

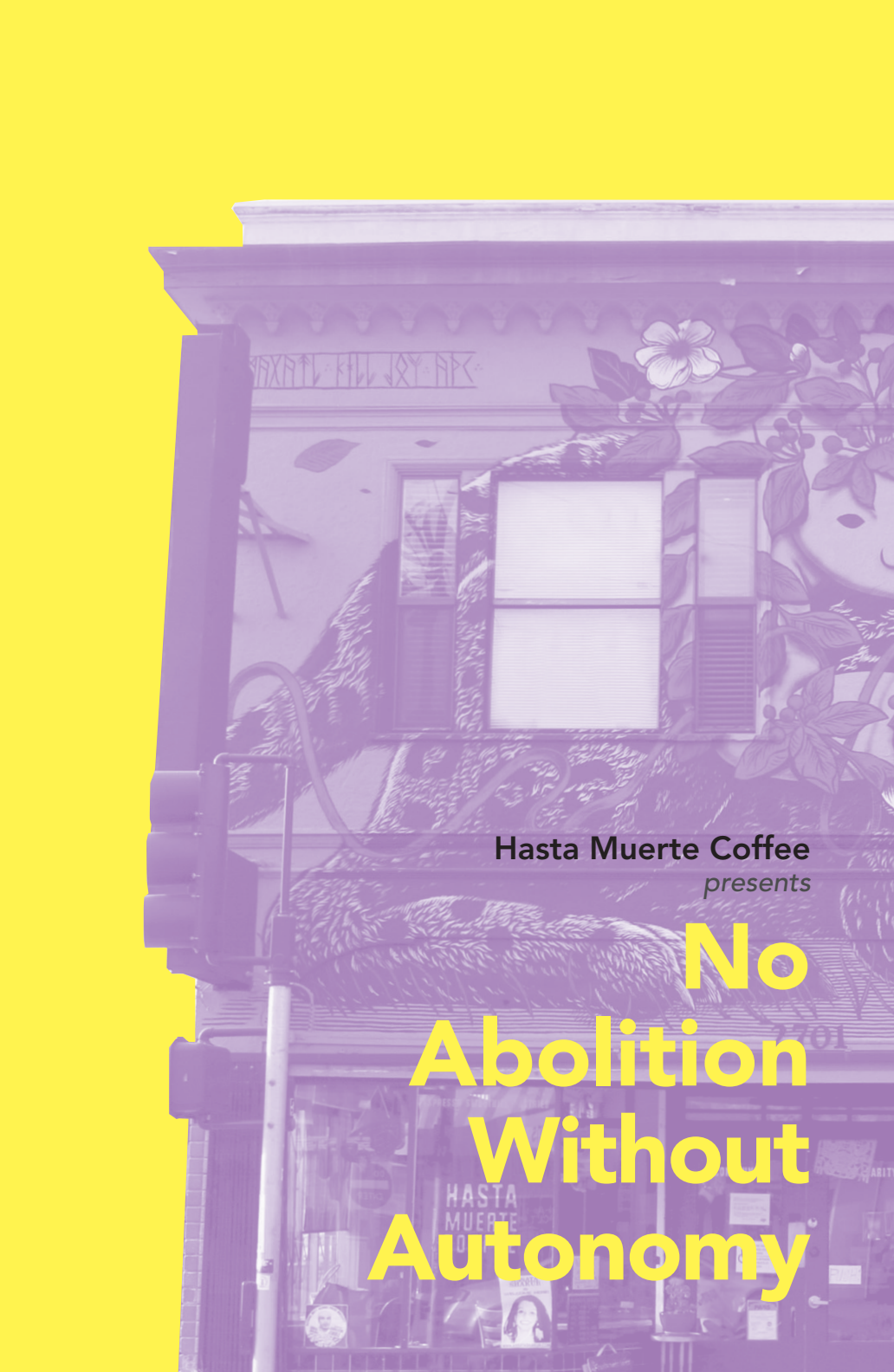
Hasta Muerte Coffee
presents

No Abolition Without Autonomy

*to everyone who's sick and tired of being sick and tired.
to everyone asking "who will we call if we do away with police?"
to everyone that stood up in collective self defense
last summer, or any of the summers before that one.
and to Mario Gonzalez, who we knew when he was in
high school, and who should still be breathing*

Rise in Power, fallen angels of the 2020 bay uprisings:
Sean Tucan Monterrosa
Erik Salgado





Hasta Muerte Coffee
presents

No Abolition Without Autonomy

This Booklet Has Three Goals

1. To share our story after taking an open stance against police abuses of power that go on daily throughout this country, and to share some take-aways that we learned from that process.
2. To educate ourselves and others on the real statistical incidents that lead people to call police. Some basic facts can cancel out the way that police are always being built up as “community heroes,” from nightly news to grade school classrooms.
3. To help inspire widespread participation in a strategic alliance of anti-racist small businesses and community organizations that interact with the public in their own space, and who seek to minimize police presence in and around their vicinity. Together we can do this by identifying and building upon practices of community self-determination and autonomy. This will involve preparing ourselves, and those close to us, to sometimes be our own response team for difficult situations in which statistically, calls to police do more harm than good. For some of us, it also means training ourselves to overcome our own personal biases and fears.

Oakland, CA

Huichin Village

Lisjan Ohlone territory

May 2021

If you stick a knife in my back 9 inches and pull it out 6 inches, there's no progress. If you pull it all the way out, that's not progress. The progress is healing the wound that the blow made. And they haven't even begun to pull the knife out, much less try and heal the wound.

They won't even admit the knife is there.

-Malcolm X

Setting the Stage

In 2018 you may have heard of a cafe in Oakland that refused service to police officers. Well, that was us. Except, that's not exactly what happened. But we'll get into that later...

The Knife (Is White Supremacy)

2020 put a magnifying glass on the racial disparities of this country, forcing the mainstream to examine the deep-rooted white-supremacy at the core of its institutions. This examination culminated in uprisings of a caliber unseen in decades. Many are still confused by this term "white-supremacy." It is not just about the KKK, neo-nazis or fascists.

"White-supremacy" refers to the ways that laws and norms of our society were formed around the made-up identity of whiteness that made it easy to distinguish, discriminate against, and exploit other racial groups. Rugged opposition to these circumstances has been waged tooth and nail to this day, from hundreds of slave and indigenous revolts, down to the uprisings of 2020. The people these laws and institutions were designed to persecute have always had to fight for a chance at a dignified life. This includes access to wealth, land, rights, housing, fair trials, and so on. That's why we say the enforcement of the law is an institution rooted in white supremacy. Because it is, and always has been. It has nothing to do with the racial makeup or "diversity" of law enforcement officers. It's about its mission, purpose, practices, and outcomes, from inception as slave catchers, to a present day domestic military.

Colorlines—difference in physical appearance, skin tone and coloration—allowed 18th and 19th century white-america a way to discern whom they would deem disposable in society. An important shift in the social terrain and political climate of the 20th and 21st centuries is allowing white-america to recruit people of color seeking to exempt themselves from that disposability. Many people of color have joined in on the benefits of structural white supremacy through assimilation, and confuse this for liberation. This type of assimilation and the mentality behind it can best be referred to as "color-blind racism," which hides white-supremacy behind a veil of "diversity." Let's illustrate this point with an analogy from a *diverse* institution heavily steeped in white supremacy: the NFL.

Last summer, Cam Newton, a black quarterback who brings emotive personality, excitement and an element of surprise to his game, was being groomed as Tom Brady's replacement under Bill Belichick, the veteran Patriots coach whose success is attributed to a hard line, by-the-book approach.

"You're allowed to be a little different, as long as you embrace the culture and the program." Hearing this statement, it's hard not to draw a parallel for how well it sums up the shift in post-civil rights era US culture which replaced older ideas of racial inferiority with new stereotypes of cultural deprivation (poor choices) as an explanation for de facto segregation. Basically, if you can adopt the prevailing culture and program, you'll be accepted.

In America, the prevailing culture and standard of logic—in government, in media, and in law, and thus socially—is still white-supremacy. Not just white supremacy, but combined with patriarchy and capitalism. This is evidenced when profits come before people and the environment, and gendered division of labor is central in guaranteeing those continual profits. As far as social and economic systems go, this triple threat of evil—white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy—has proven to be highly buoyant. It can withstand a lot of stress and bounce back. It can co-opt its opposition and grow to new heights. But every system has its limits, and as the wealth gap jumps again, more and more people everywhere are getting pushed to the edge.

The Beat Goes On

And this brings us back to the massive uprisings last summer. These were sparked by police murders. But they were about more than that. They were about the countless ways that the police state functions to wage constant low grade warfare on domestic streets to uphold the culture and logic of white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy. Police sexual assault and rape. Daily search and seizure. Central park Karens. Charlottesville Nazis. And so in the bigger picture, we must frame the the uprisings of summer 2020—the fires, the looting, the street chaos—as acts of collective self-defense, like many of their kind that came before. Even when the participants don't articulate them as such.

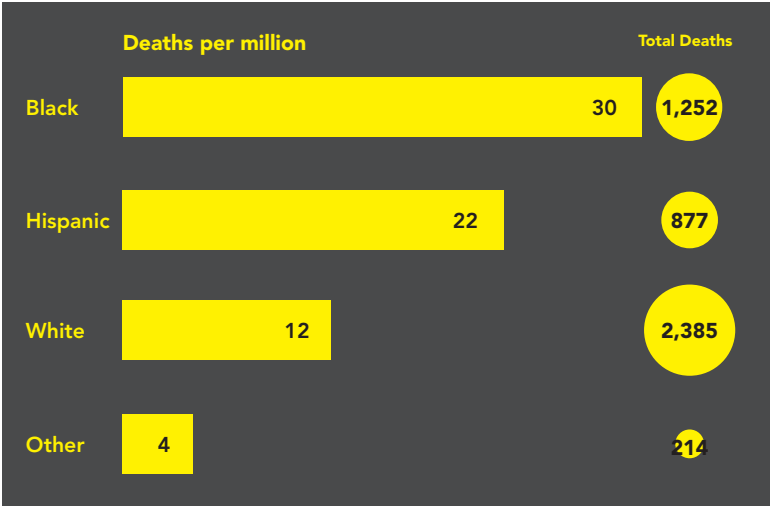
Last month we saw the results of that rage and rebellion. The main take away from the Chauvin trial is not that we should rely on courts to bring justice. It is that the brave, dangerous actions of the people in the streets last summer became the necessary spark to hold the system accountable in a singular case. A broader movement must continue this momentum.

So as time unfolds between waves of inevitable street uprisings, what else

should we be doing? Waiting for a protracted political saga to unfold in the case of “to defund or not to defund” will not alleviate the conditions that caused last year’s unrest any time soon. Rather than wait for so-called leaders to put police on a better leash, we must begin to validate that there are roles for everyone to take on, here and now.

We must explore shifting our actions and cultural practices towards ones that can diminish the need for police. Policing as an institution keeps claiming to have reformed itself with more officers of color, community oversight boards, and other false markers of progress. But nationally, police still kill more than two and a half times as many Black people as whites, and almost twice as many Latinos. Not to mention disproportionate traffic stops, hassling or arrests for minor offenses, and imprisonment. And the result is that most of us experience fear, not relief, upon encountering a cop. Even when we have nothing to hide, have done nothing wrong.

From insurgents, to service workers, to the unemployed; from lawyers, to physicians, to healers; from educators, to social workers; there are actions we all can take toward abolition of police and prisons, starting with some basic common practices. The struggle against police violence and prisons is nothing new. Building and spreading these practices starts with autonomous networks. This means the people we know, from where we stand.



U.S. Police Shootings:

Black People Disproportionately Affected

Number of people killed in police shootings in the U.S. since January 1, 2015

As of May 28, 2020 Source: The Washington Post

We understand that we are witnessing an age-old cycle in which the powers that be are shaken from the ground, from the streets and uprisings; that they then set out to regain their stature by claiming and campaigning that they are about progress while making the fewest material changes possible to maintain “order.” This is called co-optation, when they adopt the language of the movement in order to defang it. This process effectively strips the streets of its power—but only for a while—until another boiling point, usually stemming from state violence, repeats the cycle. We must watch for the ways they divide us into factions based on social and class interests. We are stronger together.

So who are we talking to? All those throwing down on building alternative economic structures with the long goal of wealth redistribution, like co-ops and land trusts, should fold autonomy from police into their charters. All those looking to tear down the remnants of white supremacy in education should get to work creating and sharing non-police emergency protocols for their life. All those just trying to smoke and barbecue should be practicing how to hold down police-free city blocks, even just for a day at a time. This is autonomy, and we need it in order to see through the abolition of police and prisons.

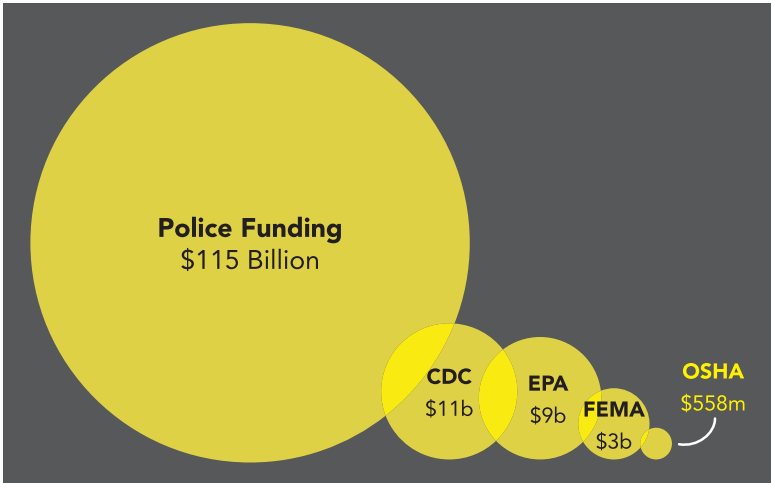
We know that an apparatus of government and media pour billions into swaying public opinion. We can't compete. So we must cut through this with sharing our own stories and popular education. This is why throughout this booklet we share relevant statistics to dispel myths about the need for police. This being the height of civilization's information sharing capacity, when most people in rich countries have sophisticated handheld computers, we must recognize the ways that fear-bating is used to control public opinion the same as it always has. Social media became a valuable tool in the justice movements of recent years, because it enabled decentralized information sharing of hard facts and breaking news, but it can easily be manipulated by the enemy.

Grey Area

Sadly, the debate on policing is framed by “experts” on either side to paint things as very black and white, when we know there is a lot of grey area in between. Here in the Fruitvale district of Oakland, CA, we know that most of our Mexican, Central and South American folks fear the authorities on account of profiling and the potential of facing deportation by ICE. But some of these same folks still call police on Black people because of society-wide prejudices and stigmas they observe, as well as language barriers. These are things many of us are equipped to help sort out without bringing police around. However, the

powers that be understand these cultural divisions and use them to manipulate us. Xenophobia combined with unconscious bias, especially amongst recently immigrated populations, has always been weaponized against the oppressed of this country.

We are not so naive to think there are no real dangers out in these streets besides police. Our communities are often steeped in violence. Each hood has characters that some people know to avoid on their walk home. While dealers and pimps still hold sections of our streets, the damage they do is only a fraction of that which policing and the “justice” system has inflicted since it began. And the historical roots of this epidemic of violence, once again, is white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy. These are the frameworks that normalized violence of the white male against all others: the slave, the savage, the wife, and all others that didn’t fall neatly into one of these categories. The toxic threat whose three parts reinforce each other to keep the ones facing hard circumstances at odds with one another, vying for comfort, dignity, and happiness. Police make possible the setup in which the poor stay poor because the work and energy they have to give is extracted every day, while telling them just act right and you’ll make it. But too many people just aren’t making it.



Funding and Budgets Graph

Data: U.S. Census reports compiled by the Urban Institute, government reports

Upset The Setup

Now is the time to build alternative structures and practices to calling police, from the ground up. We are not satisfied by appeals to trust politicians or *home-grown* police chiefs or *progressive* judges that share pigmentation with the people whose lives are perpetually ruined by the system they uphold. They may help out individuals here and there, but when people like this are put in power, they are set up to fail because the problems that lead to police abuses are so deeply embedded. Another approach is necessary. Posting and re-posting thoughts and ideas on a topic or links to donate is not the same as taking action in the streets, building trust, and asking your friends, neighbors, family, and community to do the same. This is what building autonomy means to us; community self determination. We can forge solutions with those we trust and hold ourselves and each other down. We can build alliances and rapid response networks to replace police.

The police have shown that they aren't going to change themselves. As with most things, change must come from the ground up. With that in mind, our small, humble cafe collective has spent some time revisiting what we experienced and learned a few years ago when we asked uniformed officers not to come into our place of business in Oakland, CA. In grappling with how to move forward, we found it useful to reflect back. Our reflections have shown us that we have always wanted abolition of punitive policing that destroys lives first and asks questions later. Policing that decimates the possibility of advancing our people to an even level with those that benefit from access to intergenerational wealth building. We are a collective of hard workers and impassioned, creative hustlers that know our own ability to thrive is tied to that of the many, who ultimately toil for the sake of a system that rarely, if ever, benefits them.

It is in this light that we bring you our story, and some ideas on how to move through and out of the muck of this militarized police hellscape of America. After reading, we hope you will join us and many others in a commitment to exhaust all other options before ever calling the police. We offer up some tools, insight, and resources that we have found through taking a stance against police. And it is our hope that by casting a wider call, we'll catch and bring up more and more ideas from everyone who shares this vision. Over time we can build a nationwide alliance that reduces the number of calls for "help" made to police, which should be one of the many ways that people, from where we stand, can work to chip away at police budgets, abuses, and relevance, with the ultimate goal of making police obsolete for good.

Our story

In 2017 we opened a cafe in Oakland, CA. Some of us born and raised in the region, others immigrants who moved to Cali in their teens. It was important for us to be aware of what it meant to be a new business on one of the borderlines of gentrification in the town, right here where the Dimond and Fruitvale meet. That's where we had found an affordable storefront after nearly a year of searching the Fruitvale area. Being aware mostly just meant taking the time to greet and talk to neighbors and folks that frequented the corner, and understanding our surroundings. Knowing that we couldn't really take on the issue of gentrification as one small business, we mostly focused on creating a work culture that didn't replicate many of the terrible food service jobs some of us had in the past.

As a matter of fact, bad past work environments are why we made our business a worker-owned cooperative. We wanted to embrace a set of principles between coworkers that would challenge power imbalances found in the society we live in, specifically those between bosses and employees. And in building this atmosphere we couldn't ignore other power imbalances, like those based on gender, class and race.

Pork & Beef

In a meeting a few weeks before our grand opening, someone asked, "what if the cops pull up to try and schmooze to get free coffee or offer to keep us safe?" One responded "Oh hell no." This sent us into a fifteen minute conversation where we decided what we would do. Similar to the types of common power imbalances we were exploring in forming the co-op, we agreed that a major site of power imbalance in our area is found in the relations between police and



COFFEE COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY

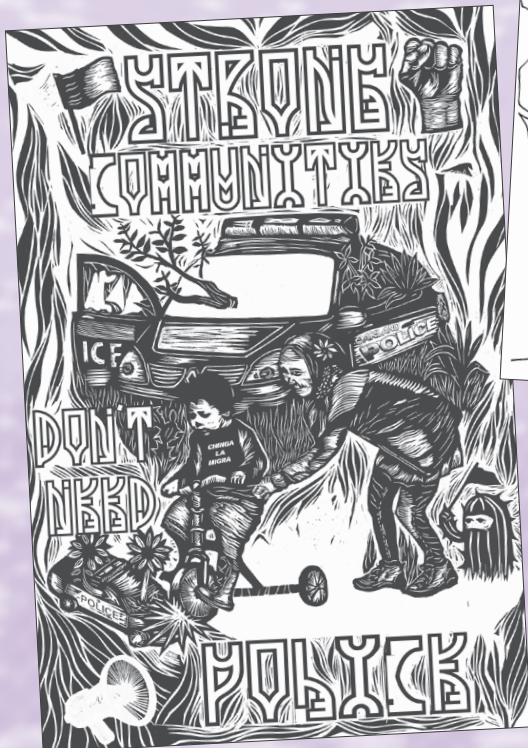
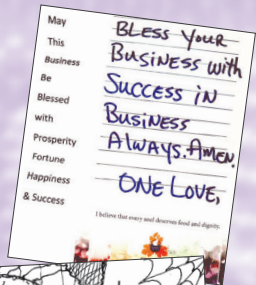
What we suggest:

1. Take some extra time to talk to neighbors and identify ones that are on a similar tip about police.
2. Learn and teach de-escalation trainings with your co-workers, neighbors, and family.
3. Invest time in development of non-police emergency protocols for your business, workplace or organization, block, or apartment complex.
4. Create and organize other ways to enable your group to make calling the police your very last resort.
5. Join the larger alliance and build with us! We will find strength in numbers.

Spread the culture of responding to hard situations without police at work, your block, or apartment complex. Start with the neighbors you know. Find small ways to develop trust with those you don't know well. If you are new to the culture, seek out those who aren't. We are not saying that this is easy work to do, but that is why it's crucial to build mutual support around it!

For an updated list of suggestions, practices, reading & educational resources:

HastaMuerteCoffee.com/NoCops



residents. Through a quick go around we found that we have all experienced this personally. Those in our group have been victims of police profiling on numerous occasions, leading to traffic stops, tickets, detainment, search and release with no cause given. And in a few cases resulting in arrest, one of these arrests accompanied by physical assault. All these incidents started with a cop stopping or following one of us because of the way we looked or dressed.

We also knew that most folks in the town who we swapped stories with saw police as unhelpful at best, and threatening in general. Someone told a story of one of our neighbors, a Black man named "D." D had a bicycle stolen from his yard. One day he saw a man riding his bike and stopped him like "hey that's my bike." The man fled. D saw a police officer driving by and flagged him down. Rather than help D pursue the stolen bicycle, they asked to see his ID and ended up arresting him for a bench warrant that had developed from an old traffic ticket he was unable to pay off. He spent a few nights in jail for asking for help.

We were trying to create a welcoming and inclusive neighborhood spot for people of the town—including those who fear police because of routine mistreatment—namely the usual targets of racial profiling, and especially formerly incarcerated, undocumented, queer, trans, and Black friends and family and neighbors. As we discussed all this, the only thing that made sense to us was to ask police not to enter or spend time at our cafe. They could take their business elsewhere. We were just one small business we thought, why would it even matter to police when they could easily go somewhere else?

Still, it was tricky to imagine asking them to leave without facing some repercussions. "What will we say to them though?" "Could they sue us if we tell them they have to leave?" We didn't have all the answers. We agreed the best thing to do would be to keep cool, be intentionally non-escalating, and ask them to leave of their own volition. We figured with all the tension between the community and the police, they would get it. And anyway they had Peets and Starbucks right up the street. So what could it hurt to ask?

We also agreed that no matter who had to address any police that may enter, we should all say the same thing for consistency. With only a few minutes left until needing to move on to the next topic, and not really knowing how relevant it would be to our day to day operations, we came up with a short script to say if police were to enter the cafe: "Hi. We have a policy of asking police officers to leave, for the physical and emotional well-being of our community and ourselves. Thanks.

Then, four months later in February of 2018, when the first police officer entered our doors and we read him the script, here's how it played out:

Officer: Oh, ok well I saw it said community on your window, so I thought maybe we could work together.

Long awkward silence.

Officer: Do you want me to tell other officers about this?

Cafe Worker *nervous, unsure if this is meant as a threat:* I guess you should tell them what ever you want to tell them.

Officer *trying to be re-assuring:* No I mean would it be helpful if I let other officers know that they are not welcomed here?

Cafe Worker: I don't know.

Officer walks outside, enters vehicle. Cafe workers give a sigh of relief... but then the officer returns suddenly.

Officer: Are you the manager?

Worker: This is a worker collective, we are all managers.

Officer: Okay well what is your name?

Worker: Why do you need to know my name?

Officer: Well you are denying me service, I have the right to know why.

Worker: I already told you why.

The officer is visibly preparing to speak again, but unable to formulate what he wants to say, and leaves again. Drives away.

No Love

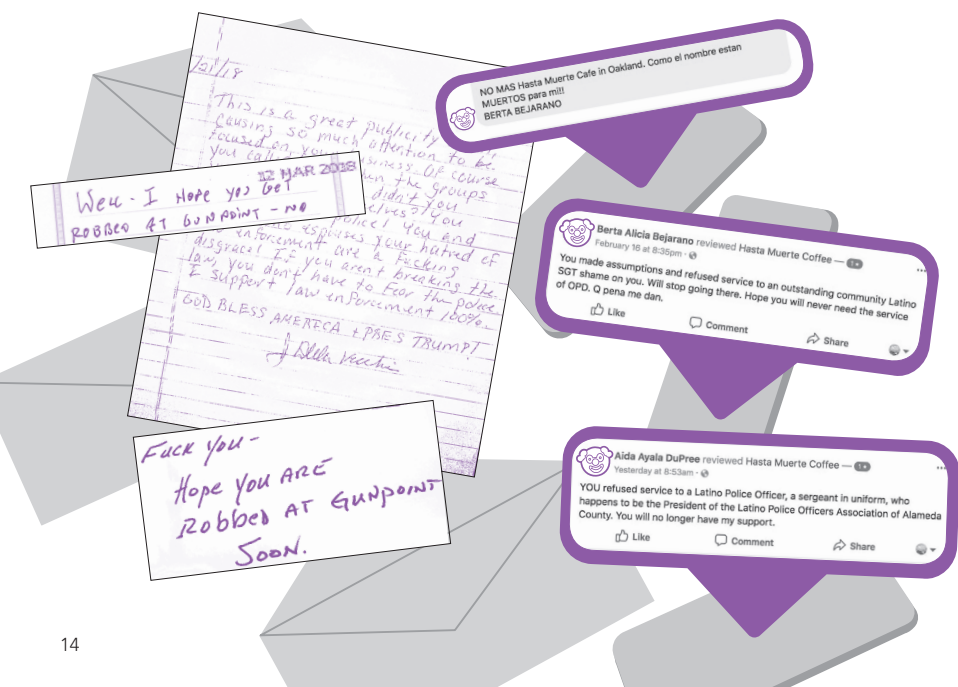
We couldn't have guessed that such a short and uneventful interaction with an officer would turn into a national headline a few weeks later. After a few days we received a certified letter from the president of the Oakland Police Officers Association (OPOA) asking us to respond to them immediately and confirm whether it was true that we had a policy of refusing service to police. In it he stated if we did have such a policy, that it was "a surprise and concern to all area law enforcement..." This was their way of insinuating that if a policy existed that there could be legal consequences for our business. They were also trying to determine if the policy really existed, or if it was just an individual worker acting of their own accord. Normally when this happens, they'll find ways to shame a company, who then fires the individual worker, like down in Torrance (south of LA) a few months prior when a worker was fired for writing *FTP* on a cops receipt.

The same week, a few people started slandering us on social media. Turned

out they were friends with the cop that had come in. At that point we posted screenshots of the slander, and a statement explaining our position. Within another week there was a nationwide flurry of blue lives matter types leaving bad google and yelp reviews to try and lower our online ratings (we were able to get those removed). The OPOA must have leaked the letter to the press, because the story was picked up by local news agencies and became a national headline. To us, what happened with the officer was not even newsworthy. There are plenty of places where police know they are not wanted in the communities that they patrol. Most of the owners of these places, for the sake of survival as relatively small family operations, don't risk telling this to police directly because of the obvious: negative consequences because they know the ways police flex their power.

In our case, we knew there may be consequences for our business when we asked police to leave. We rolled the dice. And by threatening consequences as a response, the police made their normally quiet, ever present war on the poor more explicit, targeting us directly. Their letter sought to weaponize public relations, cause us to cower, and allow them to continue doing what they do best: serving and protecting white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy.

News of our stance brought a lot of love. On March 19th, 2017 a small crowd of MAGA hat adorned blue lives matter "protesters" showed up at our shop, and a scuffle broke out when a neighbor got in their faces and told them to get lost. Within 90 seconds, the police showed up to protect them, making it fairly





When MAGA hat adorned trolls and right-wing patriots like Will Johnson (pictured) showed up, neighbors came to defend our stance against police and chased them away.

Opposite page: Shortly after a police was asked to leave our cafe, his friends tried to incite an online slander campaign against us. We also received hate mail.

clear that the group had summoned the police ahead of time in case it got too “Oakland” for them. When word quickly spread about it on social media, hundreds in the area came down to show support for us. Business the following month nearly tripled what it had been, which came along side even more meaningful outpourings of support in kind words, letters, drawings, and gifts. Letters arrived from prisoners, neighbors dropped off gifts of food and art they had made, and a network of friends and supporters took shifts on watch at our shop because of the phone and online threats we had received. All this made it clear that there was tons of on the ground support for a stance against police presence.

Despite the love, we had to keep our shades drawn for about a month due to the tactics of police intimidation, like squad cars pulling up in front of the cafe, rolling down the windows, and taking pictures of us. There was a volume of emails, written letters, and phone messages from hundreds of cop-loving americans, mostly from other states. Some of them were patronizing attempts to change our minds as if we were misguided children. Others were threats to burn down our building, or to call ICE on us. We also received calls and letters of affirmation. By and large the experience showed us that rather than hiding from empty threats and worrying about police shutting down our business, it was time to double down against the harm done by police in our community, which continues to draw headlines today.

If You Stay Ready

After that our co-op members spent some time doing self-defense and de-escalation trainings. We networked with a group that was experienced doing security in the mental health field. This de-escalation training informed and empowered us. We learned that, equal to language and words, body

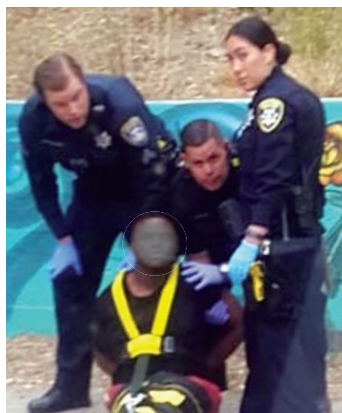
language and tone is crucial for communication with people in crisis. We can try to identify one of four common issues that people struggle with in crisis, namely fear or paranoia, frustration, manipulation, and aggression. This knowledge and practice allows for us to intervene in a caring way while also keeping ourselves out of harms way. In addition, we researched, brainstormed and developed non-police emergency protocols.

When teens roughly between ages 13-17, started showing up to steal laptops from customers, as happened throughout bay area establishments much of 2018, we created physical barriers, put up signs prohibiting laptop use at the tables closest to the door, and talked to our neighbors. Sure we wanted to stop them and prioritize the safety of our customers, but at the same time we didn't want to see the system deem those teens disposable and ruin their lives because a dumb mistake they made at a very young age. In the community, we know that even some of their family elders would want to see them get locked up to teach them their lesson. Usually this occurs when the elders themselves got caught up in their youth or worked hard and sacrificed to avoid petty crime, and think that having withstood the harsh penal system themselves somehow validates it. But this type of punitive thinking just is a coping mechanism for survival in cycles of violence and oppression. We were keyed in on breaking the cycle.

Unfortunately, a few laptops got got. Some people even tried to claim that we were a target because it was publicly known that we didn't call cops. But that was easy to refute by pointing to the fact that we were not getting hit for devices any more than other cafes throughout the bay. Some of our customers whose laptops were taken did end up calling the police, and we can tell you that those calls didn't do a thing to restore their lost possessions. What we did instead was offer to help fundraise, and talk to our neighbors. It was the long-time residents on our block that repeatedly stepped to the teens who were scheming to rob computers and told them to take what they were doing elsewhere that put an end to it. This is one simple example of the ways we must address our own community safety without police, which is what true public safety means to us.

Everyday People

And so in the end, it was awareness of and care about long-term residents and an understanding of the deep wound of white supremacy that led to the police issue in our cafe. Even outside of police, when qualms and quarrels flared up near our doors, we would clock whether it was appropriate to intervene, and



One morning a neighbor from the block ran in yelling “someone needs help,” and one of our workers ran outside to find a situation where a Black man was being threatened in the street by a police officer with a taser drawn. The man was detained for no given reason. We followed as the police drove up and down the block before pulling the man out and hog-tying him in front of the school and putting him on display near the school entrance when all the children were arriving at 8am. We were able to show them we were watching, and post the incident so that more people could see.

act accordingly. Before we opened, we had heard that certain neighbors on Nextdoor.com were saying that they hoped our business would “clean up” the corner. This corner has a long history that many others are better qualified to speak on than us. But essentially what these new Oaklanders meant when they referred to cleaning it up was that illicit activity, which goes on here like in many parts of the town, would be better if it happened a few blocks down the way, so that new home-owners could take up more space and ensure a steady increase in property value. They probably expected us to be police-friendly and help increase their presence.

A few months after opening, and before all the police hoopla, we received a beautiful appreciation from someone who we had seen and greeted a number of times coming and going since she was always kicking it up the block. Probably one of the people the other neighbors wanted to “clean up.” She came in with a friend one cloudy day, and told us that she didn’t drink coffee but just wanted to see the spot, so we talked a bit. After a cup of tea at a window table with her friend, she got up and thanked us from across the room, and said “it’s good you are here. I feel like my brain got a massage.” Many neighboring folks habitually stop in for water, to charge their phones, to use the bathroom, and to say what’s up.

Don’t get me wrong, it is not all peace and harmony. If folks act out, we tell them not to come back for a while depending on the severity. And if we somehow wrong them, we try to own it and apologize. That’s how relationships go. Give and take, live and learn.

Late last year a building on our block was put up for sale and we saw the marketing packet created by a real estate firm that sells mostly multi-million

dollar properties. In it was a map and listing of local amenities, like restaurants and cafes. In that listing they omitted our shop, a specialty coffee shop literally two doors down. We can't help but to take this as a compliment. Because of our anti-police reputation, our presence would NOT be a selling point for people with that kind of money. And so these small yet meaningful nods, and omissions, and others like them, affirm our efforts in resisting the ways that new businesses often play into gentrification. And not welcoming police had a central role in that.

Soundtrack

The Coup, *Pork and Beef*
Rocky Rivera, *No Love*
Suga Free,
If You Stay Ready
Sly & the Family Stone,
Everyday People

Bay Area Artists—*Salute!*

Songs about Police & White Supremacy

2Pac, *Violent*
Del the Funky Homosapien,
Del's Nightmare
Mac Dre, *Punk Police*
Husulah, *Fighting the Feds*
Beeda Weeda, *Fuck the Police*
Young Gully, *Here I Stand*
Mistah F.A.B., *Lovelle Mixon*
Nappy Nina, *Half A Clip*
Beastella, *1825*
Equipto x Dogg Town Dro,
Fvck Twelv
AR the Believer, *Fuck 12*
Ally Cocaine, *Fuck A Pig*

Actual Police Billboards:



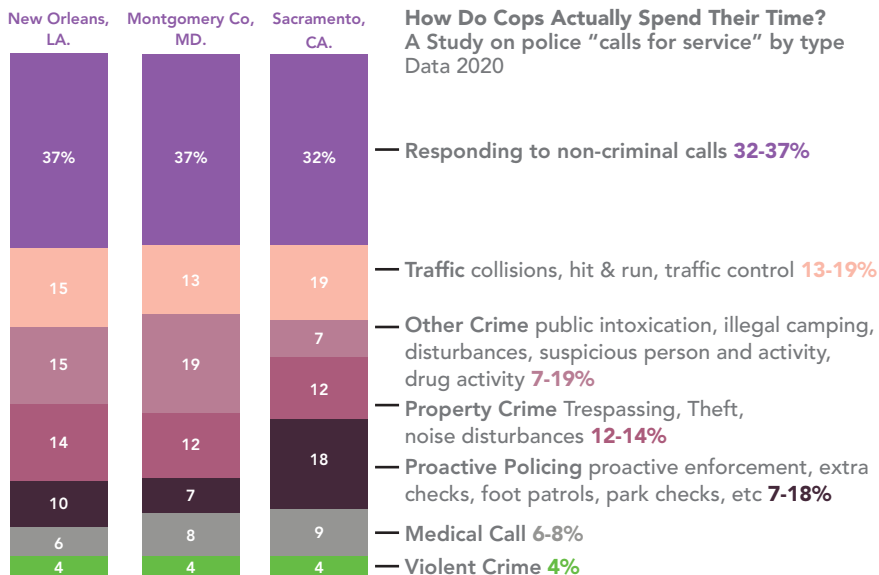
Some Call Him Pig

Every empire in history has gone to great lengths to create and disseminate myths about itself as heroic and exceptional, and push those myths on its own people to garner support. The US is no exception. Scores of books, news outlets, TV shows and movies have combined for centuries to form a myth about police as heroes, and the US as the heroic police of the world, morphing over time to fit the currents of race relations and representation. Despite all its nuance, even the current progressive trend of media “representation” still enables the myth. That is to say, rather than harp on the need to reverse the fact that there has always been and continues to be a disproportionate number of Black men in prison due to white-supremacy in policing, we increasingly see a disproportionate showing of Black people cast as police on TV.

We all loved seeing a rainbow coalition cast in the latest wave of flix in the Star Wars franchise. But representation still rarely deviates from merely projecting white savior solutions to societies ills. Representation in policing is one of those imaginary white savior solutions. In reality, representation within the ranks of the actual police by “minorities”—from groups whose lives are disproportionately ruined by the institution of policing—does not make progress more than it makes traitors. Representation matters, for sure...until it doesn't.

In the introduction to a 140-page report on the history of the Minneapolis police which was updated to include the tensions that flared last summer after the murder of George Floyd, a group called MPD150 made similar remarks in regard to the issue of policing: “our analysis locates the roots of police brutality, corruption, and racism in its history and founding mission. This is where our attention should be directed, not at frivolous arguments such as whether ‘all cops are bad.’ The presence of officers with good intentions, recruits who join the force to make things better, or even reform-minded chiefs does not actually alter the oppressive behavior of police agencies.”

So let's get into the facts. For those stuck on ‘not all cops are bad,’ here's a simple math equation. Recently twelve non-white members of NYPD, the “NYPD 12,” tried to file a lawsuit against their employer for demotions and retaliation against police that refused to follow racist and classist procedures.



So, out of 36,000 officers in the New York Metropolitan Police, an agency who sets the tone for policing across this nation, only these twelve that stood up to the force could be considered "good cops" in terms of practicing or embodying an anti-racism in any way.

$12/36,000=0.03\%$.

That's one in three thousand. In other words, 99.97% of cops, we would consider to be "bad cops." To all those that say not all cops are bad, this is what you can tell them. One in three thousand.

More importantly, stats on violent crime are shocking in relation to the resources given to police. One graph we pulled shows that even though violent crime in America has drastically fallen since the 70's, police budgets have tripled, to over \$115 billion per year. We know that Becky's and Karen's are making non-criminal calls to police to target whoever they want because of their own prejudices. And we know that by and large violent crime constitutes a very small percentage of the overall calls made for police "service," as seen by the graphed data showing types of calls in 2020 for three metropolitan areas.

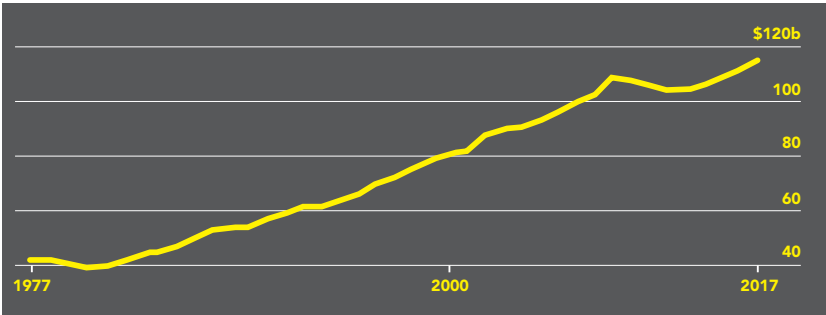
In addition, it was found that in terms of "serious violent crimes"—meaning homicide, robbery, rape, and aggravated assault—10 cities with public data available registered on average just 1% of calls in the same period.

Stats have also tracked that police are not adequately trained (and are often not trained at all) on mental health crises, and people with mental illness are 16 times more likely to be murdered in a police encounter than other civilians

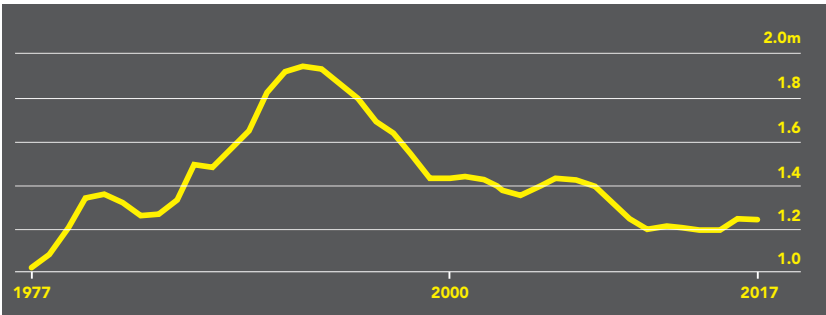
stopped by cops. In cities we see a saturation of mental illness, often linked to poverty, houselessness, queer or transphobia, or a combination there-of. Even officers who receive available mental health training still seem clueless on how to engage with people dealing with mental illness.

Imagine if you had a refrigerator repair company and over 85% of the calls you got were from people that wanted help with some other issue, like fixing a dishwasher or oven. This is what we see with police. People call them to do things that they are not qualified to do, and we are forced to pay them good money for it. So many people call them for issues that could be handled in a manner that doesn't involve cops at all.

Many people working in other sectors can do cop's jobs better than cops can. At least, at the vast majority of work cops are tasked with and paid handsomely



Police Funding. Constant 2017 Dollars
Data: U.S. Census Reports
compiled by the Urban Institute



Number of Violent Crimes
Data: FBI



Officers of color Yanez, Masso, and Mercer are the triggermen who first racially profiled, then killed (respectively) Philando Castile, Dreajon “Sean” Reed, and Alan Blueford, three black men who were all unarmed or retreating.

for. This means there are existing infrastructures and professional services that are critically under-supported for aiding houseless people, settling minor disputes, finding help for those in mental health crisis... The list goes on.

Despite this realization, one thing is for sure: cops aren’t going take cuts to their livelihood quietly. In general, cops get paid very well. They have strong unions and some of the best benefits and pensions in the public sector. Even the ones with the best intentions who understand some of the institutions problems are far from giving up the million-plus dollars they are set to receive as a career cop. For actual abolition of police and prisons, some of them—most of them—will need to be forced from their jobs. Many will appeal to their families and loved ones claiming to be one of the good ones. But we know better. One in three thousand.

We also know that the violence of policing has its roots in white supremacy and slavery, when property rights included the right to control Black bodies. We know that police historically act as the slave-catching iron fist of settler colonists, of the ruling classes. We are tired of knowing so much and being so helpless to stop the inflictions they pose when our loved ones become collateral damage, lost in the system, or worse: murdered and covered up by the ones that enforce law with impunity.

A Call To Action

As tensions rise in the fight to end white supremacy, we will be called to take actions and risks from where we stand. This is a unique moment in history in which multiple generations are able to connect the dots and really consider and implement strategies for eliminating the need for police. It is time to refute the myth about how badly we need police, that they are heroes, and that they constantly risk their lives for the greater good.

Police and their allies want people to think they are just misunderstood. Indeed, many individuals trying to do good from the seat of a patrol vehicle are prone to misunderstandings. For they themselves have misunderstood what it is that they embrace when they commit to “protect and serve.” The “law” that they worship and protect is nothing more than a set of technicalities based on a false logic and a flawed science. Everyone can see who the law serves as it paves a path of legitimacy to the violence that police enact with a ‘shoot first and ask questions later’ mentality.

What’s more is that the old racism has been replaced with a much more insidious one. In a paper titled “The New African American Inequality,” authors cite internal group differentiation in the experience of Blacks as “one of the principal and continuing mechanisms reproducing inequality in modern American history.” This is the lens that explains how when a Black cop kills a Black kid, that to most of America, justice was served, and the issue is no longer seen as “racial.”

Worse still than the blatant acts of violence on individuals by police are the structural methods of control centered on divide and conquer tactics that reinforce inequality. As we said earlier, the logic of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy finds ease in the art of co-optation. The whole of the “justice” movements, including worker co-ops, will continue to receive more and more funding that centers healing over resistance. This is because with policing under increasing scrutiny, they are working preemptively to get the people to police each other wherever they can.

The recent film “Judas and the Black Messiah” depicts well some of the ways they have used culture to sew divisions historically. The modern version of this work seems evident: they cast doubt within justice movements about how to

prioritize, and dumb down our ideas of who is fit to lead. We can't be fooled by emerging Black or people of color leadership that does not seek to dismantle all three foes of white supremacy, capitalism, and patriarchy. The three are inextricably tied.

The justice movements of this era must beware of doing the sneaky bidding of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy by policing the identities and participation of liberatory work and action. Transformative justice, healing justice, economic justice, food justice, racial justice, all must endeavor to win. But as many of us engaged in this work know, at the end of each day, there is no still "justice." It's "just—us." These movements promote the much needed physical, social and spiritual nurturing needed so our people can begin to heal in order to fight oppression. But if we focus on healing alone, we get into a chicken and egg dilemma.

How can we resist and fight without healing? And how can we heal when we're constantly under attack? If we are continually oppressed, the cycle of healing and trauma just stays on loop. This is why we need an end to police in our sights, and why building autonomy is in the roadmap to community self-determination and liberation.

We are calling for alternatives to police as a baseline, a first tier building block, to be incorporated by all. Domestic violence, sexual assault and rape, assaults of queer and trans people are tied to patriarchy and cannot be overlooked or minimized. Many call police because they simply have no alternative and need protection.

We can only show ourselves and those around us that police are not needed if we stand up, take calculated risks, and share the solutions we have found. To these ends we hope you will engage in popular education (drawing out knowledge your group already holds or can easily access). To aid in this we will continue to share and update materials we find chronicling instances of autonomy from police, historical police-state repression, and the nature of collective self-defense. Informal story-telling, reading groups, and movie/media viewing and discussion groups are great ways to start!

*Thief in the night
Tell the truth
White lives
Spreading lies*

*Take off your badge
We all know it was murder
Murder, murder
Murder*

*We are dying, it's the reason we are crying
We are crying*

*But we will never show fear
Even in my eyes
I will always rise
In wildfires
I ain't never been scared
Even through my tears
I will always care
In wildfires*

Wildfires, Sault