnared the statue with ropes in order to tear it down. The police, clad in riot gear, pepper sprayed the section of the crowd facing Columbus Drive, breaking through a human barricade. Stewart and Burgos were both pepper sprayed. "The entire surface of my body was irritated to the point of feeling boiled alive. For two hours I wanted to rip my skin off or take an ice bath," said Stewart. Swinging nightsticks, the police detained and arrested at least 12 people; many protesters were injured. The crowd retreated and returned to Buckingham Fountain to rally in solidarity. "It was beautiful to see how many people came together in solidarity for BIPOC ... truly beautiful to see the unity and community protecting each other, aiding each other, offering support and help," said Burgos. Funds were quickly set up to help those injured or whose bicycles were

taken by police.

"It only further proves we do not need a police state. We need each other. Our community. Our solidarity, unconditionally. Our communities would thrive if CPD was defunded and that budget went to schools, mental health programs, etc.," Burgos said.

Statues of Columbus have long been a point of controversy in Chicago, although Mayor Lori Lightfoot has opposed taking them down.

"Chicagoans have been calling for the removal of Columbus statues for years. The responsible thing to do would have been to mothball the statue, as the city has done with many statues over the years," said Alderman Carlos Ramirez-Rosa on Twitter. "Black and Indigenous Chicagoans and people from all across the city came together to do what our so-called progressive mayor refused and failed to do. They were met with violence and abuse. It's shameful and disgusting." After the rally, a fence was placed around the statue by the Chicago Police Department.

18-Year-Old Activist Had Teeth Knocked Out By Police At Columbus Statue Protest, Officials Say by Block Club Chicago Staff

An 18-year-old activist who had just spoken to a crowd protesting at the Christopher Columbus statue in Grant Park had several front teeth knocked out by a Chicago Police officer Friday evening, according to video and multiple elected officials.

An outraged Ald. Jeanette Taylor (20th) said Miracle Boyd, 18, of the group GoodKids MadCity was assaulted by a police officer during the tense Friday night protest where police pepper-sprayed protesters trying to tear down a towering, nearly 90-year-old statue of Columbus.

Taylor, who knows Boyd, said the rising young activist was injured by police. Boyd was filming the encounter, in which she argued with officers away from the Columbus statue. At the end of her recording, her phone appears to be knocked away. A second video, posted to Twitter from someone filming across the street, shows an officer wearing shorts and a bike helmet swinging his left hand at her. She flees after he swings. Ald. Taylor said watching video of the attack horrified her. Taylor's daughter is good friends with Boyd.

"I'm going to tell you right now, if this was my kid — and Miracle is one of mine — I would burn this city to the ground," Taylor said. "You beat people up over a statue? You rough them up over a statue?"

"They're so busy protecting white supremacy, they're so busy protecting a Christopher Columbus statue that they beat her."

On Sunday, Boyd told Block Club she had been trying to assist a protester she saw being arrested when two officers approached her, one with dark gray facial hair and sunglasses. "He walked up to me

and smacked me," Boyd said Sunday. "I don't know if the phone hit me in the mouth, I don't know if his hand hit me in the mouth. "But the way that I was recording, I think that he tried to smack the phone in my hand and he hit me at the same time, and the phone hit me in the mouth, and it knocked my tooth out and I was bleeding." GoodKids MadCity tweeted in the aftermath, showing Boyd suffered multiple injuries to her face and chipped teeth. They later tweeted the video footage they said showed a police officer beating Boyd in the face. Essence Gatherright, a 16-year-old member of Chicago Freedom School's youth leadership board who was at the protest, said Boyd spoke at the rally earlier that night. Gatherright helped get Boyd get medical attention at the Freedom School after she was hit.

"Her teeth came out, it was really bad," Gatherright said. "She was bleeding, she kept crying and sobbing. It was a really messed up situation. ... We were able to walk her and others to the school and provide her with support and make sure she got home safely." Ald. Taylor said Boyd is "a good kid, a CPS graduate" who has helped raise money for the most vulnerable in her community. "I don't care if you become the president, the mayor, the garbage man — you are not exempt from this country and what its racist ass will do to you," Taylor said.

Through tears, Taylor said she was tired. "How many more times are we going to go through this?"

State Sen. Robert Peters posted the photo of Boyd's injuries, saying he had just offered her an internship last week because she is "fighting gun violence everyday."

"She is just over 5 ft, 100 pounds. Tonight a police officer beat her. Knocked out her teeth," Peters tweeted. "I'm sad, angry, and disgusted."

Kofi Ademola, an organizer with Black Lives Matter Chicago, also tweeted about the case Friday, saying "Don't let the Mayor or city Council sleep until we get the justice we demand!"

Boyd is a recent graduate of Sarah E. Goode STEM Academy in Ashburn. Last weekend, she helped lead a protest through Washington Park and Woodlawn in memory of friends lost to violence. She said more policing is not the answer and demanded that Mayor Lori Lightfoot divest from the Chicago Police Department and direct the money to communities instead.

"We're the people of the community. I don't see you [Mayor Lightfoot] out here organizing people," Boyd said. "... We are the ones in our community that have to deal with the trauma." She was recently featured in a Block Club Chicago story about the Washington Park protest. She also co-wrote a story about activism in Injustice Watch. Friday evening's protest ended in in clashes between police and

demonstrators, some of whom attempted to pull down the statue of Christopher Columbus in the southern edge of the park. Police eventually converged on the area, using pepper spray to push back protesters. Video tweeted from reporters and demonstrators shows multiple physical confrontation. In a statement, the Chicago Police News Affairs office said it was not aware of the Boyd incident.

"The Chicago Police Department strives to treat all individuals our officers encounter with respect," according to the statement. "We do not tolerate misconduct of any kind and if any wrongdoing is discovered, officers will be held accountable. Anyone who feels they have been mistreated by a CPD officer is encouraged to call 311 and file a complaint with COPA, who will investigate allegations of misconduct."

During the protest last week in Washington Park, Boyd and other activists detailed proposals about reducing violence in their communities, calling on the city to reallocate 2 percent of the Chicago police budget to services like robust mental health, schools and grocery stores.

That money would help support violence interrupters and other residents doing ground-level work to keep communities safe through direct action with gang members. Peace treaties, accountability, trauma-healing and a restorative justice process are all part of the plan, Boyd said.



The Siege of the Third Precinct in Minneapolis

An Account and Analysis

The following analysis is motivated by a discussion that took place in front of the Third Precinct as fires billowed from its windows on Day Three of the George Floyd Rebellion in Minneapolis. We joined a group of people whose fire-lit faces beamed in with joy and awe from across the street. People of various ethnicities sat side by side talking about the tactical value of lasers, the “share everything” ethos, interracial unity in fighting the police, and the trap of “innocence.” There were no disagreements; we all saw the same things that helped us win. Thousands of people shared the experience of these battles. We hope that they will carry the memory of how to fight. But the time of combat and the celebration of victory is incommensurable with the habits, spaces, and attachments of everyday life and its reproduction. It is frightening how distant the event already feels from us. Our purpose here is to preserve the strategy that proved victorious against the Minneapolis Third Precinct.

Our analysis focuses on the tactics and composition of the crowd that besieged the Third Precinct on Day Two of the uprising. The siege lasted roughly from 4 pm well into the early hours of the morning of May 28. We believe that the tactical retreat of the police from the Third Precinct on Day Three was won by the siege of Day Two, which exhausted the Precincts personnel and supplies. We were not present for the fighting that preceded the retreat on Day Three, as we showed up just as the police were leaving. We were across the city in an area where youth were fighting the cops in tit-for-tat battles while trying to loot a strip mall—hence our focus on Day Two here.

Context

The last popular revolt against the Minneapolis Police Department took place in response to the police murder of Jamar Clark on November 15, 2015. It spurred two weeks of unrest that lasted until December 2. Crowds repeatedly engaged the police in ballistic confrontations; however, the response to the shooting coalesced around an occupation of the nearby Fourth Precinct. Organizations like the NAACP and the newly formed Black Lives Matter asserted their control over the crowds that gathered; they were often at odds with young unaffiliated rebels who preferred to fight the police directly. Much of our analysis below focuses on how young Black and Brown rebels from poor and working-class neighborhoods seized the opportunity to reverse this relationship. We argue that this was a necessary condition for the uprising.

George Floyd was murdered by the police at 38th Street and Chicago Avenue between 8\20 and 8\32 pm on Monday, May 25. Demonstrations against the killing began the next day at the site of his murder, where a vigil took place. Some attendees began a march to the Third Precinct at Lake Street and 26th, where rebels attacked police vehicles in the parking lot.

These two locations became consistent gathering points. Many community groups, organizations, liberals, progressives, and leftists assembled at the vigil site, while those who wanted to fight generally gathered near the Precinct. This put over two miles between two very different crowds, a spatial division that was reflected in other areas of the city as well. Looters clashed with police in scattered commercial zones outside of the sphere of influence of the organizations while many of the leftist marches excluded fighting elements with the familiar tactic of peace policing in the name of identity-based risk aversion.

The “Subject” of The George Floyd Uprising

The subject of our analysis is not a race, a class, an organization, or even a movement, but a crowd. We focus on a crowd for three reasons. First, with the exception of the street medics, the power and success of those who fought the Third Precinct did not depend on their experience in “organizing” or in organizations. Rather, it resulted from unaffiliated individuals and groups courageously stepping into roles that complemented each other and seizing opportunities as they arose.

While the initial gathering was occasioned by a rally hosted by a Black-led organization, all of the actions that materially defeated the Third Precinct were undertaken after the rally had ended, carried out by people who were not affiliated with it. There was practically no one there from the usual gamut of self-appointed community and religious leaders, which meant that the crowd was able to transform the situation freely. Organizations rely on stability and predictability to execute strategies that require great quantities of time to formulate. Consequently, organization leaders can be threatened by sudden changes in

the social conditions, which can make their organizations irrelevant. Organizations—even self-proclaimed “revolutionary” organizations—have an interest in suppressing spontaneous revolt in order to recruit from those who are discontent and enraged. Whether it is an elected official, a religious leader, a “community organizer,” or a leftist representative, their message to unruly crowds is always the same: wait.

The agency that took down the Third Precinct was a crowd and not an organization because its goals, means, and internal makeup were not regulated by centralized authority. This proved beneficial, as the crowd consequently had recourse to more practical options and was freer to create unforeseen internal relationships in order to adapt to the conflict at hand. We expand on this below in the section titled “The Pattern of Battle and ‘Composition.’”

The agency in the streets on May 27 was located in a crowd because its constituents had few stakes in the existing order that is managed by the police. Crucially, a gang truce had been called after the first day of unrest, neutralizing territorial barriers to participation. The crowd mostly originated from working-class and poor Black and Brown neighborhoods. This was especially true of those who threw things at the police and vandalized and looted stores. Those who do not identify as “owners” of the world that oppresses them are more likely to fight and steal from it when the opportunity arises. The crowd had no interest in justifying itself to onlookers and it was scarcely interested in “signifying” anything to anyone outside of itself. There were no signs or speeches, only chants that served the tactical purposes of “hyping up” (“Fuck 12!”) and interrupting police violence with strategically deployed “innocence” (“Hands up! Don’t shoot!”).

Roles

We saw people playing the following roles:

Medical Support

This included street medics and medics performing triage and urgent care at a converted community center two blocks away from the precinct. Under different circumstances, this could be performed at any nearby sympathetic commercial, religious, or not-for-profit establishment. Alternatively, a crowd or a medic group could occupy such a space for the duration of a protest. Those who were organized as street medics did not interfere with the tactical choices of the crowd. Instead, they consistently treated anyone who needed their help.

Scanner Monitors and Telegram App Channel Operators

This is common practice in many US cities by now, but police scanner monitors with an ear for strategically important information played a critical role in setting up information flows from the police to the crowd. It is almost certain that on the whole, much of the crowd was not practicing the greatest security to access the Telegram channel. We advise rebels to set up the Telegram app on burner phones in order to stay informed while preventing police stingrays (false cell phone towers) from gleaning their personal information.

Peaceful Protestors

The non-violent tactics of peaceful protestors served two familiar aims and one unusual one:

They created a spectacle of legitimacy, which was intensified as police violence escalated.

They created a front line that blocked police attempts to advance when they deployed outside of the Precinct.

In addition, in an unexpected turn of affairs, the peaceful protestors shielded those who employed projectiles.

Whenever the police threatened tear gas or rubber bullets, non-violent protestors lined

up at the front with their hands up in the air, chanting “Hands up, don’t shoot!” Sometimes they kneeled, but typically only during relative lulls in the action. When the cops deployed outside the Precincts, their police lines frequently found themselves facing a line of “non-violent” protestors. This had the effect of temporarily stabilizing the space of conflict and gave other crowd members a stationary target. While some peaceful protestors angrily commanded people to stop throwing things, they were few and grew quiet as the day wore on. This was most likely because the police were targeting people who threw things with rubber bullets early on in the conflict, which enraged the crowd. It’s worth noting that the reverse has often been the case—we are used to seeing more confrontational tactics used to shield those practicing non-violence (e.g., at Standing Rock and Charlottesville). The reversal of this relationship in Minneapolis afforded greater autonomy to those employing confrontational tactics.

Ballistics Squads

Ballistics squads threw water bottles, rocks, and a few Molotov cocktails at police, and shot fireworks. Those using ballistics didn’t always work in groups, but doing so protected them from being targeted by non-violent protestors who wanted to dictate the tactics of the crowd. The ballistics squads served three aims:

They drew police violence away from the peaceful elements of the crowd during moments of escalation.

They patiently depleted the police crowd control munitions.

They threatened the physical safety of the police, making it more costly for them to advance.

The first day of the uprising, there were attacks on multiple parked police SUVs at the Third Precinct. This sensibility resumed quickly on Day Two, beginning with the throwing of water bottles at police officers positioned on the roof of the Third Precinct and alongside the building. After the police responded with tear gas and rubber bullets, the ballistics squads also began to employ rocks. Elements within the crowd dismantled bus bench embankments made of stone and smashed them up to supply additional projectiles. Nightfall saw the use of fireworks by a few people, which quickly generalized in Days Three and Four. “Boogaloos” (Second Amendment accelerationists) had already briefly employed fireworks on Day One, but from what we saw they mostly sat it out on the sidelines thereafter. Finally, it is worth noting that the Minneapolis police used “green tips,” rubber bullets with exploding green ink tips to mark lawbreakers for later arrest. Once it became clear that the police department had limited capacity to make good on its threat and, moreover, that the crowd could win, those who had been marked had every incentive to fight like hell to defy the police.

Laser Pointers

In the grammar of the Hong Kong movement, those who operate laser pointers are referred to as “light mages.” As was the case in Hong Kong, Chile, and elsewhere in 2019, some people came prepared with laser pointers to attack the optical capacity of the police. Laser pointers involve a special risk/reward ratio, as it is very easy to track people using laser pointers, even when they are operating within a dense and active crowd at night. Laser pointer users are particularly vulnerable if they attempt to target individual police officers or (especially) police helicopters while operating in small crowds; this is still the case even if the entire neighborhood is undergoing mass looting (the daytime use of high-powered lasers with scopes remains untested, to our knowledge). The upside of laser pointers is immense: they momentarily compromise the eyesight of the police on the ground and they can disable police surveillance drones by interfering with their infrared sensors and obstacle-detection cameras. In the latter case, a persistently lasered drone may descend to the earth where the crowd can destroy it. This occurred

repeatedly on Days Two and Three. If a crowd is particularly dense and visually difficult to discern, lasers can be used to chase away police helicopters. This was successfully demonstrated on Day Three following the retreat of the police from the Third Precinct, as well as on Day Four in the vicinity of the Fifth Precinct battle.

Barricaders

Barricaders built barricades out of nearby materials, including an impressive barricade that blocked the police on 26th Avenue just north of Lake Street. In the latter case, the barricade was assembled out of a train of shopping carts and a cart- return station pulled from a nearby parking lot, dumpsters, police barricades, and plywood and fencing materials from a condominium construction site. At the Third Precinct, the barricade provided useful cover for laser pointer attacks and rock- throwers, while also serving as a natural gathering point for the crowd to regroup. At the Fifth Precinct, when the police pressed on foot toward the crowd, dozens of individuals filled the street with a multi-rowed barricade. On the one hand, this had the advantage of preventing the police from advancing further and making arrests, while allowing the crowd to regroup out of reach of the rubber bullets. However, it quickly became clear that the barricades were discouraging the crowd from retaking the street, and it had to be partially dismantled in order to facilitate a second press toward the police lines. It can be difficult to coordinate defense and attack within a single gesture.

Sound Systems

Car sound systems and engines provided a sonic environment that enlivened the crowd. The anthem of Days Two and Three was Lil' Boosie's "Fuck The Police." Yet one innovation we had never seen before was the use of car engines to add to the soundscape and "rev up" the crowd. This began with a pick-up truck with a modified exhaust system, which was parked behind the crowd facing away from it. When tensions ran high with the police and it appeared that the conflict would resume, the driver would red line his engine and make it roar thunderously over the crowd. Other similarly modified cars joined in, as well as a few motorcyclists.

Looters

Looting served three critical aims. First, it liberated supplies to heal and nourish the crowd. On the first day, rebels attempted to seize the liquor store directly across from the Third Precinct. Their success was brief, as the cops managed to re-secure it. Early in the standoff on Day Two, a handful of people signaled their determination by climbing on top of the store to mock the police from the roof. The crowd cheered at this humiliation, which implicitly set the objective for the rest of the day: to demonstrate the powerlessness of the police, demoralize them, and exhaust their capacities.

An hour or so later, looting began at the liquor store and at an Aldi a block away. While a majority of those present participated in the looting, it was clear that some took it upon themselves to be strategic about it. Looters at the Aldi liberated immense quantities of bottled water, sports drinks, milk, protein bars, and other snacks and assembled huge quantities of these items on street corners throughout the vicinity. In addition to the liquor store and the Aldi, the Third Precinct was conveniently situated adjacent to a Target, a Cub Foods, a shoe store, a dollar store, an Autozone, a Wendy's, and various other businesses. Once the looting began, it immediately became a part of the logistics of the crowd's siege on the Precinct.

Second, looting boosted the crowd's morale by creating solidarity and joy through a shared act of collective transgression. The act of gift giving and the spirit of generosity was made accessible to all, providing a positive counterpoint to the head-to-head conflicts with the police.

Third, and most importantly, looting contributed to keeping the situation ungovernable. As looting spread throughout the city, police forces everywhere were spread thin. Their

attempts to secure key targets only gave looters free rein over other areas in the city. Like a fist squeezing water, the police found themselves frustrated by an opponent that expanded exponentially.

Fires

The decision to burn looted businesses can be seen as tactically intelligent. It contributed to depleting police resources, since the firefighters forced to continually extinguish structure fires all over town required heavy police escorts. This severely impacted their ability to intervene in situations of ongoing looting, the vast majority of which they never responded to (the malls and the Super Target store on University Ave being exceptions). This has played out differently in other cities, where police opted not to escort firefighters. Perhaps this explains why demonstrators fired in the air around firefighting vehicles during the Watts rebellion.

In the case of the Third Precinct, the burning of the Autozone had two immediate consequences: first, it forced the police to move out into the street and establish a perimeter around the building for firefighters. While this diminished the clash at the site of the precinct, it also pushed the crowd down Lake Street, which subsequently induced widespread looting and contributed to the diffusion of the riot across the whole neighborhood. By interrupting the magnetic force of the Precinct, the police response to the fire indirectly contributed to expanding the riot across the city.

The Pattern of the Battle and “Composition”

We call the battles of the second and third days at the Precinct a siege because the police were defeated by attrition. The pattern of the battle was characterized by steady intensification punctuated by qualitative leaps due to the violence of the police and the spread of the conflict into looting and attacks on corporate-owned buildings. The combination of the roles listed above helped to create a situation that was unpoliceable, yet which the police were stubbornly determined to contain. The repression required for every containment effort intensified the revolt and pushed it further out into the surrounding area. By Day Three, all of the corporate infrastructure surrounding the Third Precinct had been destroyed and the police had nothing but a “kingdom of ashes” to show for their efforts. Only their Precinct remained, a lonely target with depleted supplies. The rebels who showed up on Day Three found an enemy teetering on the brink. All it needed was a final push.

Day Two of the uprising began with a rally: attendees were on the streets, while the police were stationed on top of their building with an arsenal of crowd control weaponry. The pattern of struggle began during the rally, when the crowd tried to climb over the fences that protected the Precinct in order to vandalize it. The police fired rubber bullets in response as rally speakers called for calm. After some time passed and more speeches were made, people tried again. When the volley of rubber bullets came, the crowd responded with rocks and water bottles. This set off a dynamic of escalation that accelerated quickly once the rally ended. Some called for non-violence and sought to interfere with those who were throwing things, but most people didn't bother arguing with them. They were largely ignored or else the reply was always the same: “That non-violence shit don't work!” In fact, neither side of this argument was exactly correct: as the course of the battle was to demonstrate, both sides needed each other to accomplish the historic feat of reducing the Third Precinct to ashes.

It's important to note that the dynamic we saw on Day Two did not involve using non-violence and waiting for repression to escalate the situation. Instead, a number of individuals stuck their necks out very far to invite police violence and escalation. Once the crowd and the police were locked into an escalating pattern of conflict, the objective of the police was to expand their territorial control radiating outward from the Precinct. When the police decided to advance, they began by throwing concussion grenades at

the crowd as a whole and firing rubber bullets at those throwing projectiles, setting up barricades, and firing tear gas.

The intelligence of the crowd proved itself as participants quickly learned five lessons in the course of this struggle.

First, it is important to remain calm in the face of concussion grenades, as they are not physically harmful if you are more than five feet away from them. This lesson extends to a more general insight about crisis governance: don't panic, as the police will always use panic against us. One must react quickly while staying as calm as possible.

Second, the practice of flushing tear-gassed eyes spread rapidly from street medics throughout the rest of the crowd. Employing stores of looted bottled water, many people in the crowd were able to learn and quickly execute eye-flushing. People throwing rocks one minute could be seen treating the eyes of others in the next. This basic medic knowledge helped to build the crowd's confidence, allowing them to resist the temptation to panic and stampede, so that they could return to the space of engagement.

Third, perhaps the crowd's most important tactical discovery was that when one is forced to retreat from tear gas, one must refill the space one has abandoned as quickly as possible. Each time the crowd at the Third Precinct returned, it came back angrier and more determined either to stop the police advance or to make them pay as dearly as possible for every step they took.

Fourth, borrowing from the language of Hong Kong, we saw the crowd practice the maxim "Be water." Not only did the crowd quickly flow back into spaces from which they had to retreat, but when forced outward, the crowd didn't behave the way that the cops did by fixating on territorial control. When they could, the crowd flowed back into the spaces from which they had been forced to retreat due to tear gas. But when necessary, the crowd flowed away from police advances like a torrential destructive force. Each police advance resulted in more businesses being smashed, looted, and burned. This meant that the police were losers regardless of whether they chose to remain besieged or push back the crowd. Finally, the fall of the Third Precinct demonstrates the power of ungovernability as a strategic aim and means of crowd activity. The more that a crowd can do, the harder it will be to police. Crowds can maximize their agency by increasing the number of roles that people can play and by maximizing the complementary relationships between them.

Non-violence practitioners can use their legitimacy to temporarily conceal or shield ballistics squads. Ballistics squads can draw police fire away from those practicing non-violence. Looters can help feed and heal the crowd while simultaneously disorienting the police. In turn, those going head to head with the police can generate opportunities for looting. Light mages can provide ballistics crews with temporary opacity by blinding the police and disabling surveillance drones and cameras. Non-violence practitioners can buy time for barricaders, whose works can later alleviate the need for non-violence to secure the front line.

Here we see that an internally diverse and complex crowd is more powerful than a crowd that is homogenous. We use the term composition to name this phenomenon of maximizing complementary practical diversity. It is distinct from organization because the roles are elective, individuals can shift between them as needed or desired, and there are no leaders to assign or coordinate them. Crowds that form and fight through composition are more effective against the police not only because they tend to be more difficult to control, but also because the intelligence that animates them responds to and evolves alongside the really existing situation on the ground, rather than according to preexisting conceptions of what a battle "ought" to look like. Not only are "compositional" crowds more likely to engage the police in battles of attrition, but they are more likely to

have the fluidity that is necessary to win.

As a final remark on this, we may contrast composition with the idea of “diversity of tactics” used by the alter-globalization movement. “Diversity of tactics” was the idea that different groups at an action should use different tactical means in different times or spaces in order to work toward a shared goal. In other words, “You do you and I’ll do me,” but without any regard for how what I’m doing complements what you’re doing and vice-versa. Diversity of tactics is activist code for “tolerance.” The crowd that formed on May 27 against the Third Precinct did not “practice the diversity of tactics,” but came together by connecting different tactics and roles to each other in a shared space-time that enabled participants to deploy each tactic as the situation required.

The Ambiguity of Violence and Non-Violence on the Front Lines

We are used to seeing more confrontational tactics used to shield those practicing non-violence, as in Standing Rock and Charlottesville or in the figure of the “front-liner” in Hong Kong. However, the reversal of this relationship divided the functions of the “militant front-liner” (à la Hong Kong) across two separate roles: shielding the crowd and counter-offense. This never rose to the level of an explicit strategy in the streets; there were no calls to “shield the throwers.” In the US context, where non-violence and its attendant innocence narratives are deeply entrenched in struggles against state racism, it is unclear if this strategy could function explicitly without ballistics crews first taking risks to invite bloodshed upon themselves. In other words, it appears likely that the joining of ballistics tactics and non-violence in Minneapolis was made possible by a tacitly shared perception of the importance of self-sacrifice in confronting the state that forced all sides to push through their fear.

Yet this shared perception of risk only goes so far. While peaceful protesters probably viewed each other’s gestures as moral symbols against police violence, ballistics squads undoubtedly viewed those gestures differently, namely, as shields, or as materially strategic opportunities. Here again, we may highlight the power of the way that composition plays out in real situations, by pointing out how it allows the possibility that totally different understandings of the same tactic can coexist side by side. We combine without becoming the same, we move together without understanding one another, and yet it works.

There are potential limits to dividing front-liner functions across these roles. First, it doesn’t challenge the valorization of suffering in the politics of non-violence. Second, it leaves the value of ballistic confrontation ambiguous by preventing it from coalescing in a stable role at the front of the crowd. It is undeniable that the Third Precinct would not have been taken without ballistic tactics. However, because the front line was identified with non-violence, the spatial and symbolic importance of ballistics was implicitly secondary. This leaves us to wonder whether this has made it easier for counter-insurgency to take root in the movement through “community policing” and its corollary, the self-policing of demonstrations and movements within the bounds of non-violence. Fact-Checking: A Critical Necessity for the Movement

We believe that the biggest danger facing the current movement was already present at the Battle of the Third Precinct—namely, the danger of rumors and paranoia. We maintain that the practice of “fact checking” is crucial for the current movement to minimize confusion about the terrain and internal distrust about its own composition.

We heard a litany of rumors throughout Day Two. We were told repeatedly that riot police reinforcements were on their way to kettle us. We were warned by fleeing crowd members that the National Guard was “twenty minutes away.” A white lady pulled up alongside us in her van and screamed “THE GAS LINES IN THE BURNING AUTO-ZONE ARE GONNA BLOWWWW!!!” All of these rumors proved to be false. As expres-

sions of panicked anxiety, they always produced the same effect: to make the crowd second-guess their power. It was almost as if certain members of the crowd experienced a form of vertigo in the face of the power that they nonetheless helped to forge. It is necessary to interrupt the rumors by asking questions of those repeating them. There are simple questions that we can ask to halt the spread of fear and rumors that have the effect of weakening the crowd. "How do you know this?" "Who told you this?" "What is the source of your information?" "Is this a confirmed fact?" "The evidence seems inconclusive; what assumptions are you using to make a judgment?"

Along with rumors, there is also the problem of attributing disproportionate importance to certain features of the conflict. Going into Day Two, one of the dominant storylines was the threat of "Boogaloo boys," who had showed up the previous day. This surprised us because we didn't encounter them on Day One. We saw half a dozen of them on Day Two, but they had relegated themselves to the sidelines of an event that outstripped them. Despite their proclaimed sympathy with George Floyd, a couple of them later stood guard in front of a business to defend it from looters. This demonstrated not only the limit of their claimed solidarity, but also of their strategic sensibility. Finally, we awoke on Day Three to so-called reports that either police provocateurs or outside agitators were responsible for the previous day's destruction. Target, Cub Foods, Autozone, Wendy's, and a half-constructed condominium high rise had all gone up in flames by the end of the night. We cannot discount the possibility that any number of hostile forces sought to smear the crowd by escalating the destruction of property. If that is true, however, it cannot be denied that their plan backfired spectacularly.

In general, the crowd looked upon these sublime fires with awe and approval. Even on the second night, when the condominium development became fully engulfed, the crowd sat across from it on 26th Avenue and rested as if gathered around a bonfire. Each structure fire contributed to the material abolition of the existing state of things and the reduction to ash became the crowd's seal of victory. Instead of believing the rumors about provocateurs or agitators, we find it more plausible that people who have been oppressed for centuries, who are poor, and who are staring down the barrel of a Second Great Depression would rather set the world on fire than suffer the sight of its order. We interpret the structure fires as signifying that the crowd knew that the structures of the police, white supremacy, and class are based in material forces and buildings.

For this reason, we maintain that we should assess the threat posed by possible provocateurs, infiltrators, and agitators on the basis of whether their actions directly enhance or diminish the power of the crowd. We have learned that dozens of structure fires are not enough to diminish "public support" for the movement— though no one could have imagined this beforehand. However, those who filmed crowd members destroying property or breaking the law—regardless of whether they intended to inform law enforcement agencies—posed a material threat to the crowd, because in addition to bolstering confusion and fear, they empowered the state with access to information.

Postscript: Visions of the Commune

Ever since Guy Debord's 1965 text "The Decline and Fall of the Spectacle-Commodity Economy," there has been a rich tradition of memorializing the emergence of communal social life in riots. Riots abolish capitalist social relations, which allows for new relations between people and the things that make up their world. Here is our evidence.

When the liquor store was opened, dozens came out with cases of beer, which were set on the ground with swagger for everyone to share. The crowd's beer of choice was Corona.

We saw a man walk calmly out of the store with both arms full of whiskey. He gave one to each person he passed as he walked off to rejoin the fight. Some of the emptied liquor bottles on the street were later thrown at the police.

With buildings aflame all around us, a man walked by and said to no one in particular, "That tobacco shop used to have a great deal on loosies... oh well. Fuck 'em."

We saw a woman walking a grocery cart full of Pampers and steaks back to her house. A group that was taking a snack and water break on the corner clapped in applause as she rolled by.

After a group opened the Autozone, people sat inside smoking cigarettes as they watched the battle between cops and rebels from behind the front window. One could see them pointing back and forth between the police and elements in the crowd as they spoke and nodding in response to each other. Were they seeing the same things we were seeing?

We shopped for shoes in the ransacked storeroom of a looted Foot Locker. The floor was covered wall to wall with half-destroyed shoeboxes, tissue paper, and shoes. People called out for sizes and types as they rummaged. We spent fifteen minutes just to find a matching pair until we heard the din of battle and dipped.

On Day Three, the floors of the grocery stores that had been partially burned out were covered in inches of sprinkler water and a foul mix of food that had been thrown from the shelves. Still, people in rain boots could be found inside combing over the remaining goods like they were shopping for deals. Gleaners helped each other step over dangerous objects and, again, shared their loot outside.

As the police made their retreat, a young Somali woman dressed in traditional garb celebrated by digging up a landscaping brick and unceremoniously heaving it through a bus stop shelter window. Her friends—also traditionally dressed—raised their fists and danced.

A masked shirtless man skipped past the burning Precinct and pumped his fists, shouting, "COVID IS OVER!" while twenty feet away, some teenage girls took a group selfie. Instead of saying "Cheese!" they said "Death to the pigs!" Lasers flashed across the smoke-filled sky at a police helicopter overhead.

We passed a liquor store that was being looted as we walked away from the best party on Earth. A mother and her two young teenagers rolled up in their car and asked if there was any good booze left. "Hell yea! Get some!" The daughter grinned and said, "Come on! I'll help you Mommy!" They donned their COVID masks and marched off.

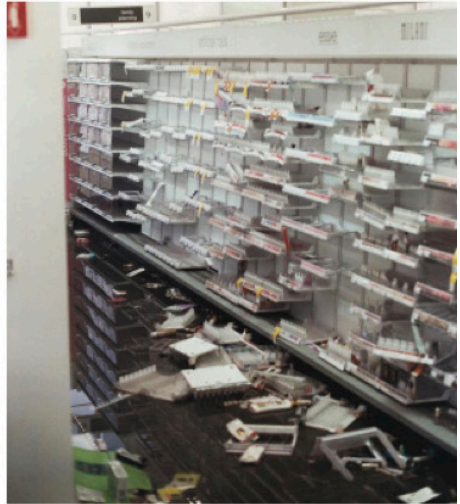
A day later, before the assault on the Fifth Precinct, there was mass looting in the Midtown neighborhood. A young kid who couldn't be more than seven or eight years old walked up to us with a whiskey bottle sporting a rag coming out the top. "Y'all got a light?" We laughed and asked, "What do you wanna hit?" He pointed to a friendly grocery store and we asked if he could find "an enemy target." He immediately turned to the US Bank across the street.



May 28: Inside the liberated & gutted Target across lake street from the third precinct



May 28: The 3rd Precinct during the day. It was set alight that night



May 29: The beauty supply section of a looted Walgreens on Lake Street, just east of 3rd Precinct.



May 29: Graffiti on a K-mart.



May 28: A looted pawn shop east of the 3rd precinct on Lake street about to catch fire. The story spread the the previous night the owener had shot and killed some



May 28: The back of the same pawn shop on fire

Unheard Voices: Are Police Participating In Sex Trafficking In Milwaukee?

by Netscape Negro Jun 24

The media world is constantly on fire with scandalous tales of people like the late billionaire financier sex criminal Jeffrey Epstein, and more recently, the widespread protests in the wake of the murder of George Floyd have garnered nonstop attention. However, at the intersection of sexual violence near the heart of power, and police reform/abolition, is a little big story that has only been covered by local news as of now. If you turn on CNN I'm sure you'll get analysis of the president's latest tweets, instead of the horror that broke to the surface of Milwaukee last night. For those of us not in Milwaukee, including myself, last night came as an incredible shock. According to sources following the case, last night, it seems that a coalition of community members uncovered a set of homes that were trafficking missing black children, apparently at the behest of both the church, local police, and registered sex offenders. This strange story doesn't end or begin there, and as we'll see, something truly sinister is happening, and this is only a fragment of a possibly massive organism of cruelty.

This massive story begins with an unfortunately common incident, a young black child went missing on Sunday. This was not the first, nor was this an isolated incident, as other families began to suspect that someone was behind this. According to a tweet by someone following the case, the parents had contacted authorities who had stonewalled, saying that they were, "not endangered". As a result, no amber alert was ever issued for the now two children missing. On Tuesday night, the mother of one of the missing girls was able to ping the cellphone of one of the missing girls to a two story townhouse in Milwaukee. The mother, along with several others went to the property, in addition to calling police, who ignored them for 10 hours. An attempt at entry was made, and someone from within the house shot at the group, no injuries were reported. The shots were heard much louder than the phone call, and police arrived at the scene. The people within the home were taken into custody. Immediately after, the report from people on the ground starts to diverge from the police and media narrative.

After the arrests were made, a crowd began to form, and cops began to circle the original location, as well as a second location that was deemed to be connected. Many social media posts and livestreams began to spring up, as well as the aforementioned posts cited above. During this, a search party of people recovered the two girls from the location. Police on the scene, claimed to have not seen any children during their search, something that is flat out untrue. The pictures and videos that were recovered by the search

party were heartbreaking. During the search party, unknown people were taken into custody anonymously via tarps and placed into an unmarked van. The owner of the property was claimed to have escaped by police, and yet people on the ground claim that he had Ted to the van parked on the second property.



Sometime after, the protesters noticed a fire in the second location as well as in the van. While police claim that the protesters started the fire, people on the ground had not yet entered the van nor the second property, of which police were first on the scene to. In an attempt to salvage evidence, people entered the home, and found several documents already burnt near the center of the blaze. Some papers were recovered, including what is allegedly (this document has not been released) a time schedule of what times the girls were solicited out, and the name of someone who was connected to this. That name was of the property owner, Mike Bartsch, a disaster recovery specialist who had been working as a spiritual leader for children at local youth camps. This person serves as a senior board member of this group, and has been working with them as far back as 2014, though he does have other ties to local Lutheran groups. Another identity recovered was the

name of Roderick Bowie, a registered sex offender, who had apparently been in repeated contact with the trafficked people, of which there are 20 missing children suspected of having been sent through this home, according to people familiar with the area. One girl was found nearby in October, and police had apparently refused to investigate further out of a lack of evidence, though bloody clothes had been found in the area. The home has been politely scrubbed by their former realtor in an attempt to further obfuscate this tangled web, though archives are available.

Shortly after this, riot cops came to the location and began attacking people who were stationed outside this area. Despite overwhelming evidence that there was a trafficking organization, they shot rubber bullets and tear gas at the people attempting to investigate. Due to the infinite compassion of the people there, no officers were harmed, and firefighters began to put out the blaze as people drew back. Finally, nearly 72 hours after this event had started, the media began to arrive with a helicopter to survey the area. The first write up about the story to appear online came from the local ABC station. This article was only 18 sentences long and repeated nearly verbatim what the police had said. For the 20+ Black children, they get less than a sentence each for their stories. Their names and families will be plastered all over local news forever, and yet not a single breath was given to the people behind this, out of respect for the little black girls whose lives will be forever changed by this ordeal in numerous ways, I refuse to print their names to make them part of the spectacle. As for the Milwaukee PD, their first media soundbite was that "[We] have not confirmed that the girls were found because they said they have not been contacted". As for Police Chief Alfonso Morales, he claims that no evidence of trafficking has been found and that the "unruly mob" will be investigated as well. In a theater world where Black bodies murdered by police are constantly on display, this brief peepshow into the dark underbelly of this trauma cabaret shows that police are, at best not on the side of the communities they claim to protect, and very well may be actively serving interests directly against the towns on their badges.

Research Determines Protests Did Not Cause Spike In Coronavirus Cases

Tommy Beer // Forbes // July 1, 2020

Protests against systemic racism held in 300-plus U.S. cities following the death of George Floyd did not cause a significant increase in coronavirus infections, according to a team of economists who have published their findings in a 60-page paper released by the National Bureau of Economic Research; these somewhat surprising results are supported by Covid-19 testing data in many populous cities where demonstrations were held.

Key Facts:

- In the immediate aftermath of Floyd's death, health officials expressed great concern that protesters, potentially yelling and shouting in very close proximity, would quickly spread the virus, which might lead to devastating outbreaks.
- However, researchers found "no evidence that urban protests reignited Covid-19 case growth during the more than three weeks following protest onset."
- In fact, they determined that, based on cellphone data, "cities which had protests saw an increase in social distancing behavior for the overall population relative to cities that did not," leading to "modest evidence of a small longer-run case growth decline."
- The study's lead author, Dhaval Dave of Bentley University, said, "In many cities, the protests actually seemed to lead to a net increase in social distancing, as more people who did not protest decided to stay off the streets."
- The study used newly collected data from 315 of the largest U.S. cities and documents that protests took place in 281 of those cities.
- The authors prereleased the paper last week, and it has not yet been peer-reviewed.

Key Background:

The study's conclusions are supported by Covid-19 testing data in many of the cities that were home to prevalent protesting. For instance, the Minneapolis Department of Health reported that more than 15,000 people were tested at centers set up in communities affected by the protests, and 1.7% of tests came back positive—below the statewide average of about 3.6%. According to the Washington Post, protest attendees in Minneapolis returned positivity rates of less than 1% and that “officials believe the low infection rates reflect that the protests were outside, that most people wore masks and that people spent most of their time in motion, circulating through the crowd.” NPR reported last week that parties—not protests—are believed to have caused coronavirus spikes in Washington. “We’re finding that the social events and gatherings, these parties where people aren’t wearing masks, are our primary source of infection,” said Erika Lautenbach, a local county Health Department director.

Tangent:

Earlier this week, House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy partly blamed increased coronavirus cases on protesters. “When I looked at that drone view of [Los Angeles], where it was almost a mile-long shoulder-to-shoulder of people, and they’re expressing, they’re vocal . . . and now we’re finding that’s the easiest way to transmit to one another, the long periods of time next to one another,” said McCarthy, a Republican who represents California. In the NBER paper’s abstract, the authors write, “We conclude that predictions of broad negative public health consequences of Black Lives Matter protests were far too narrowly conceived.”

Critical Quote:

“When considering the results’ implications for the entire population: public speech and public health did not trade off against each other in this case,” the authors wrote in the NBER paper.

Here's what you need to know about defunding the police

By Mary Retta

At first, protesters demanded that all four of the Minneapolis police officers responsible for Floyd's death be held accountable, but now, they are increasingly calling to defund the police -- arguing that billions of dollars shouldn't go to police departments in America when public education, housing programs and health departments are drastically underfunded. Some cities, such as Los Angeles and San Francisco, have already pledged to defund their police departments in the coming year, and in Minneapolis, officials have taken this movement one step further -- by pledging to disband their police department all together and create a new community-based effort for public safety. Though "defund the police" has become a rallying cry as of late in the aftermath of Floyd's death and subsequent police brutality, efforts to defund and abolish policing in America are by no means new. Many Black radical activists such as Angela Davis and Malcolm X were vocal abolitionists, arguing for the end of both policing and the prison industrial complex in the US in the 60s. In 2018, abolitionist organizers in Minneapolis were able to divest \$1.1 million dollars away from their police budget and invest in a newly formed Office of Violence Prevention, a community led organization committed to public safety without policing. While this reform was an enormous accomplishment, this happened two years before Floyd was killed in the same city, which is why many advocates point to the need for further defunding and disbanding of police across the country. "Defunding is necessary because instead of using that money for things like police trainings, we want to use that money to invest in things that have actually been shown to improve people's lives -- like healthcare, access to fresh foods and education systems that are reflective of the community's needs," K Agbebiyi, a social worker and abolitionist organizer based in New York City, tells i-D. "Police training, body cameras and other reforms fail to reckon with the fact that policing, as it was conceived and how it is used today, and how it will be used in the future is anti-Black. No amount of reform can fix something with rotten roots." Agbebiyi's argument touches on the highly contested debate in America right now: should the police be defunded or reformed? Many politicians, including Washington, DC Mayor Muriel Bowser and New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, have ignored their citizen's demands for a smaller police budget and have instead put forth a slew of police reforms such as bias training and mandatory body cameras intended to quell police violence against Black Americans. Campaign Zero, a police reform campaign started by activists associated with Black Lives Matter, recently unveiled its #8CantWait campaign which proposed several police reforms including a ban on chokeholds and firing shots at moving vehicles, and requiring comprehensive reporting of all crimes everywhere. Notably, employees at Campaign Zero recently admitted that the campaign was invalid, and many of the higher-ups at the organization resigned in admission that the reforms suggested were not well researched or executed. Many have been extremely dissatisfied with reforms on the table across the country. Activists have taken to social media to call for immediate defunding and disbanding of police in place of reform, and many have pointed out how past instances of reform have been ineffective -- in 2014, Eric Garner was killed by a police officer in New York who held him in a chokehold, even though chokeholds were banned by the New York Police Department in 1993. Others have noted that neighborhoods with less police presence typically also have less crime, and have pointed out that crime in New York City fell significantly when the NYPD went on strike in 2015. In light of this, many believe that defunding the police and investing their budgets in other public goods is a more effective way of keeping communities safe. "Time and time again we have seen police reform policies like mandatory body cameras and community oversight boards fail to keep our communities safe, even despite good intentions," Jessica Shotwell, abolitionist organizer in Black Youth Project 100's DC chapter and a PhD candidate at the University of Maryland, tells i-D. "Police reform assumes that policing

can be 'better', so people advocate for more funding, resources and training for the police. What other job involves killing, harassing and terrorizing, yet gets rewarded through more funding? If we want the police to stop killing us, then we truly have no choice but to abolish the institution itself. A way to start is by defunding police departments and investing in community care, not cops." As an abolitionist, Shotwell aims to not only defund the police, but eventually abolish the policing system in America altogether. She is not alone in this effort. In response to the #8CantWait campaign, several abolitionist organizers created a new campaign entitled #8ToAbolition, which lists eight steps to disbanding and abolishing police forces across the country. The first is to defund the police, followed by demilitarizing communities and removing police from schools. The eventual goal of the campaign is to envision a radical new form of public safety where police no longer exist.

"Defunding the police will look like eliminating their budgets until the police as an institution is abolished," Shotwell says. "We want to be very clear: defunding the police is an abolitionist demand, but it is not our only demand. We demand investment in safe housing, healthcare, access to food, public transportation and sustainable employment. We don't just want to see the police department's budget slashed to zero." Many argue that defunding the police is a crucial first step in changing the way that public safety operates in America. The NYPD, for example, has a \$6 billion annual budget, but spends \$2 billion on homeless services, \$1.7 billion on sanitation and less than \$1.3 billion on environmental protection annually. In the last few weeks, graphics have cropped up across the internet as a brutal illustration of how overfunded our police budgets are compared to spending on public goods: in Madison, WI, the annual police budget is \$86 million dollars while only \$19 million is spent on public health, and in Des Moines, Iowa, a third of the city's budget is spent on police alone. "In my opinion, I think that defunding the police would look like a divest/invest strategy, something my comrades in Free Them All 4 Public Health have really been discussing a lot recently, though the strategy has of course existed before then," Agbebiyi says. "Cities and states would divest and take money away from the police budget, hopefully shrinking the pool of police officers, and diverting the money to other actually essential things like free housing, free healthcare and education budgets."

While most can agree that defunding the police in some form is necessary, given extremely high budgets in most cities, there tends to be a disconnect among Americans about how exactly these budgets should be cut, or what defunding really means. Because the definition of abolition means abolishing the prison industrial complex and policing systems entirely, a lot of abolitionists have been upset by visions of "defunding" that mainstream media have put forth that don't cut police budgets completely, or still allow a policing system to exist in some way. Some people are seemingly scared to go this route or view it as a little extreme; they've taken to social media to ask what would happen in emergencies where one might want to call the police, for example. However, abolitionist organizers hope to set up a new form of community safety. Visions of this differ, but many, such as the model put forth by Minneapolis abolitionist organizers at MPD150, advocate for civilian deescalation training, creating a separate dispatch for fire or medical emergencies, and other tactics that allow people to keep themselves and their loved ones safe in their community -- without a police force present.

In cities that have yet to slash their police budgets, there have been pivotal developments -- perhaps thanks to protesters increased demands and actions. New York recently repealed Civil Rights Law section 50-A, which has shielded police disciplinary records from the public for 44 years. Though not a direct defunding or disbanding of the office, this is an action that moves past reform and allows police to be held accountable for their actions by the public. Though elected officials are the ones who ultimately have the power to determine a city's budget, the demands of their constituents play a large role in what reforms or changes are made in a given location. For example, organizers in MPD150, Black Visions Collective and Reclaim The Block each played a huge role in Minneapolis' decision to disband their police department.

Black queer voices are normally at the forefront of these conversations too -- both historically and in current discussions as well.

“Go to your city council members and mayor’s budget meetings,” Reina Sultan, a writer and abolitionist organizer, tells i-D. “Budgets are moral documents and you can voice your priorities at those meetings.”

As progress towards defunding and disbanding the police continues across the country, many look to abolitionist organizers to help imagine what a police free society could look like, and to lead the charge. You can get involved by signing petitions, writing letters to your local officials and by voting in local elections to ensure that people with your same priorities are in positions of power in your city.

Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police

Because reform won't happen.

By Mariame Kaba

Ms. Kaba is an organizer against criminalization.

Congressional Democrats want to make it easier to identify and prosecute police misconduct; Joe Biden wants to give police departments \$300 million. But efforts to solve police violence through liberal reforms like these have failed for nearly a century.

Enough. We can't reform the police. The only way to diminish police violence is to reduce contact between the public and the police.

There is not a single era in United States history in which the police were not a force of violence against black people. Policing in the South emerged from the slave patrols in the 1700 and 1800s that caught and returned runaway slaves. In the North, the first municipal police departments in the mid-1800s helped quash labor strikes and riots against the rich. Everywhere, they have suppressed marginalized populations to protect the status quo.

So when you see a police officer pressing his knee into a black man's neck until he dies, that's the logical result of policing in America. When a police officer brutalizes a black person, he is doing what he sees as his job.

Now two weeks of nationwide protests have led some to call for defunding the police, while others argue that doing so would make us less safe.

The first thing to point out is that police officers don't do what you think they do. They spend most of their time responding to noise complaints, issuing parking and traffic citations, and dealing with other noncriminal issues. We've been taught to think they "catch the bad guys; they chase the bank robbers; they find the serial killers," said Alex Vitale, the coordinator of the Policing and Social Justice Project at Brooklyn College, in an interview with Jacobin. But this is "a big myth," he said. "The vast majority of police officers make one felony arrest a year. If they make two, they're cop of the month." We can't simply change their job descriptions to focus on the worst of the worst criminals. That's not what they are set up to do.

Second, a "safe" world is not one in which the police keep black and other marginalized people in check through threats of arrest, incarceration, violence and death.

I've been advocating the abolition of the police for years. Regardless of your view on police power — whether you want to get rid of the police or simply to make them less violent — here's an immediate demand we can all make: Cut the number of police in half and cut their budget in half. Fewer police officers equals fewer opportunities for them to brutalize and kill people. The idea is gaining traction in Minneapolis, Dallas, Los Angeles and other cities. History is instructive, not because it offers us a blueprint for how to act in the present but because it can help us ask better questions for the future. The Lexow Committee undertook the first major investigation into police misconduct in New York City in 1894. At the time, the most common complaint against the police was about "clubbing" — "the routine bludgeoning of citizens by patrolmen armed with nightsticks or blackjacks," as the historian Marilyn Johnson has written.

The Wickersham Commission, convened to study the criminal justice system and examine the problem of Prohibition enforcement, offered a scathing indictment in 1931, including evidence of brutal interrogation strategies. It put

the blame on a lack of professionalism among the police.

After the 1967 urban uprisings, the Kerner Commission found that "police actions were 'final' incidents before the outbreak of violence in 12 of the 24 surveyed disorders." Its report listed a now-familiar set of recommendations, like working to build "community support for law enforcement" and reviewing police operations "in the ghetto, to ensure proper conduct by police officers."

These commissions didn't stop the violence; they just served as a kind of counterinsurgent function each time police violence led to protests. Calls for similar reforms were trotted out in response to the brutal police beating of Rodney King in 1991 and the rebellion that followed, and again after the killings of Michael Brown and Eric Garner. The final report of the Obama administration's President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing resulted in procedural tweaks like implicit-bias training, police-community listening sessions, slight alterations of use-of-force policies and systems to identify potentially problematic officers early on.

But even a member of the task force, Tracey Meares, noted in 2017, "policing as we know it must be abolished before it can be transformed." The philosophy undergirding these reforms is that more rules will mean less violence. But police officers break rules all the time. Look what has happened over the past few weeks — police officers slashing tires, shoving old men on camera, and arresting and injuring journalists and protesters. These officers are not worried about repercussions any more than Daniel Pantaleo, the former New York City police officer whose chokehold led to Eric Garner's death; he waved to a camera filming the incident. He knew that the police union would back him up and he was right. He stayed on the job for five more years.

Minneapolis had instituted many of these "best practices" but failed to remove Derek Chauvin from the force despite 17 misconduct complaints over nearly two decades, culminating in the entire world watching as he knelt on George Floyd's neck for almost nine minutes.

Why on earth would we think the same reforms would work now? We need to change our demands. The surest way of reducing police violence is to reduce the power of the police, by cutting budgets and the number of officers.

But don't get me wrong. We are not abandoning our communities to violence. We don't want to just close police departments. We want to make them obsolete.

We should redirect the billions that now go to police departments toward providing health care, housing, education and good jobs. If we did this, there would be less need for the police in the first place.

We can build other ways of responding to harms in our society. Trained "community care workers" could do mental-health checks if someone needs help. Towns could use restorative-justice models instead of throwing people in prison.

What about rape? The current approach hasn't ended it. In fact most rapists never see the inside of a courtroom. Two-thirds of people who experience sexual violence never report it to anyone. Those who file police reports are often dissatisfied with the response. Additionally, police officers themselves commit sexual assault alarmingly often. A study in 2010 found

that sexual misconduct was the second most frequently reported form of police misconduct. In 2015, The Buffalo News found that an officer was caught for sexual misconduct every five days.

When people, especially white people, consider a world without the police, they envision a society as violent as our current one, merely without law enforcement — and they shudder. As a society, we have been so indoctrinated with the idea that we solve problems by policing and caging people that many cannot imagine anything other than prisons and the police as solutions to violence and harm.

People like me who want to abolish prisons and police, however, have a vision of a different society, built on cooperation instead of individualism, on mutual aid instead of self-preservation. What would the country look like if it had billions of extra dollars to spend on housing, food and education for all? This change in society wouldn't happen immediately, but the protests show that many people are ready to embrace a different vision of safety and justice.

When the streets calm and people suggest once again that we hire more black police officers or create more civilian review boards, I hope that we remember all the times those efforts have failed.

Protests and Police Violence in Portland

Reports from Portland, Oregon, where protests have continued every night since the killing of George Floyd, and police and state violence continues to escalate.

For Portland police to provide the name of an officer at protests, you have to give them the officer's name first

Molly Harbarger and Celina Tebor • The Oregonian • 7/10/2020

In order for the Portland Police Bureau to tell you the names of its officers at protests, you first have to provide them with the names of the officers.

Back in June, then-Portland Police Chief Jami Resch first told officers they could cover their name tags on their uniforms with tape, instead showing their personnel number when they were working on the street during protests in Portland. Police officials say they allowed this move because protesters were sharing officers' names and addresses on social media.

The city provides officers with a personnel number, which is typically used as an employee ID. And while officers can be identified internally by these personnel numbers, police officials maintain they are confidential.

Police Bureau policy says uniformed officers will visibly display their bureau name tag and badge on their outer uniform while on duty or at the request of a member of the public – unless doing so would compromise the officer's safety, impair an officer's job performance or when a supervisor has relieved officers of the requirement.

When police first started showing up at protests with "12" or "20" written in marker on masking tape, Alan Kessler, a Portland attorney, asked the city for the list of numbers that line up with police officers' names. He assumed, because the numbers were usually two digits, that they were probably randomly assigned to officers and kept in a spreadsheet somewhere.

But instead he was given a document on June 17 that said that police were instructed to use their employee ID numbers, write them

by hand, and place them over their names or badge numbers.

Kessler pushed back, arguing that he needed the list of city employee ID numbers to match officers' names with the numbers they displayed at protests.

The city responded weeks later, saying they had given the Portland Police Association, the police union, the opportunity to respond. The union claimed that the numbers were exempt from disclosure.

Kessler, a lawyer who has fought the city before on First Amendment issues, called the move "the dirtiest trick I've seen."

The city gave him the option of making an argument for why certain officers should be identified by their employee ID number: Kessler could provide the name of the officer and why he wanted the information.

"It's this catch-22 where they say I cannot tell you their name unless you give me their name," Kessler said. "Which is silly."

Kessler appealed to the Multnomah County District Attorney's office with a letter that calls the tactic a "neat trick." He said he expects to win his appeal, but the city has successfully slowed him down from identifying officers who protesters claim have used excessive force during nightly conflicts at the protests.

"We can't figure out which people are perpetuating that violence without asking the city first and letting them wind up their defense machine," Kessler said.

He also resents that the city is putting the public in the position of having to request information considered sensitive.

Previously, Portland police officials defended their decision to allow the obscuring of name patches because some officers reported their families were contacted and harassed after officers' names and addresses were posted online.

Police officials said that the ID numbers would still allow internal investigations into police actions.

Portland police did not respond to further questions about the policy and whether it limits accountability.

Opinion: 50 Nights of Unrest in Portland

Charlie Warzel • The New York Times • 7/17/2020

Thursday night marked the 50th consecutive night of demonstrations in Portland, Oregon. Since they began, the protests have grown smaller, but clashes between law enforcement officers and protesters have escalated — on July 12, videos circulated of a federal officer shooting a protester in the head with a nonlethal munition, resulting in a skull fracture. Coverage of the unrest has caught the attention of President Trump, who vowed to “dominate” the protesters with federal law enforcement officers.

According to recent reports from Oregon Public Broadcasting and other outlets, federal agents dressed in fatigues have been patrolling the city in unmarked vans, grabbing and detaining protesters, often with no indication of whether they’ve been charged with any crime. “This is an attack on our democracy,” Portland’s mayor, Ted Wheeler, said.

The Oregon senators, Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, as well as Senator Chuck Schumer, have requested a formal federal investigation into the arrests. The Nation reports that the arrests have been carried out by Customs and Border Protection, acting on the president’s “Executive Order on Protecting American Monuments, Memorials, and Statues and Combating Recent Criminal Violence.”

To get a sense of what is unfolding in Portland and what it’s like to be covering protests each night for two months, I spoke with Robert Evans, a freelance journalist based in the city. Mr. Evans is a conflict reporter who has reported from Iraq and Ukraine. He covers far-right extremism for the investigative journalism site Bellingcat and hosts the Behind The Bastards podcast. The conversation has been edited for length and clarity:

What is happening in Portland right now?

What is happening in Portland right now — and I say this as somebody who’s seen war in other countries — it’s as close up to the line as you can get to actual war without live rounds. It’s really hard for

me to see how things go much further without people dying.

The craziest night so far was July 4, where kids stockpiled thousands of dollars in illegal fireworks. They were in the center of downtown where the bulk of the protests happened around the Justice Center.

It started as drunken party, more or less. At random, cops began shooting into the crowd. Protesters coalesced around the idea of firing commercial-grade fireworks into the Justice Center and Federal Courthouse. You had law enforcement firing rubber bullets, foam bullets, pepper balls and tear gas as crowds circled in around the courthouse firing rockets into the side of the building. That went on for a shocking length of time — there was this running three-hour street battle. I couldn't tell whose explosions were whose. Just a constant series of concussions.

The president started taking Portland personally after that.

Federal law enforcement escalated after that, right? That's the story that is making the rounds right now — the unmarked vans rounding up suspected protesters and arresting them.

Since the feds got involved with police it's gotten really brutal. I'd argue we've seen more police brutality in the last 50 days from Portland Police Department than anywhere else in the country. It's brutal but it's also predictable. There are rhythms to the way police work. It's become an orchestrated dance with both sides.

There are warnings and kicking people out of the demonstration area. But the feds have deliberately defied the rhythms. Last Saturday, the crowd was 100 or so. It was very chill — nothing going on beyond the now-normal occupation of the Justice Center. And feds came out grabbing people seemingly at random and beating people with sticks. There was the kid who got shot in the head and his skull was fractured. The federal law enforcement violence is unpredictable violence.

How are people keeping up the stamina after 50 nights of this?

There's this cycle of violence every night but also something ineffable at the center of it. Everyone is kind of aware they're getting some

P.T.S.D. from this and it'll hit so hard when it stops. So you can almost delay it another night by eating the tear gas. And I do think there's also this growing realization that what's happening here is deadly serious. So there's a choice, I think. We'll either accept that this is the country we're living in or we'll just show up until people, nationally, realize that this isn't OK.

Part of it is: what else are you going to do? I live here. I don't want to live in a place where this happens. You can talk about journalistic objectivity all you want but I don't want to live in a place where federal agents in unmarked vans abduct people.

The image of federal police in unmarked vans has captured attention because it feels so nakedly authoritarian. Is what we're seeing just the purest example of American militarized policing or is it something different?

It's something different. It's two things. Law enforcement is extremely lucrative and so you have a huge class of people in a lucrative industry who feel threatened and like they need to do violence to those who want to take the job away. The other is you have Portland, which has put itself in opposition to this president who has made law and order a defining issue of his re-election.

Portland is being used as a bellwether to see what this administration can get away with. And also what works to quell protest. The police tactics don't work. We're on night 50. There's this knowledge, I believe, in the more lucid chunks of the administration, that this problem will get worse in the next month. August is shaping up to be one of the hardest months in our nation's modern history. September may be worse. And it will have to come to a head.

Cities Remove Police from Public Schools

Information compiled from: Star Tribune, Seattle Times, TIME, CBS News, CNN

Police removed

Minneapolis

- The school board voted unanimously to terminate the MPD's contract to provide school resource officers. The district will cease further negotiations with the department and Superintendent Ed Graff must come up with a new plan for school safety by the board's Aug. 18 meeting.
- "I value people and education and life," school board chairwoman Kim Ellison said in an interview. "Now I'm convinced, based on the actions of the Minneapolis Police Department, that we don't have the same values."

Denver

- After four hours of heated comment from the public Thursday evening, the Denver Public Schools Board of Education voted unanimously to order Denver Police Department officers out of school hallways and classrooms.
- "Last night we voted to end the contract with Denver Police, but this was never about an individual officer," Anderson wrote. "It was about dismantling a system that has held children of color down for far too long. I know that this change comes with critics and doubts on our ability to lead this district forward, but together we will craft a brighter future to ensure all students are safe in our schools and are no longer thrust into the school to prison pipeline."

Seattle

- School board members unanimously approved the measure

- The suspension is just one part of a broader proposal to improve school climate for Black students, who last year made up nearly half of students referred to police across the district but just 14% of enrollment at Seattle Public Schools (SPS), according to district data.

Oakland

- the George Floyd Resolution to Eliminate the Oakland Schools Police Department passed 7-0. The district will eliminate its police department by the end of the year and hire more social workers, psychologists or “restorative justice practitioners.” In the coming months, the district will work with students, parents, teachers and the BOP to create a new school safety plan.

Police Remain

Chicago

- By a 4-3 vote, Mayor Lori Lightfoot’s hand-picked board voted down a motion to terminate a \$33 million contract with the Chicago Police Department to provide more than 200 school resource officers and staff sergeants at 72 high schools.
- “I don’t believe that a top-down mandate makes sense in this situation, and I share publicly that my views, my personal views on this, continue to evolve, but I also want to make sure that we do the right thing,” Jackson said before the board’s vote. “If this were an easy issue, and cut and dry, we wouldn’t be spending so much time on it today. There are just a lot of people who have different views about it.”
- Teachers Union rallied outside the board meeting with signs that said: “Counselors, not Cops,” “Clean Schools, not Cops,” and “PPE[personal protective equipment] not CPD.”

Homeland Security making plans to deploy some 150 agents in Chicago this week, with scope of duty unknown by George Pratt & Jeremy Gordner July 20, 2020

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is crafting plans to deploy about 150 federal agents to Chicago this week, the Chicago Tribune has learned, a move that would come amid growing controversy nationally about federal force being used in American cities. The Homeland Security Investigations, or HSI, agents are set to assist other federal law enforcement and Chicago police in crime-fighting efforts, according to sources familiar with the matter, though a specific plan on what the agents will be doing had not been made public. One city official said the city was aware of the plan but not any specifics. The Department of Justice and DHS in Washington did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

One Immigration and Customs Enforcement official in Chicago, who asked not to be named because they were not authorized to speak on the matter, confirmed the deployment was expected to take place. The official noted that the HSI agents, who are part of ICE, would not be involved in immigration or deportation matters. It was unclear where all the agents would be coming from, though many were expected to be from agencies operating in the Chicago area. Questions remained about the chain of command they would fall under. The Chicago Police Department issued a statement Monday. "The Chicago Police Department does not maintain any authority over the federal government's deployment of federal law enforcement agents to the City of Chicago. We regularly work alongside our local and federal law enforcement agency partners toward the common goal of keeping Chicago residents safe," the statement read. "If federal agents are deployed, it is critical that they coordinate with the Chicago Police Department and work alongside us to fight violent crime in Chicago."

Federal agents being used to confront street protesters in Portland, Oregon, has raised alarm in many circles. Chicago, too, has dealt with protests that have led to injuries in recent days. On Saturday, the president of the Chicago police's largest union had sent Trump a letter asking for help from the federal government in putting a lid on crime in the city.

out this week as we start to go in and make sure that the communities, whether it's Chicago or Portland or Milwaukee or some place across the heartland of the country, we need to make sure their communities are safe."

"I am certain you are aware of the chaos currently affecting our city on a regular basis now," John Catanzara, president of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 7, wrote in a letter that was posted on the

FOP's Facebook page. "I am writing to formally ask you for help from the federal government. Mayor Lightfoot has proved to be a complete failure who is either unwilling or unable to maintain law and order here." On Sunday, Black Lives Matter Chicago issued a statement condemning Catanzara's request, saying it "made even more frightening" the news of federal agents rounding up protesters in Portland.

"Escalating the level of surveillance and militarization of our communities does not make us safer, whether it is by federal agents or the Chicago Police Department," the group said in the statement.

"Defunding the police and investing in education, jobs, housing, and mental health care is what is needed to make us safe." In addition to Portland, Homeland Security agents have already been sent to other cities, including Washington, D.C., and Seattle.

Oregon's attorney general sued Homeland Security and the U.S. Marshals Service on Friday, alleging in a complaint that federal agents in Portland, which has continued to see intense unrest since Floyd's death on May 25, unjustifiably grabbed people from the city's streets.

Majority of Seattle council pledges to support Police Department defunding plan laid out by advocates by Daniel Beekman

A majority of Seattle City Council members now say they agree with a high-level proposal by advocates to defund the Police Department by 50% and reallocate the dollars to other community needs.

Council members Lisa Herbold, Dan Strauss and Andrew Lewis added support Thursday to a road map set out by Decriminalize Seattle and King County Equity Now.

They joined colleagues Tammy Morales, Kshama Sawant, Teresa Mosqueda and M. Lorena González, who previously backed the push to reduce the Police Department's annual budget by 50% and promised quick action, while Mayor Jenny Durkan has asked the council to slow down. That means seven of nine council members are on board with the idea, though they have yet to say exactly how they intend to make the cuts; six votes are needed to pass budget-related legislation and to override a mayoral veto. Durkan has not backed a 50% reduction.

Decriminalize Seattle and King County Equity Now are new coalitions that have emerged during the recent Black Lives Matter protests and that count a number of community organizations led by Black people as endorsers.

In a presentation to the council's budget committee Wednesday, they said the Police Department's 2021 budget should be reduced by 50% from the status quo (its budget is \$409 million this year). They also said the department's remaining 2020 budget should be cut by 50% this summer.

Decriminalize Seattle and King County Equity Now laid out a four point proposal for defunding the Police Department:
Remove Seattle's 911 dispatchers from police control
Scale up community-based solutions to public safety
Fund a community-led process to "imagine life beyond policing."
Invest in affordable housing

The aim is "defunding the Seattle Police Department and building a world where we trust and believe in community to provide the safety that we need," Decriminalize Seattle's Jackie Vaughn said at a news conference Thursday.

Morales, Sawant, Mosqueda and González joined coalition representatives and supporters for the remote news conference, pledging to advance the proposal.

Herbold told The Seattle Times she also has committed to the demands, including cuts this summer and a 50% reduction to the Police Department's budget. Strauss is in "100% agreement" with

the four-point proposal and believes the council must “define how 50% cuts occur,” he wrote on Twitter.

Majority of Seattle council pledges to support Police Department defunding plan laid out by advocates | The Seattle Times 7/20/20, 5(55 PM

Councilmember Andrew Lewis later added on Twitter, “To be clear, I am 100% in favor of the (Decriminalize Seattle) demands, including the goal of a 50% cut of SPD’s budget.”

The council is currently considering changes to the city’s 2020 budget, which has been ripped apart by the coronavirus health and economic crisis.

Durkan last month proposed about \$20 million in Police Department cuts as part of a broader plan to close a \$378 million budget hole. Most of those cuts were identified in response to the pandemic, before the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police sparked protests across the country against violence by officers and against institutional racism in law enforcement.

The council has the power to alter Durkan’s 2020 rebalancing package but must do so soon, in the coming weeks. This fall, the mayor and council will hash out 2021’s budget.

In an email about the four-point proposal by Decriminalize Seattle and King County Equity Now, Durkan spokeswoman Kelsey Nyland said, “Our office doesn’t object to any of these ideas – they are all undeniably critical to building a more just and equitable city. But each ... is much more nuanced than it initially might seem, and if we don’t factor that into our discussions ... then we’ll never be able to build actionable and lasting solutions.”

In a letter Wednesday, Senior Deputy Mayor Mike Fong warned the council that major and immediate Police Department cuts could require large numbers of officers to be laid off, arguing the city isn’t ready for that scenario.

‘Significant moment’

At Thursday’s news conference, defunding advocates said community organizations and practitioners — with adequate resources — can protect Seattle residents better than the Police Department in many instances.

The speakers represented the organizations Creative Justice; Trans Women of Color Solidarity Network; Africatown Community Land Trust; East African Community Services; Black Trans Task Force; Greenlight Project; Wa Na Wari; and WA-BLOC.

“We are at a very significant moment,” said Nikkita Oliver, whose nonprofit Creative Justice uses art to empower court-involved young people and resolve their cases. “Seeing the discussion of defunding the police become more than just a chant in the streets.”

K. Wyking Garrett, whose Africatown organization works to combat

displacement by acquiring land and developing housing in the Central District, said militarized police responses don't solve problems. "Police don't stop crime, they respond to crime," he said. "What really prevents crime is access to resources."

Jaelynn Scott from the Black Trans Task Force said Black trans community needs "should be front and center" as Seattle works on community-based strategies to keep people safe.

Mosqueda said she will be "following the lead of Decriminalize Seattle and King County Equity Now" in budget talks. "History has taught us change only comes from those living on the margins rising up," she said.

González apologized for supporting police budget increases in past years, saying she no longer believes the department can be wholly reformed.

Plan advances to allow dismantling Minneapolis Police Dept.

By Steve Karnowski and Amy Forliti • Associated Press • 6/26/2020

The Minneapolis City Council on Friday unanimously advanced a proposal to change the city charter to allow the police department to be dismantled, following widespread criticism of law enforcement over the killing of George Floyd.

The 12-0 vote is just the first step in a process that faces significant bureaucratic obstacles to make the November ballot, where the city's voters would have the final say. It also comes amid a spate of recent shootings in Minnesota's largest city that have heightened many citizens' concerns about talk of dismantling the department.

The proposed amendment, which would replace the police department with a new "Department of Community Safety and Violence Prevention" that has yet to be fully defined, next goes to a policy committee and to the city's Charter Commission for a formal review, at which point citizens and city officials can weigh in.

The Minneapolis force has come under heavy pressure since Floyd, a Black man in handcuffs, died May 25 after a police officer pressed his knee on Floyd's neck for nearly eight minutes. Activists have long accused the department of being unable to change a racist and brutal culture, and earlier this month, a majority of the council proclaimed support for dismantling the department.

Jeremiah Ellison, a member of the council, said after the vote that the charter is one of three major barriers to "transformative public safety," along with the city's police union and the Minnesota Legislature. The charter — which requires the city to have a police department of a certain size — is the one thing the city council has a say over, he said.

According to draft language posted online, the new department

“will have responsibility for public safety services prioritizing a holistic, public health-oriented approach.”

The amendment goes on to say the director of the new agency would have “non-law-enforcement experience in community safety services, including but not limited to public health and/or restorative justice approaches.” It also provides for a division of licensed peace officers who would answer to the department’s director.

Ten years from now, Council member Steve Fletcher predicted, everybody will be looking to emulate the Minneapolis model.

“The path that we’re going to chart will steal the best ideas from everywhere and combine them in away that is uniquely appropriate to our city,” he said.

The board of the city’s police union called the move “irresponsible” without a clear plan for what comes next.

“Politicians are good at making promises, but not at following through on them, and voters should be wary of any promises that delivered by the City Council about how they will figure it out when and if the charter amendment passes,” it said in a statement.

Some activists against police brutality were displeased, too. The Twin Cities Coalition for Justice for Jamar, named for a black man who died in a 2015 confrontation with police, said the amendment would leave power in the hands of the council and mayor’s office, which it said have already failed. The coalition wants the department under community control via a new elected civilian council with the power to hire, fire and prosecute officers.

Civil rights attorney Nekima Levy Armstrong, a sharp critic of the department, said the move is premature and counterproductive to building trust with the Black community amid the current uptick in crime.

“There are a lot of people in the African American community

who are anxious, who are fearful, who are concerned about the irresponsibility of the Minneapolis City Council and the failure to articulate a clear plan of action on what to expect, and they want an opportunity to weigh in on that,” Armstrong said.

Council members who support the change wanted to seize on a groundswell of support for significant policing changes following Floyd’s death. If they don’t get the charter change on the November ballot, their next chance won’t come until November 2021, they say. The measure faces some time pressure to be finalized and clear a potential mayoral veto in time to make this fall’s ballot.

Mayor Jacob Frey, who opposes abolishing the department, said he’s concerned by the draft amendment.

Frey said when something goes wrong now, the chief and the mayor are accountable. Under the new plan, which would have the council appoint a director of the new agency, accountability would be spread among 14 people. Frey, who has said he supports deep structural changes in the existing department, questioned whether policing practices would vary based on ward or other factors.

Suad Mire, 30, a receptionist at a mental health clinic, said she’s “very torn” between supporting dismantling the police and whether reforming the existing department should be the path toward significant change. Mire said she wants to see an end to police brutality but doesn’t know if a society can function without law enforcement. She fears a reduced presence by officers citywide may lead to an increase in violence.

“I just feel like they should be better trained, have new officers and their training should be at least a little longer ... and if a police officer that lives deep down in the suburbs, if they’re going to work in the city then they should know the surroundings and the civilians that are from that city and protect them,” she said. “But I’m not sure about dismantling them.”

Thousands show up for black trans people in nationwide protests

By Lauren Holt

Black transgender activist Raquel Willis stood on the deck of the Brooklyn Museum on Sunday and led thousands of protesters in a chant.

"I believe in my power," she said, as people in the crowd echoed the words back. "I believe in your power. I believe in our power. I believe in black trans power."

The Black Trans Lives Matter rally in New York, one of many nationwide, came after two black trans women -- Dominique "Rem'Mie" Fells, 27, of Philadelphia, and Riah Milton, 25, of Cincinnati, Ohio -- were murdered last week.

There have been 14 reported murders of trans and gender non-conforming people -- including Fells and Milton -- since the start of 2020, according to the Human Rights Campaign. But the number of deaths of trans people are likely undercounted, the Human Rights Campaign said in its report on anti-transgender violence in the US in 2019. Sunday's protest also took place amid global demonstrations in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, which has surged in the wake of George Floyd's death.

It also followed the Trump administration's announcement that it is eliminating an Obama-era regulation prohibiting discrimination in health care against patients who are transgender.

Led by and centered around black trans women, Sunday's march and rally in New York gave trans and gender non-conforming people the opportunity to mourn lives lost, and to vocalize their demand for justice and fair treatment.

"We can't just talk about trans people when they're dying," Eliel Cruz, one of the co-organizers of the event and director of communications at NYC Anti-Violence Project, told CNN. "But what are we doing actively and intentionally to create space for them to be safe and well?"

Protesters wore white as a nod to black history

Protesters wore white and were asked to march silently for the first portion of Sunday's march.

Rally co-organizer Fran Tirado explained this decision was made as a nod to black history. In 1917, nearly 10,000 demonstrators in New York City wore white as they participated in the NAACP's Silent Protest Parade, one of the first public demonstrations of civil rights by black Americans.

"We felt that was a really powerful way to think about our action in relation to a lot of others and how thinking on the metaphor

of like silence equals death and how everything comes together," Tirado, a queer writer and producer, told CNN.

"In the 1917 Silent Parade the men wore black while women and children wore white," co-organizer West Dakota explained in a statement following the protest. "The decision to wear white was to symbolize our unity, and also to take a stand against corporate appropriation of the rainbow flag. We don't need rainbow (merchandise) to show our pride."

The role of organizer in times of civil unrest has most often been filled by the same black and brown people who themselves are facing violence and mistreatment, Tirado said.

It was important to Sunday's organizers -- a group made up primarily of queer people of color, both black and non-black -- that the legwork of organizing be done by non-trans folks, while keeping the spotlight on the partnering trans activists and organizations. "This collective of folks is particularly powerful because it's modeling what is possible when you do have allies and folks who do care and also want to make sure that they're building something that speaks to the hearts of the actual people that they're representing," Willis told CNN in an interview. "So often that doesn't happen."

Melania Brown, the sister of Layleen Polanco, was among the speakers at the New York rally on Sunday. Polanco, an AfroLatinx transgender woman, died in June of 2019 while being held in solitary confinement following an epileptic seizure at Riker's Island. "Black trans lives matter," Brown told the crowd. "My sister's life mattered. All of the loved ones we have lost, all of these beautiful girls that we have lost. Their lives matter. We have to protect them."

Protest partners were all trans-based support organizations

While Sunday's protest came in response to the murders of Fells and Milton, organizers emphasized the necessity to fight for trans lives beyond seeking post-mortem justice.

Like Fells and Milton, the majority of trans people killed are black women. Ninety-one percent of the reported murders of trans and gender non-conforming people in 2019 were black women, and 81% were under the age of 30, according to the Human Rights Campaign, which tracks reported killings. Violence against the transgender community often goes unreported or misreported, as a result of authorities, media reports, and family members misidentifying the dead, the Human Rights Campaign said. All of the partners in Sunday's protest are trans-based support organizations that provide both immediate and longterm assistance to trans people, organizers said.

The Okra Project delivers free meals to trans and gender non-

conforming individuals who are experiencing food insecurity. Gays and Lesbians Living In a Transgender Society (G.L.I.T.S) facilitates assistance, including health care and housing, for transgender sex workers. The organization is nearing its \$1 million fundraising goal following a surge in donations, said Ceyenne Doroshow, G.L.I.T.S founder, on Sunday.

Nationwide solidarity

New York City wasn't the only place where trans activists and allies mobilized.

In Los Angeles on Sunday, an estimated 25,000 people marched through Hollywood during an All Black Lives Matter protest, CNN affiliate KTLA reported. The march was meant to honor Tony McDade, a black transgender man who was shot by a Tallahassee police officer last week.

Protesters carried rainbow flags and balloons, as an aircraft overhead pulled a "Black Lives Matter" banner. "The protest is in direct response to racial injustice, systemic racism, and all forms of oppression," the Black LGBTQIA Advisory Board Council, which organized the protest, said on its website.

A group of people in Chicago organized a Drag March for Change this weekend. They demanded justice for victims of police brutality, as well as a reclassification of violence against transgender individuals as hate crimes, CNN affiliate WLS reported.

In Boston, thousands chanted "no justice, no peace, no anti-trans violence on our streets" as they marched from Franklin Park to Nubian Square, CNN affiliate WCVB reported.

"We know that black people are vulnerable -- especially vulnerable in this society -- and especially trans folks and trans black folks," protester Khery Petersen-Smith told WCVB. "So I think it's important we all show up and build solidarity."

THE DEMANDS OF THE COLLECTIVE BLACK VOICES AT FREE CAPITOL HILL TO THE GOVERNMENT OF SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

demands transcribed by @irie_kenya and @AustinCHowe

In credit to the people who freed Capitol Hill, this list of demands is neither brief nor simplistic. This is no simple request to end police brutality. We demand that the City Council and the Mayor, whoever that may be, implement these policy changes for the cultural and historic advancement of the City of Seattle, and to ease the struggles of its people. This document is to represent the black voices who spoke in victory at the top of 12th & Pine after 9 days of peaceful protest while under constant nightly attack from the Seattle Police Department. These are words from that night, June 8th, 2020.

Justice System Demands:

1. The Seattle Police Department and attached court system are beyond reform. We do not request reform, we demand abolition. We demand that the Seattle Council and the Mayor defund and abolish the Seattle Police Department and the attached Criminal Justice Apparatus. This means 100% of funding, including existing pensions for Seattle Police. At an equal level of priority we also demand that the city disallow the operations of ICE in the city of Seattle.
2. In the transitionary period between now and the dismantlement of the Seattle Police Department, we demand that the use of armed force be banned entirely. No guns, no batons, no riot shields, no chemical weapons, especially against those exercising their First Amendment right as Americans to protest.
3. We demand an end to the school-to-prison pipeline and the abolition of youth jails. Get kids out of prison, get cops out of schools. We also demand that the new youth prison being built in Seattle currently be repurposed.
4. We demand that not the City government, nor the State government, but that the Federal government launch a full-scale investigation into past and current cases of police brutality in

Seattle and Washington, as well as the re-opening of all closed cases reported to the Office of Police Accountability. In particular, we demand that cases particular to Seattle and Washington be reopened where no justice has been served, namely the cases of Iosia Faletofo, Damarius Butts, Isaiah Obet, Tommy Le, Shaun Fuhr, and Charleena Lyles.

5. We demand reparations for victims of police brutality, in a form to be determined.
6. We demand that the City of Seattle make the names of officers involved in police brutality a matter of public record. Anonymity should not even be a privilege in public service.
7. We demand a retrial of all People in Color currently serving a prison sentence for violent crime, by a jury of their peers in their community.
8. We demand decriminalization of the acts of protest, and amnesty for protestors generally, but specifically those involved in what has been termed “The George Floyd Rebellion” against the terrorist cell that previously occupied this area known as the Seattle Police Department. This includes the immediate release of all protestors currently being held in prison after the arrests made at 11th and Pine on Sunday night and early Saturday morning June 7th and 8th, and any other protesters arrested in the past two weeks of the uprising, the name Evan Hreha in particular comes to mind who filmed Seattle police macing a young girl and is now in jail.
9. We demand that the City of Seattle and the State Government release any prisoner currently serving time for a marijuana-related offense and expunge the related conviction.
10. We demand the City of Seattle and State Government release any prisoner currently serving time just for resisting arrest if there are no other related charges, and that those convictions should also be expunged.
11. We demand that prisoners currently serving time be given the full and unrestricted right to vote, and for Washington State to pass

legislation specifically breaking from Federal law that prevents felons from being able to vote.

12. We demand an end to prosecutorial immunity for police officers in the time between now and the dissolution of the SPD and extant justice system.
13. We demand the abolition of imprisonment, generally speaking, but especially the abolition of both youth prisons and privately-owned, for-profit prisons.
14. We demand in replacement of the current criminal justice system the creation of restorative/transformational accountability programs as a replacement for imprisonment.
15. We demand autonomy be given to the people to create localized anti-crime systems.
16. We demand that the Seattle Police Department, between now and the time of its abolition in the near future, empty its “lost and found” and return property owned by denizens of the city.
17. We demand justice for those who have been sexually harassed or abused by the Seattle Police Department or prison guards in the state of Washington.
18. We demand that between now and the abolition of the SPD that each and every SPD officer turn on their body cameras, and that the body camera video of all Seattle police should be a matter of easily accessible public record.
19. We demand that the funding previously used for Seattle Police be redirected into:
 - Socialized Health and Medicine for the City of Seattle.
 - Free public housing, because housing is a right, not a privilege.
 - Public education, to decrease the average class size in city schools and increase teacher salary.
 - Naturalization services for immigrants to the United States living here undocumented. (We demand they be called “undocumented” because no person is illegal.)
 - General community development. Parks, etc.

Economic Demands:

1. We demand the de-gentrification of Seattle, starting with rent control.
2. We demand the restoration of city funding for arts and culture to re-establish the once-rich local cultural identity of Seattle.
3. We demand free college for the people of the state of Washington, due to the overwhelming effect that education has on economic success, and the correlated overwhelming impact of poverty on people of color, as a form of reparations for the treatment of Black people in this state and country.
4. We demand that between now and the abolition of the SPD that Seattle Police be prohibited from performing “homeless sweeps” that displace and disturb our homeless neighbors, and on equal footing we demand an end to all evictions.
5. We demand a decentralized election process to give the citizens of Seattle a greater ability to select candidates for public office such that we are not forced to choose at the poll between equally undesirable options. There are multiple systems and policies in place which make it impractical at best for working-class people to run for public office, all of which must go, starting with any fees associated with applying to run for public office.

Health and Human Services Demands:

1. We demand the hospitals and care facilities of Seattle employ black doctors and nurses specifically to help care for black patients.
2. We demand the people of Seattle seek out and proudly support Black-owned businesses. Your money is our power and sustainability.
3. We demand that the city create an entirely separate system staffed by mental health experts to respond to 911 calls pertaining to mental health crises, and insist that all involved in such a program be put through thorough, rigorous training in conflict de-escalation.

Education Demands:

1. We demand that the history of Black and Native Americans be given a significantly greater focus in the Washington State education curriculum.
2. We demand that thorough anti-bias training become a legal requirement for all jobs in the education system, as well as in the medical profession and in mass media.
3. We demand the City of Seattle and State of Washington remove any and all monuments dedicated to historical figures of the Confederacy, whose treasonous attempts to build an America with slavery as a permanent fixture were an affront to the human race.

Although we have liberated Free Capitol Hill in the name of the people of Seattle, we must not forget that we stand on land already once stolen from the Duwamish People, the first people of Seattle, and whose brother, John T. Williams of the Nuu-chah-nulth tribe up north was murdered by the Seattle Police Department 10 years ago.

Black Lives Matter – All day, Every day.



FROM ATLANTA TO PALESTINE: OUR STRUGGLES ARE INTERTWINED

Da'Shaun Harrison, Eva, Bisan, and Osama // Wear Your Voice Magazine // June 18, 2020

Over the span of mere days, Atlantans have bore witness to yet another murder of a Black person at the hands of police, the resignation of police chief Erika Shields, and uprisings against state violence continue to press on. Following the now-former police chief's resignation, over eight other police officers resigned from their posts, citing "low morale" as their reasoning. In Shields's absence, it has been reported that Deputy Chief Rodney Bryant would step in as the interim police chief.

In 2014, the Atlanta Police Department (APD) published a press release noting that Bryant had "completed a two-week public safety program and exchange focused on new public safety techniques and technologies." This training took place in apartheid Israel through the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange (GILEE)—a program that APD has supported since it was founded in 1992. GILEE's sole purpose is to serve as a cross-national service for Georgia officers to learn "best practices on counterterrorism measures" from the Zionist Entity.

Instead of aligning herself with the impoverished and otherwise marginalized Black Atlantans who suffer the violence of the American empire, our mayor, Keisha Lance Bottoms, and her underlings have fully stepped into their role as members of The Establishment and the Black Elite, using their position as Black (mis)leaders to aid in the perpetuation of global anti-Blackness by appointing Bryant to this position. This is not new for her. In fact, both

through her tenure as mayor and previously as a member of city council, Keisha Lance Bottoms has made it her business to undermine progress towards liberation—even going so far as to use her authoritative position to expand the powers of the police state.

For upwards of a decade, organizers and community members in Atlanta have called for APD to withdraw its participation in GILEE, all to no avail. In tandem with other police departments in the Atlanta Metro area, these officers return to our city equipped, prepared, and enthusiastic to reproduce terroristic violence on Black people like Kathryn Johnston, Alexia Christian, Anthony Hill, Nicholas Thomas, Jamarion Robinson, Caine Rogers, Oscar Cain, Jimmy Atchison, D'etrick Griffin, and now Rayshard Brooks. As we have witnessed in these three weeks of protests, alone, they have the state-backing and the resources to tear gas us, shoot us with their rubber bullets, and even threaten the use of a Long Range Acoustic Device (LRAD). This is only made possible by this city's (mis)leaders' commitment to our deaths through state-sanctioned murder—in all of its varying forms.

In Palestine, the Zionist Entity's colonial system ensures the continued subjugation of the Palestinian people through mass movement restrictions, home demolitions, theft of water and land, mass incarceration, and the denial of Palestinian refugees from returning to their land. The Zionist Entity's commitment to Palestinian death is epitomized by its overwhelming military assaults on Gaza which have killed thousands. In spite of the Zionist Entity's crimes committed against the Palestinian people, the Palestinian Authority operates only to secure its political hegemony and capital. In parallel with the Black (mis)leadership, these Palestinian compradors claim that partnership with the Zionists is necessary for the sake of peace and state-development. These claims ring hollow for the Palestinian masses, who continue their just struggle against Zionist settler-colonialism.

To this point, the Zionist Entity's police execution of Eyad Hallaq just a few weeks ago mirrors that of Rayshard Brooks's; their deaths exist harmoniously in that both America and the Zionist Entity are made "legitimate" only through the continued murders of Black and Palestinian people. The priorities of the Atlanta government and the Zionist Entity are in contradiction to the safety of our peoples.

As it is also Pride month, let it be known that we will not accept empty gestures of TLGBQ+ support by our so-called leaders under the guise of being “progressive.” In an orientalist effort to justify its existence and pander to neoliberal sentiments, the Zionist Entity carries out “pinkwashing,” presenting itself to the world as “the only democratic state in the Middle East” which allows the free expression of TLGBQ+ individuals in its society. In reality, the IDF has been known to entrap queer Palestinians and threaten outing them to their families, humiliating them if they do not agree to collaborate with the oppressive Israeli regime. Zionist missiles do not change direction when a queer Palestinian is in range. Furthermore, to paint itself as queer-friendly, the Zionist Entity hosts yearly pride parades and festivals and asserts that it “adamantly protects the rights of its gay citizens,” much like how “rainbow capitalism” pervades Atlanta in its effort to live up to “the city too busy to hate.”

Atlanta paints the crosswalks of white, affluent parts of this city with colors of the rainbow while its leadership actively proposes legislation that would further criminalize sex work—an occupation disproportionately engaged by Black trans people in this city. Atlanta’s leadership hired a white lesbian woman to be APD’s police chief while at least 1/3 of this city’s homeless youth remain TLGBQ+. Annually, there are Pride events for the entire month of June and for a week in September, yet APD remains the greatest threat to Black trans women in this city. Overwhelmingly, rainbow capitalism and pinkwashing are used as propagandizing tools by America and Apartheid Israel to discard of queer and trans Black and Palestinian people, and to project a faux image of progressivism by co-opting our movements.

All of these things considered, this is a statement—written in its entirety by Black and Palestinian radical organizers—intended to condemn Bryant, GILEE, and all other Black Atlanta and Zionist cops and politicians who give their bodies and platforms to the maintenance of this white supremacist imperialist capitalist patriarchy by way of borders, policing, and the occupation of stolen land.

Bottoms’s failure to halt APD’s participation in GILEE, as well as her failure to end Operation WHIPLASH, scale back Atlanta’s astronomical surveillance, and make any notable contributions to the fight to stop the displacement of legacy Black residents, brings her commitment to misleadership and the

ultimate “black on black crime” to a global scale.

In 2017, Da’Shaun Harrison wrote of Atlanta’s former mayor, Kasim Reed, and other Black politicians:

“While the harm Black individuals encounter during daily survival are frequently used to justify the flawed concept of ‘black-on-black crime’, the audacious nature of white supremacy to use Black [folks’] bodies to further an agenda for systemic eradication [of people and total movements] is the true ‘black-on-black crime’, in that Black [folks’] bodies become agents of the machine — white supremacy.

If white supremacy can recruit and weaponize Black American people to advocate for and push its policies, it can undermine the importance of the Black Liberation Movement and create what is ultimately the only and real black-on-black crime.”

As this is the case, for the crimes committed against the people of our city and for its collusion with the Israeli ethnostate, we will disband the Atlanta Police Department. As part of the abolition of APD, we intend to ensure that no officer ever participates in an international law enforcement exchange again. The points of alignment between Black people in Atlanta and the Palestinian people are many, and have been named time and time again by countless Black and non-Black Palestinian thought leaders, scholars, and organizers. The most critical connection between these two bodies of people is that we will forever resist the powers of white supremacy that have tried and failed to kill us.

We write this in full solidarity with all oppressed peoples across the globe who struggle under the thumb of imperialism. And more specifically, **this is a statement of solidarity between our two peoples, Palestinians and Black people, as we resist against Israeli and American genocide.** It is also a statement which seeks to name that the material collaboration of our enemies demonstrates to us how connected we are as siblings in struggle.

As we continue to occupy the streets of Atlanta for the third week in a row, we do so with a global analysis of imperialism, capitalism, Zionism, and anti-Blackness. The only way we win is together, and we **will** win.

Israel rubberstamps 50 years of land theft

Aseel AlBajeh

The year 2020 is set to mark yet another reverse for Palestinian hopes of self-determination and freedom from oppression. From a US "Vision for Peace" in January offering Israel large parts of the occupied West Bank to an Israeli unity government in May promising to proceed with the illegal annexation of exactly such territory, a new catastrophe is at the door. But why has Israel waited for more than half a century to pursue formal annexation?

After all, the facts on the ground already constitute a de facto annexation of the West Bank, which has been undertaken at no great cost to Israel's carefully constructed image as the "only democracy in the Middle East," along with the formal annexations of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights (in Syria) all captured during the 1967 war.

The answer lies in systematic Israeli settler-colonial designs that date back to 1948 and which seek the replacement of the indigenous population by an imported one. The delay in annexation should be understood as a reflection of the West Bank's demography, which, with its large Palestinian population, had to be properly prepared before any more formal move could be made. That preparation is now complete in significant parts of the West Bank.

Annexation of East Jerusalem

After its capture of the West Bank in 1967, Israel immediately and illegally extended its jurisdiction and administration to East Jerusalem and 28 surrounding villages. In 1980, it formally annexed East Jerusalem, by passing the Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel. Such rapid annexation came as a result of the demographic balance in Jerusalem, which in 1967 was 74 percent Jewish to 26 percent Palestinian.

Indeed, the demographic balance is fundamental to Israeli policy. Until the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, there was never a Jewish majority in Palestine and it was only with the dislodgement of more than half of all Palestinians from their homes and lands that such a majority was secured.

Israel carefully controlled its population ratio between Jews and non-Jews in the years between 1948 and 1967. By not allowing refugees to return, destroying their villages and confiscating their homes (with the 1950 Absentee Property Law – which even resulted in the absurd "present absentee" category in order to confiscate the homes of those who had been internally displaced) Israel worked hard to maintain this Jewish majority.

As a result, the Jewish-Palestinian ratio was already in place in Jerusalem by 1967.

Since 1967, Israel has been working on maintaining this ratio in a

number of ways in the city: through discriminatory planning laws, land expropriation and house demolitions, alongside ever-expanding settlements.

One of the tools it has deployed – in the name of security – is the construction of a massive wall in the West Bank. The route of the wall is instructive. It has, in effect, been wrapped around 80 per cent of Israeli settlers in the West Bank, including all East Jerusalem settlers. It has, therefore, paved the way for the annexation of the largest settlements.

Michael Lynk, the UN's special rapporteur on the occupied West Bank and Gaza, has noted that in Jerusalem large Palestinian neighborhoods were deliberately located outside the wall. That obviated any obligation to provide municipal services and cut off one third of Palestinian Jerusalemites from the remainder of the West Bank. Israel has also targeted those who remain. Palestinians in East Jerusalem are generally granted permanent residency status. They can apply for citizenship, but that involves pledging loyalty to Israel. Compelling Palestinians to swear allegiance to their occupiers is illegal under international law and would imply that Palestinian Jerusalemites recognize Israel's annexation, something they have always refused to do.

Since 1967, however, residency revocation has been one of many policies aiming at forcibly transferring Palestinians out of the city. Since 1995, such revocation can be imposed on any Palestinian who cannot prove their "center of life" is in the city. In essence, if a Palestinian Jerusalemite spends too much time away from the city, they can lose their residency rights.

Since 2006, revocation can also be imposed punitively on the basis of a "breach of allegiance," defined loosely as a lack of loyalty to the State of Israel.

More than 14,500 Palestinians from Jerusalem have lost their legal status since 1967.

From de facto to de jure annexation

That Israel has decided it is time to turn de facto annexation into de jure annexation at this moment should be read as signaling the successful realization of Israel's longstanding policy to annex the land with the least Palestinian population.

It has taken half a century to create irreversible facts on the ground that flipped the demographic reality in areas Israel did not want in the West Bank.

As early as the fourth day of the 1967 war, Israel initiated its planning for settlements. As of 2019, there were just over 240 settlements in the West Bank with more than 620,000 settlers. Settler colonialism begins with settlement and proceeds by replacing the original population.

An illustrative model of how Israel has effectively replaced the Pal-

estinian population is the Jordan Valley, which is part of the area that the new Israeli government is reportedly seeking to annex, amounting to almost 30 percent of the West Bank.

According to the Oslo accords, almost 90 percent of the Jordan Valley was designated as being under full Israeli military and civilian control. It is part of a zone known as Area C.

Despite the fact that the area was supposed to be transferred to the Palestinian Authority's jurisdiction within two years of the signing of the Oslo accords in 1993, Israel maintained its control over security, planning and construction. The Oslo accords and the "legal regime of segregation" have enabled Israel to consolidate its sovereignty there. Israeli settlers and Palestinians living in Area C are, therefore, subject to separate legal systems. Settlers enjoy the protections afforded by Israeli civilian law but Palestinians will be hauled before military courts with a conviction rate of almost 100 percent.

Policies such as land appropriation, settlement building, exploitation of the rich natural resources of the area for the benefit of settlers, impediments to movement, and nearly-impossible-to-obtain building

permits allowing Israel's military a wide remit to demolish houses, have all combined to create a hostile and coercive environment for indigenous Palestinians in the Jordan Valley.

The result has been the forcible transfer of the Palestinian population from the area.

Before 1967, there were some 250,000 Palestinians in the area. By 2016, that number had shrunk to less than 54,000.

The Jordan Valley is not a unique case. Israel has prepared the West Bank generally for formal annexation by creating a physical infrastructure – with settlements, the wall and roads reserved for Israelis – that leaves what Michael Lynk has called "a Palestinian bantustan, an archipelago of disconnected islands of territory, completely surrounded and divided up by Israel and unconnected to the outside world."

The lesson should have been long learned from Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem. Israel is not hiding its designs. And yet the world cannot even agree on how to respond to such patently illegal behavior.

The European Union's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell confirmed that the EU is "far away" from sanctioning Israel on its recent annexation plans of the West Bank.

This is the last chance for the world's most powerful governments and institutions to reconsider how they treat Israel. Third states need to fulfill their obligations to bring to an end a situation that is in clear transgression of international law, and not to render aid or assistance to Israel.

It is not only Palestinians who will bear the consequences should the world fail them now. The foundation of the entire post-Second World War legal framework is in danger of collapse should Israel's expansionism be allowed to continue without serious repercussions.

An incomplete list of Annexation Day of Rage protests in the US:

July 1

Online/National

- Call on Congress to end the \$3.8 billion in military funding to Israel every year, and instead invest in Black communities, via US Campaign for Palestinian Rights.

California

- Los Angeles: Day of Rage Car Caravan (10:30 am)

- San Diego: Day of Rage - No to Annexation Car Caravan (12 pm)

- San Francisco: Car Caravan from the Civic Center to Israeli Consulate (4:30 pm)

Florida

- Miami: Say No to Annexation of Palestinian Land (4 pm)

Illinois

- Chicago (SW Suburbs): Day of Rage Rally & Car Caravan (4 pm)

New York

- NYC (Bay Ridge): Day of rage against Israeli annexation, racism and repression (4 pm)

Oregon

- Portland: Palestinian Day of Rage (5 pm) July 5

Michigan

Detroit: Day of Rage: Land and Annexation (Note: this action involves an interactive work day on a farm in Waawiyatanong territory followed by a community discussion dinner and bonfire.)

Palestine and Israel: Mapping an annexation

1917 Pre-British Mandate Palestine

- Palestinian
- Jewish

On **October 31, 1917**, British forces conquered **Palestine** from the Ottoman-Turks, ending 1,400 years of Islamic rule over the region.

Before the British Mandate in Palestine, Jews made up around **six percent** of the **total population**.



1918-1947 Jewish immigration from Europe

- Palestinian
- Jewish

Under the British Mandate, the **Jewish population in Palestine** increased from 6 percent (1918) to **33 percent** (1947).



1948 Palestinians expelled

- Palestinian
- Israeli
- Armistice "Green" Line (Created in 1949)

Zionist military forces expelled at least **750,000 Palestinians** and captured **78 percent** of historic Palestine.

The remaining 22 percent was divided into the West Bank and Gaza Strip.



1967

Israel occupies Gaza and the West Bank

- Palestinian (under Israeli occupation)
- Israeli
- Egyptian and Syrian land occupied by Israel

During the June 1967 War, Israel occupied all of historic Palestine and expelled a further **300,000** Palestinians from their homes.



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1993 & 1995 Oslo accords

- Palestinian (under Israeli occupation)
- Israeli
- Area C - (Palestinian under Israeli control)

The occupied West Bank was divided into three areas - A, B and C - as part of the Oslo Accords, signed by the **Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)** and Israel.

Area A 18% Area B 22% Area C 60%



Under Palestinian Control



Under joint Israeli-Palestinian Control



Under Israeli Control

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2020

How big are Palestine and Israel?



Similar in size to:
Cape Town, South Africa (400 km²),
Abbotsford, Canada (375 km²),
Detroit, US (370 km²),
Sheffield, UK (367 km²),
Lucknow, India (349 km²).

Similar in size to:
Delaware, US (6,446 km²),
Perth, Australia (6,418 km²),
Abia State, Nigeria (6,320 km²),
Brasilia, Brazil (5,802 km²),
Brunei (5,765 km²).

Similar in size to:
New Jersey, US (22,591 km²),
El Salvador (21,041 km²),
Slovenia (20,273 km²),
Bengkulu, Indonesia (19,919 km²),
Gauteng, South Africa (18,176 km²).

Surface areas as per the 1949 Green Line boundaries.

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Freedom In The World
By Sharky Loko
incarcerated artist, organizer, & abolitionist

Those who kill their own children and discriminate daily against them because of their color of their skin, those who let the murderers of Blacks remain free, protecting them, and further punishing the Black population because they demand their legitimate rights as free people, How can those who do this consider themselves guardians of freedom???

South Amerika, like the global south, suffers the same miseries, you see it on a daily basis, captured on film same way you see these murderous pigs killing people of color on live t.v. This is the time and era where us the hungry will be hungry no more, the landless will be landless no more, it is time for the peasant, the exploited worker to write his-her-story.

This is a struggle of masses and ideas which will be carried out by US the people that have been mistreated and scorned by imperialism. The government likes to see us as their submissive flock, but is not the people that should fear the government, it is the government that should fear the people!! This system is so terrified to even admit that when they see us in unity, out on the street, barrio and dungeons demanding change, real world social change, freedom, as we sing Fuck The Police! The system and its entire body of regimes and governments! That it is then in that moment that the empire sees the end of an era materializing, they see their own grave diggers, it is during this beautiful time of change that the silent will be silent no more, the once anonymous mass will begin to write hisherstory with OUR own blood – by any means necessary.

It is not a crime to want freedom, it is not a crime to believe in something, it is not a crime to be human and exist!!! It is not a fucking crime to take back and reclaim what has been stolen from us all. Our birth right to freedom and our land – the revolution has been cooking for over 500 years in a pot called colonialism. This is the revolution of the world.

It is time for direct actions, it is this wave of anger that comes from being oppressed that is sweeping across the

land of the planted at this level for the very first time, awakening the oppressed from the long, brutalizing sleep, this "dream" to which we all have been subjected to.

People are politically conscious more now than ever of what's really going on. A few years back it was a difficult task to get people in the hood/dungeon talking about oppression, decolonization, now you see that almost in every corner, cell block, cage, and project yard – you hear the usual FTP followed by a lumpen organization, BLM, or a viva my gente!!

A true activist revolutionary, abolitionist, humanitarian, member of the community, a true leader is guided by a greater feeling of love. It leads by example. In most cases, the people's unity becomes our higher power in a materialized way. One knows you are true to our political line and ideas when you are capable of feeling deeply at any injustice committed against anyone anywhere in the world – this is the most beautiful quality of a revolutionary.

"Hungry People Don't Stay Hungry Forever"

"The Future Is Now"

In struggle & solidarity
Sharky Loko