

The Necessity of Abolishing the Police and Capitalism

New York City Local Statement on the Current Revolt

Black Rose/Rosa Negra NYC Local

6th August 2020

The explosive revolt following the murders of George Floyd, Raynard Brooks, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Loreal Tsingine and Chantel Moore laid bare the collective anger that's been simmering just below the surface in a U.S. society founded on white supremacy and a capitalist system designed to enrich a very few haves at the expense of everyone else. The uprising was a revolt of the Black and Brown people and the have-nots sickened by seeing the video of a Black man being slowly lynched, and tired of living day-to-day with a dim future of precarious jobs, health and housing, unstable food, debt, a degrading climate, and a pandemic-induced depression. The system has failed the have-nots. It's time to uproot it and replace it with a cooperative and democratic society.

The uprising has shifted the public conversation drastically. For example, three months ago the slogan 'Defund the Police' was something that had little circulation beyond anarchist and other radical circles. Today it's mainstream and painted on streets with the permission of local authorities. Corporate politicians like Andrew Cuomo, hardly a 'progressive', suddenly began speaking of 'systemic racism' in the police, health, housing and jobs.

The murders of Mr. Floyd and the others also set off an eruption of potentially revolutionary energy—and liberal overdrive. The revolt put a big dent in the legitimacy of the police, and to a lesser extent, in the state and capitalism, in cities and towns as cops attacked marches of peaceful protesters. Masses of people took over streets, confronted and fought cops, destroyed police property, and pulled down white supremacist and colonialist statues. Aside from turning loose the cops, however, the authorities and their corporate allies spent more energy working overtime to divert the militant anger into channels that wouldn't collapse the system. These efforts took three forms. First was the attempt to drive a wedge in the marchers by differentiating the 'peaceful' ones from the 'thugs' and 'looters'. However, the authorities couldn't quite get together exactly who these 'thugs' were: radical left 'antifa' or white supremacist boogaloo boys? (These same powers naturally ignored that the entire country was founded on looting of land from those who already lived here and the mass kidnapping of people from Africa, not to mention the wholesale looting of wealth over the past twelve years by an assortment of banks, hedge funds, private equity and other unaccountable institutions).

Second, the liberals and their friends have tried to narrow the issues to the police, ignoring jobs, health, housing, education, and crushing levels of debt. Even ‘Defund the Police’ got watered down, becoming instead proposals to ‘reimagine the police’, whatever that’s supposed to mean, or transfer some functions over to other state bureaucracies. ‘Abolish the Police’ turned into vague propositions to reorganize the departments or replace one police force with another. The aforementioned Cuomo is a case in point. Walking back his fine words about systemic racism, he has since told demonstrators after signing a weak ‘police reform’ bill that ‘you don’t need to protest’ anymore because ‘you’ve won’.

Third, the liberal ruling class is working feverishly to take advantage of the fact that, after marching for weeks, protesters are looking for next steps. The liberals are happy to provide in the form of moving from ‘protest’ to ‘politics’; that is, electoral politics, and the Democratic Party in particular. Fortunately, polls show large distrust in politicians and electoral politics in general. However, whether this sentiment can be cohered into blocs of militant activists will depend on the orientation and actions of revolutionary anarchists and others who see the need for non-electoral direct action.

Black Rose/Rosa Negra of the New York Metropolitan Area also sees the need for protesters to discuss next steps. We are calling for anarchists, anti-authoritarians, and revolutionaries to support the formation of Neighborhood Peoples’ Assemblies, independent from all political parties and candidates, across the city to discuss, coordinate and map out strategies to eliminate police terrorism, dismantle jails, raise wages, and create housing and quality education and healthcare that masses of people can afford.

Towards the revolutionary necessity for abolishing the police along with capitalism.

1. **Defund, Disarm, Disband the NYPD** – We are fighting for a world without police. The oppressor classes require police. They are enemies of the masses of people, including Black, indigenous, and all others who are oppressed because of who their relationship to capitalism, white supremacy and settler colonialism. All police should be disbanded in a social revolution. That said, as immediate steps toward that goal, we demand to drastically slash the budget and the number of cops in the NYPD. Remove them from schools and hospitals. Disarm the department of military-grade weapons and vehicles, including chemical agents and rubber bullets. Abolish the bloated PR and media relations section. Disband the department without replacement by private security, metropolitan area forces, or a vast expansion of state social work bureaucracy. Redirect police funds toward restorative justice initiatives and social programs controlled by democratic and cooperative community organizations. Strong communities make the police obsolete.
2. **Eject ICE from the Metro Area** – ICE should never have been established. We demand to remove this intrinsically oppressive agency from the metro area. Their overt cruelty has no place in our communities, and no place in our world. They cannot be given a safe haven to kidnap and disappear entire families into concentration camps. Open all borders.
3. **Dismantle All Prisons & Concentration Camps** – We demand total abolition. Immediately release all non-violent prisoners. Immediately close the concentration camps detaining immigrant children and their families. Invest in community-controlled systems of restorative justice to deal with prisoners accused of violent crimes. Prisons do not prevent or solve violence. They cause, displace, and perpetuate it. The U.S. legal system is wholly

inadequate for dispensing justice. It instead deals injustice. We demand closure of Rikers Island and all jails in the metro area under the direct guidance of democratic and cooperative community organizations. We need robust accountability structures in our communities, not human cages.

4. **Decommodify The Means to Survive** – The freedom to work or starve is no freedom at all. Human survival cannot be a market commodity. We are in the most resource abundant civilization in any stage of human history, and in one of the wealthiest places on Earth. Food, water, health and shelter are basic human rights. Yet access to them is restricted to those who can pay. COVID19 has exposed the failure of a profit-driven healthcare system in causing the needless deaths of thousands. We demand universal, comprehensive and accessible healthcare. Rental housing leaves people precarious when they can't work. End predatory real estate development, speculation, and further privatization of our housing stock. All sites where people live should be cooperative in nature, and people should be free to live where they wish. Access to money should not be a barrier to people's basic needs.
5. **Direct Democracy & Self Governance Now** – We demand freedom. Truly emancipatory freedom that can never be offered by any government or state agency. We have the ability to govern ourselves. We do not need politicians to do things for us. As such, we seek to establish a directly democratic libertarian socialist society. Let's democratize all aspects of our lives, from the work that we do to places we live. We also recognize that U.S. capitalism was built on land stolen from indigenous people. Indigenous people have a right to their territory, their sacred sites and to self-determination. But a free and decolonial future will require organizing and struggle. We must organize at work and in our neighborhoods. We achieve our demands through the formation of popular assemblies in our own neighborhoods where we decide the fate of our communities together: actual democracy. All power to the people!
6. **Revolution: Destroy Capitalism & The Settler Colonialist State** – All of the demands above require the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and the settler colonialist state. By the latter, we are referring to the colonialist tactics of displacement, erasure and extermination. By putting as many settlers as possible onto lands occupied by indigenous peoples and laying claim to those lands, colonizers set out to erase indigenous histories and exterminate their existence through killings, sterilization, blood quantum laws and cultural obliteration. In solidarity with indigenous communities, we call for decolonization of the settler colonial state through the abolition of whiteness, and removing eurocentrist systems, ideas and practices from indigenous lands. The settler colonial state is the fabric of life as we know it in the U.S. and nothing short of revolution can ensure its undoing. The police are the enforcers of capitalist property laws and social relations. As long as private property, the state, and all other hierarchies intrinsic to capitalism remain intact, the police will be necessary to maintain those relationships. At the same time, we cannot simply pull out the rug from underneath our feet. Eliminating capitalism from our world will require a cooperative effort like we have never seen before. It is up to us to build the consciousness, institutions, networks, and alternative

economic models that we need in order to rid ourselves of the tyranny of capitalist social relationships once and for all.

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