

## State Violence, Social Control, and Resistance

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When it comes to the American state, violence and control occur at a level beyond most of the US's state competitors. While perhaps uncomfortable for the average American to reflect upon, the following are simply uncontroversial facts: for example, despite purporting to be the freest country, the US has the world's highest incarceration rate, with over 2.1 million people locked up. Presently, one-quarter of the world's prisoners are imprisoned in the US. Not all groups share equally in this incarceration, as Black males have the highest rate of any comparable group.<sup>1</sup> The US has over 800 foreign military bases located in over 80 countries around the world, a greater number than any other nation, people, or empire in world history—including the Roman and British Empires.<sup>2</sup> The Pentagon has stationed US troops in approximately 160 countries and territories, resulting in the US literally occupying most of the planet. Thus, it is no surprise that the US spends the same amount of its federal budget on military spending (approximately \$600 billion annually) than the next 14 countries combined.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, roughly half of the federal budget is dedicated solely to the military.

Through its justification of “national security” and protection against “terrorism”, the National Security Agency seems to tap into every wire it can, recording billions of computer communications records and one billion phone calls per day, in order to achieve what Noam Chomsky calls “security for state power”.<sup>4</sup> The NSA's data collection includes metadata that documents who nearly every person contacted, for what duration, and

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often the location of the parties involved in that communication. Consequently, the state has the ability to literally pry into the lives of every American (and many people throughout the world), without court order, individual consent, or any popular oversight.<sup>5</sup>

To “secure” the US’s borders, the Obama administration deported approximately 2.5 million people, more than any presidential administration in US history.<sup>6</sup> These deportations disrupt families, split parents apart from their children, send people back to unsafe conditions, and lead to unstable communities. The borders that people must cross to find a better, safer life, are increasingly militarized, staffed with armed patrols (of government employees, private security personnel, as well as right-wing vigilantes), and stretch across treacherous and dangerous terrain. The motivations of the largest group of migrants and refugees—Mexican and other Central Americans—is strongly connected to the fratricidal violence occurring throughout the region for control over the illicit drug trade, which largely services American demand for illegal drugs and the corresponding US “War on Drugs”.

For more than two generations, going back to Nixon, but especially with Reagan, the US has waged a unilateral war upon those who use, sell, and possess certain specified drugs. The aforementioned prison boom is only one effect of the War on Drugs, which has in actuality been a war on poor communities of color. Additionally, American police departments have become militarized. Take, for example, the rapid increase in US cities of SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) units (paramilitary tactical units for sieges and raids). There are more than 100 SWAT raids everyday across the US, mostly targeting low level nonviolent crimes like illegal drug sales and gambling.<sup>7</sup> The US Department of Defense has sold local police forces old caches of automated weaponry, bullet-proof vehicles, and other war-ready gear. Due to the long history of racialized and class-based policing<sup>8</sup>, these police already see the neighborhoods they patrol—especially those that are populated by poor people of color—as enemies of order, civilization, and the US. Consequently, in 2015, nearly 1,000 people, 43 percent of whom were Black and Latino, were shot and killed by the police across the US.<sup>9</sup> Amazingly, the US state is so indifferent to these murders that no government agency even bothers to record such routine occurrences; so 2015 is the first year in which a comprehensive count was up-to-date, albeit supplied by news agencies.

Finally, President Donald Trump’s 2016 presidential campaign was built upon promises of enacting deeper and more aggressive forms of racialized social control on countless marginalized communities of color. These promises included threats of mass deportation (despite declining

immigration rates in the US) and the hyper-criminalization of millions of undocumented immigrants (who Trump casually referred to as “murderers” and “rapists”), Islamophobia-inspired calls for increased surveillance and record-keeping on both Muslim immigrants *and* citizens, a heightened “tough-on-crime” posturing which legitimizes racist police violence and terror, and a promise to “annihilate”, via military force, all the “enemies of Western civilization”. It is hard to ignore that the US is obsessed with, and the undisputed leader in, enacting state violence and social control both domestically and abroad.

## **STATE VIOLENCE**

Despite these examples of US state violence and social control, the US is simply the state currently most proficient with such matters: most contemporary and previous states have aspired to attain the same level of dominance and control. In other words, state violence is in some ways an oxymoronic term because states are inherently violent. Some states, like the US, are just simply more violent and dominant than others. Sociologist Max Weber observed that the state is, by its own definition, the only entity authorized to legitimately use violence.<sup>10</sup> In fact, it retains a monopoly on violence. In other words, violence—whether regularly practiced, the threat thereof, or merely the capacity for violence—*is* the essence of the state. The state can establish rules that benefit its own interests over that of any other power center, but often end up aligning with powerful corporate interests. And, due to the sanctity of “law”, states allow no one else the ability to establish and maintain autonomous rules that the state cannot influence, short of revolutionary overthrow. The above actors, including border guards, the military, local police forces, spy agencies, and prisons are all not only well-funded, diverse, and empowered components of the US and other states, but also core to what *defines and makes* the state. Violence is therefore a central feature of the state.

Sociologist Cecilia Menjivar provides a useful conceptual framework for understanding the various forms of state violence. Typically, when people think about violence, they often think about the various forms of physical violence, including assaults, beatings, and even state sponsored murder. While these forms of state violence are some of the ways in which states enact violence upon individuals and communities, Menjivar argues that it is also useful to expand our analytic lens to examine instances of violence beyond those just embodied in physical pain and injury, in order to provide a multifaceted analysis of the various forms of violence. By doing so, it allows us to make connections between (macro) structural

violence with interpersonal (micro) forms of violence, state or otherwise, that originate in broader social structures. In this sense, violence is not always an “event” but rather a process or ongoing social condition embedded in our everyday lives.<sup>11</sup> It is our contention that state violence takes both physical and structural (non-physical) forms and manifests in racialized, gendered, classed, and sexualized forms. While it is easier to “see” direct violence, such as police killings, or the bloody aftermath of US drone killings around the world, structural violence is a by-product of our highly unequal social system: a social and economic system that is permeated by racial, gender, and class-based inequality.

As Joy James argues in *Resisting State Violence*: “Frequently in the United States, where racial fears and hostilities are manipulated, state and civil society seem to speak in one voice regarding policing, punishment, and violence as the media, educational institutions, and private citizens are organized to further state hegemony in spite of their autonomy from state apparatuses”.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, regressive movements often appear that serve the interests of the state and powerful capitalist interests, such as anti-immigrant movements and organizations, like the Minuteman Project and other vigilante groups. Or, counter-movements pop-up to challenge the narratives of social justice movements like Black Lives Matter, by attempting to de-mobilize, denigrate, libel, and attack them at pro-police rallies and events organized under the banner of “All Lives Matter” or “Blue Lives Matter.”

Not only is state violence racialized and gendered, but it can also specifically target other marginalized communities, especially immigrants. In “Legal Violence in the Lives of Immigrants” Menjívar and Abrego argue that legal violence is readily deployed by the state against undocumented immigrants in the United States. Legal violence refers to the cumulative effects of an increasingly punitive set of immigration laws, coupled with increased enforcement efforts by the state, along with a negative stigmatization of immigrants.<sup>13</sup> Legal violence has deleterious consequences for immigrant communities throughout major social institutions, like the family, the workplace, and school. Within the family, legal violence causes many immigrant families to live in a constant state of fear of being separated (due to deportation) from their loved ones. Within the workplace, increased state enforcement has led to private employers having even more control over immigrant workforces. The rights of immigrant workers are therefore structurally weakened as many immigrant workers feel they cannot stand up for their worker’s rights for fear of deportation.<sup>14</sup> Finally, legal violence also manifests in the education system, not only making schools sites of potential detention, but many

undocumented students face the psychological toll of knowing that even if they pursue higher education, their degree may never “pay off” due to their precarious legal status.<sup>15</sup>

Identifying the ways in which state violence is infused with the intersections of white supremacy, capitalism and class exploitation, heterosexism, and patriarchy has been at the forefront of women of color led anti-violence movements in the US. For example, INCITE!, a grassroots network of radical feminists of color working to end state violence have actively challenged the mainstream (read: white, middle-class) anti-violence movement by making connections between police violence, border violence, militarism and war, environmental violence, domestic violence, and racialized-gendered forms of economic violence directed against women of color and trans people of color.<sup>16</sup>

It is important to make connections between forms of state violence enacted by state institutions domestically (e.g., prisons, immigrant detention centers, mental institutions, etc.) and transnational state violence (e.g., war, colonialism, military occupation, etc.).<sup>17</sup> The modern capitalist state regularly enacts violence in order to protect the interests of private capital. Take, for instance, the private security company G4S (Group 4 Security). After Wal-Mart and Foxconn, G4S is the third largest private employer in the world.<sup>18</sup> Under the guise of security, this firm has spread out all over the world, enacting violence and repression. G4S has learned to profit from racism, Zionism, Islamophobia, and anti-immigrant policies and practices, from Palestine, to the US-Mexico border, to South Africa. Consequently, the privatization of state violence has become a driving force in today’s global capitalist economy. It should be no surprise then, that on the day after President Trump’s election victory over Hillary Clinton, the stock with the single best performance (soaring 43 percent in a single day) was Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), the largest private prison company in the US.<sup>19</sup> Building coalitions across struggles against state violence necessarily becomes a global challenge. Police violence and the militarization of policing in the US, Israel, and Canada to just name a few states, has deep connections to other forms of state violence around the world. According to Angela Davis:

Why do I say that Ferguson reminds us of the importance of a global context? What we saw in the police reaction to the resistance that spontaneously erupted in the aftermath of the killing of Michael Brown was an armed response that revealed the extent to which local police departments have been equipped with military arms, military technology, military training. The militarization of the police leads us

to think about Israel and the militarization of the police there – if only the images of the police and not of the demonstrators had been shown, one might have assumed that Ferguson was Gaza. I think that it is important to recognize the extent to which, in the aftermath of the advent of the war on terror, police departments all over the US have been equipped with the means to allegedly ‘fight terror’.<sup>20</sup>

## SOCIAL CONTROL

While the state’s social control efforts target everyone, a society’s dissident elements are particularly targeted. Specifically, movements for social justice often have to face a mixture of ambivalence, ignorance, stonewalling, tactical demobilization, and outright attack and repression from the state. Jules Boykoff describes the methods for movement suppression in *Beyond Bullets*, pointing out that the state, of course, can resort to outright violence against political opponents, which include breaking the bones of demonstrators at rallies or roughing them up in the back of police vans. But, violence also included explicit assassination, as in the case of Black Panther Fred Hampton.<sup>21</sup> State violence is typically portrayed as necessary by the mainstream corporate media. In fact, former military generals find lucrative second careers as paid cable television “experts” on warfare and military strategy. Indeed, the agenda setting for-profit press rarely criticizes state power and violence. Instead, corporate media readily rely upon racialized frames that portray the “enemies of the state” in Islamophobic and/or racist ways. As Joy James notes: “...state depictions of terrorism function to absolve the United States of any responsibility for terrorist activities while racializing the domestic and foreign terrorist as black or Arab”.<sup>22</sup>

However, too much violence tends to normalize and polarize conditions, which entrenches resistance. Thus, the US state has also used less overtly violent—but just as suppressive—techniques to stop movements in their tracks. The state can prosecute activists, thus keeping them wrapped-up in meaningless trials for years, even for absurdly petty charges like “blocking an intersection” (the equivalent of jay-walking). The state may lean on employers to drop activists from full employment, thus depriving them of the means to economic survival. States regularly use surveillance techniques; in the US’s case this involves the vast array of computer and cellular technology available to monitor activists. More maliciously, the state may monkey-wrench activists’ internal relationships, decision-making, and organizations, through methods of infiltration and counterintelligence. Consequently, an activist meeting may be filled with

police who are consciously (but covertly) working to subvert a group's process and stymie their ability to take action and resist state power. State infiltrators have "bad-jacketed" activists, which encourages paranoia amongst activists. For example, if an undercover cop accuses a real activist of being a "cop" in a meeting, this spreads suspicion and disunity, thus eroding group trust and solidarity. This was a common tactic employed by FBI agents during the COINTELPRO years, where the Black Liberation, Anti-War, and American Indian Movements were subject to harassment, surveillance, sabotage, and internal disruptions.<sup>23</sup> States have also regularly employed agent provocateurs in crowds, who either encourage people to break laws or simply break a law themselves to provoke police crackdown. Since the state has an extensive capacity to act, it can also repeatedly harass movement participants by continuously demanding interviews, showing up and making demands at events, and engaging in other threatening behavior. Police may also arrest people simply for the sake of harassing them – just because they *can*.

Many of these social control methods (including murder) are within the legal jurisdiction of the state. The state simply uses its resources, purview, and bureaucratic power to suppress movements that threaten its interests. Through these "normal" state functions, states can put the brakes on many movements before they can even become a threat. These state strategies are also time-tested. French mutualist philosopher and anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon wrote in 1851 about the powers that the state had been accumulating:

To be GOVERNED is to be kept in sight, inspected, spied upon, directed, law-driven, numbered, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, estimated, valued, censured, commanded, by creatures who have neither the right, nor the wisdom, nor the virtue to do so... To be GOVERNED is to be at every operation, at every transaction, noted, registered, enrolled, taxed, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, authorized, admonished, forbidden, reformed, corrected, punished. It is, under pretext of public utility, and in the name of the general interest, to be placed under contribution, trained, ransomed, exploited, monopolized, extorted, squeezed, mystified, robbed; then at the slightest resistance, the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, despised, harassed, tracked, abused, clubbed, disarmed, choked, imprisoned, judged, condemned, shot, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed; and, to crown all, mocked, ridiculed, outraged, dishonoured. That is government; that is its justice; that is its morality.<sup>24</sup>

Today, to Proudhon's list we can add, in brief: being electronically monitored, set-up on false-evidence, and bombed via aerial drones, all thanks to the advent of new technologies that have extended the reach of the state. However, even before Proudhon's time, the state had to acquire its power. A state's abilities are not only claimed and asserted, but are the very essence of the state's power over society and all life. James C. Scott describes in *Seeing Like a State* that European states evolved to fulfill their primary power functions (i.e., taxation, conscription, and dissent suppression) through various strategies that made their claimed territories and human subjects "legible" to the gaze of states. The state had to exert this influence through an array of methods, including instantiating common measurement metrics, uniform property law, distributing surnames, and data gathering and mapping its claimed physical and social terrain.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, all incipient states were able to finally make sense of their targets—all of us. Scott later describes how people have regularly aspired to avoid the state, particularly its centripetal effects, to become "free". Such aspirants use physical and social distance, remain mobile, prevent surveillance, become less legible, act in unstable ways, and use other strategies to thwart the state.<sup>26</sup> Social control is as integral to the state as is violence.

## IN THIS ISSUE<sup>27</sup>

This special issue of the *Journal of Social Justice* focuses on these matters of state violence, social control, and resistance. In their own unique ways, the four papers featured in this special issue interrogate not only the various ways in which modern states enact violence and social control upon marginalized communities, but also illuminate how social movements and activists are engaged in resisting state power and repression.

In "Penal Abolition as the End of Criminal Behavior", Michael J. Coyle examines the central role that language plays in both the study of "criminal justice", and popular notions of crime and criminality. Terms such as "crime", "criminals", and "criminal behavior" are not only socially constructed categories, but, as Coyle argues, "are by necessity fictions." Consequently, Coyle argues for penal abolition on the grounds that the logic, practices and justification for the "criminal justice system" derive from fictitious ideas of so-called criminal deviance. He draws upon evidence that proves that in actuality, most ordinary people participate in everyday transgressions that might otherwise be labeled as "criminal acts",



thus contradicting the popular belief that criminal acts are somehow abnormal. As Coyle further points out, in the face of a world suffused by transgressive acts and transgressive actors, the penal system functions to label certain transgressions as ‘criminal behavior’ and to sort certain transgressors into the category of ‘criminals.’ In this sense, the purpose of the penal system is exposed as preoccupied with the management of only *certain* transgressions. As a result, Coyle posits that penal abolition can be seen for what it is: a call to end the ‘criminal behavior’ discourse which hides the ubiquity of transgression. If transgression is not deviant, but in fact is actually a norm, Coyle argues that one must conclude the following: (1) that the penal system is not (and never will be) able to effectively address the transgression of social norms, (2) that it should therefore be abolished, and (3) that we re-conceptualize and re-design our social responses to norm transgression to prioritize the management of *difference* (and not deviance).

Jeff Shantz’s “They Have Always Been Military: On So-Called Militarized Policing in Canada” provides another radical critique of so-called criminal justice. He argues that despite recent, popular claims of policing’s militarization, “it is incorrect and inaccurate to discuss the militarization of policing as if this is something recent, new, or unique.” In other words, police in the settler Canadian state context have been military since their colonial origins. Shantz’s analysis disrupts liberal arguments about the so-called rise of military policing by pointing out that the current militaristic tendencies of Canadian policing are indeed reflective of what and who the police in Canada represent and what they have *always* represented. Shantz’s argument provides an important framework for challenging forms of state violence and current conversations surrounding police violence. Military policing is an ongoing everyday occurrence in poor neighborhoods and racialized communities throughout Canada, and it has been for generations. In those targeted communities (especially for First Nations), there is no perception that militarization is recent or unique. Thus, Shantz maintains that a proper understanding of the police in Canada can help to contextualize and challenge current responses that are limited to liberal reformist measures for the police (e.g., de-militarization, de-escalation, improved training, non-lethal weaponry, etc.) or even those which allow for the expansion of certain forms of policing (community policing, drones, etc.). Finally, without adequately understanding the true nature and histories of state violence and the repressive apparatus in Canada it is difficult to situate more recent developments in ongoing relationships of power or, as importantly, to develop appropriate strategies for challenging that

repressive apparatus. Without a doubt, critical analyses of state violence and policing can be extended to other violent settler states like the US and Israel.

In “Same, Same But Different: An Atlanta Case Study of Movement Building”, Daniel Horowitz Garcia’s paper provides an important case study of the struggle against police brutality in Atlanta, Georgia during the US political crisis of 1973-1974. Drawing on “The ‘Long Movement’ as Vampire: Temporal and Spatial Fallacies in Recent Black Freedom Studies” by Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua and Clarence Lang as his theoretical framework, Horowitz Garcia argues that the radical approach to organizing opened up a political space allowing working-class people to conduct analyses of their own problems and develop a critique of the larger political economy. The radical organizing practice of the seventies introduced a new vision of what political space could be. For example, as Horowitz Garcia demonstrates, “the early 70s in Atlanta were a time of transition. It had many of the characteristics of the civil rights movement, but there were some significant differences.” The main difference was the creation of political space for groups that had not held formal leadership even within the civil rights movement, notably working-class black women. The struggles against police brutality in Atlanta before, during, and after the 1970s almost always had one or more black mothers in the center. Black women also took leadership roles in other areas of struggle as well. In part, this was the genesis of today’s vibrant network of anti-poverty activists and organizations made up overwhelmingly of working-class black women, the same type of women at the center of radical organizing in the seventies. Finally, Horowitz Garcia points to the ideological diversity of Atlanta, which made it possible for people to see the pros and cons of different types of politics as applied to their situation.

Sebastián Sclofsky’s “Policing Race in Two Cities: From Necropolitical Governance to Imagined Communities”, argues that the victimization of people of color by the police is a central component of the necropolitical governance that renders certain (racialized) bodies disposable. Drawing on extensive fieldwork conducted in South L.A. and São Paulo’s southern and western periphery, Sclofsky maintains that these experiences have become a central component in the formation of racial and communal identities, and have become part of the rituals that create the imagined community of South L.A. and São Paulo’s periphery. In this sense, Sclofsky contends that by understanding the commonalities of these experiences we can expand the limits of the imagined community and as a consequence the limits of resistance to state violence. In other words, traumatic encounters with the police, even when they are not explicitly violent, shape the way racial

identities are defined and form content of the communal identity. The fact that people of color share similar experiences in such *different* regions of the world when it comes to police repression and state violence has the potential of creating an imagined community that not only suffers together but also may engage in common struggle and resistance. Sclofsky concludes that developing this transnational communal consciousness has the potential of becoming a first step towards a larger resistance movement.

Finally, relevant to this special issue, Jaden Netwig provides an in-depth book review of Joseph Masco's (2014) *The Theater of Operations: National Security Affect from the Cold War to the War on Terror* (Duke University Press).

## **RESISTANCE**

Collectively, these articles make clear there is an urgent need for social justice. North America is incredibly wealthy and unique in the supposed freedoms offered to citizens and residents, in contrast to both comparable countries and other countries in the Western Hemisphere. However, the United States and Canada have a brutal historical relationship to communities of color and to countries throughout the world. In the US particularly, the apparent paradox between a prosperous country (coupled with vast inequality and widespread poverty) that grants many formal freedoms, and its status as a violent and unjust superpower may appear contradictory to many, but there is no rule that says wealthy countries must be just, or says that countries that claim rights for some citizens must be just. Some of the manifestations of these injustices can be found in the prison industrial complex (PIC). It is an imperative to stop the PIC in its tracks through prison and penal abolition. But, even slowing its destruction down is a welcome reform as it will reduce the amount of resultant misery, suffering, violence, and chaos it causes. The same logic holds for racialized and class-based policing (militarized or otherwise), and other power systems that attack and target socially disadvantaged communities and social movements. But, the ultimate, important question here is: Is it possible to create a world without these oppressive, bureaucratic institutions of social control? Or must we simply tame their worst excesses, resigned to not abolishing them, just reforming them? Many advocates of social justice now advocate the pursuit of non-reformist reforms (those that are not mere ends-in-themselves), which should serve as a stepping-stone to further reforms, which are more radical.<sup>28</sup>

In the vacuum left by hierarchical institutions, horizontal and cooperative institutions must take up the requisite workload. If destructive deviance and violence persists, it must be dealt with through community-means that value freedom as well as justice for *all* involved. Thus, justice is only possible when everyone plays some kind of *active* role in both their communities and broader society. (And, clearly, such “roles” sharply transgress the “activity” of merely voting every few years for some kind of “better politician” to solve our problems.) Helping to make things work right and not out-sourcing the “solution” to armed government bureaucrats (i.e., police) to do that work for us, and poorly at that, is an essential task.

Strategies of restorative justice are particularly important in this regard. But, this also necessitates people shouldering an increased responsibility for problems that most people today rely upon the state (and other hierarchical institutions, like corporations, organized religion, the patriarchal family, the police, and the military) to handle. Communities must continue to build counter institutions that resist the oppressive legacies of state violence, an inequalities rooted in white supremacy, sexism, homophobia, and capitalist exploitation. Socio-biologist and revolutionary Peter Kropotkin wrote in his classic study *Mutual Aid* about this conundrum, specifically how the state has relinquished people of their moral responsibilities to each other and in the process created not only worse outcomes, but also an unethical society:

In barbarian [sic] society, to assist at a fight between two men [sic], arisen from a quarrel, and not to prevent it from taking a fatal issue, meant to be oneself treated as a murderer; but under the theory of the all-protecting State the bystander need not intrude: it is the policeman’s business to interfere, or not.<sup>29</sup>

People must take responsibility for things that they have influence over. As Noam Chomsky is famous for arguing, we have a social responsibility for the predictable consequences of our actions. And since we have much influence over our own actions, we have incredible moral agency, should we choose to exercise it.

Creating social justice is not always desired by the state or in its best interest. In fact, social democratic reforms that created welfare systems, at least in the United States, have served as a pressure release-valve that allows the state to survive social turmoil: the New Deal programs tempered the Great Depression movements, while the Great Society attempted to defuse the anti-war and Black Liberation movements’ more radical demands. Once those tensions (like those that arose during the

Great Depression) have abated, the state happily rolls-back such reforms.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, the labor of social justice typically falls on the backs of communities and practitioners to struggle for deep, systemic changes. There are three general strategies that such groups take. The first is to advocate for restricting and inhibiting the systems of control. For example, placing strict limits on the police's ability to use deadly force could lead to an immediate decline in police murders. Relatedly, law enforcement could be mandated to use data-based patrolling methods (pointing them to social science data where crimes *actually* occur), rather than allowing individual police to use their own faulty perceptions and discretion of where crime happens, commonly leading them to "hunt for dirtbags."<sup>31</sup> We must move away from a law and order society to one that works toward restorative justice. Decriminalizing drugs, and moving toward a public health strategy, would prevent individuals from being criminalized due to their victimless behaviors. Additionally, society should shift resources away from the prison system while simultaneously increasing support for community-based anti-violence efforts, especially related to gendered and domestic violence. All of these approaches could lead to a real minimization of harm and need to be taken seriously. But, they involve an uphill fight. Additionally, these restrictive strategies require at times working inside a corrupt, antagonistic, and incompatible system, which will likely lead to too many compromises. Also, people must not be fooled into thinking that simply having a less-violent, less-racist, less-sexist state is a good final outcome. That is, state power will always rely upon entrenched social inequalities along racial, gendered, and class based lines.<sup>32</sup> Finally, any reforms can easily be rolled-back with a new incoming regime that is less pliable to popular demands.

A second strategy is to create spaces of justice and pockets of freedom. For example, people can establish sanctuary cities and universities that prohibit the profiling, harassment, and arrest of any individual for their citizenship or immigration status. Community members can establish more active cop-watch programs that transcend the mere use of a smartphone to film police, and actively surveil police behavior as they target poor neighborhoods of color. Community means of dealing with harassment and violence—like the work of Sista II Sista in New York City—can empower people to handle their own problems. Or, computer programmers can continue to develop new tools and apps that help people evade state surveillance, such as Tor, GPG email encryption, "off-the-record" messaging, and others. We have control over some of these strategies as they are closer to home, but they are still limited in scope and

are really just stop-gap measures to give people a buffer of space to more freely and justly operate within.

A third and final strategy is the hardest, but offers the best solutions to the above problems: revolutionary change. The earlier two strategies can be seen as moves in this direction. Demolishing and abolishing the varied systems of hierarchical domination—prisons, police, military, and the state, but also capitalism, white supremacy, Islamophobia, homophobia and transphobia, sexism and patriarchy—strike at the root of violence and social control. This is a daunting challenge that is very difficult for many people to even envision. To accomplish such abolition will take years or even generations, and may be a never-ending struggle to keep hierarchy from re-encroaching upon our lives. There is no guarantee of success, either. Movement-building and organizing efforts are essential preliminary steps: they fight for meaningful reforms, support rebellions, organize people in their communities to struggle for longer-term changes, and experiment with practical alternatives. If we view revolution as a process—rather than a concrete, discrete event to be endlessly planned for—it is easier to participate in revolutionary activity. It's the surest path to social justice.

## NOTES

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<sup>2</sup> Vine, David. 2015. *Base Nation: How US Military Bases Abroad Harm America and the World*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

<sup>3</sup> Taylor, Adam and Laris Karklis. (February 9, 2016) "This remarkable chart shows how US defense spending dwarfs the rest of the world."

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/02/09/this-remarkable-chart-shows-how-u-s-defense-spending-dwarfs-the-rest-of-the-world/?utm\\_term=.80dca08e4b07](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/02/09/this-remarkable-chart-shows-how-u-s-defense-spending-dwarfs-the-rest-of-the-world/?utm_term=.80dca08e4b07)

<sup>4</sup> Chomsky, Noam. 2016. *Who Rules the World?* New York: Metropolitan Books.

<sup>5</sup> Greenwald, Glen. 2014. *No Place to Hide: Edward Snowden, the NSA, and the U.S. Surveillance State*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

<sup>6</sup> Marshall, Serena. (August 29, 2016). "Obama has deported more people than any other president." ABC News: <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/obamas-deportation-policy-numbers/story?id=41715661>

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