

# CARE NOT COPS



**Against policing  
student parties at  
Queen's University**

**Care Not Cops** is a group of students and non-students working to end police presence at Queen's University and beyond.

We are opposed to Queen's strengthening its relationship with the police. The policing of student parties around Homecoming and St. Patrick's Day is **not about 'safety' - it is about control.**

Fundamentally, police & prisons are born from settler-colonialism & anti-Black racism, as systems of subjugation and control to protect private property, industry, and state power.

**Cops do not keep us safe.**

#NoCopsOnCampus

#CareNotCops

#AbolitionNow

# The historical roots of policing: a Canadian perspective

*An excerpt from Defund Police YGK's zine, "Why We Oppose the Police," originally published as an article in Issue 6 of the Skeleton Press*

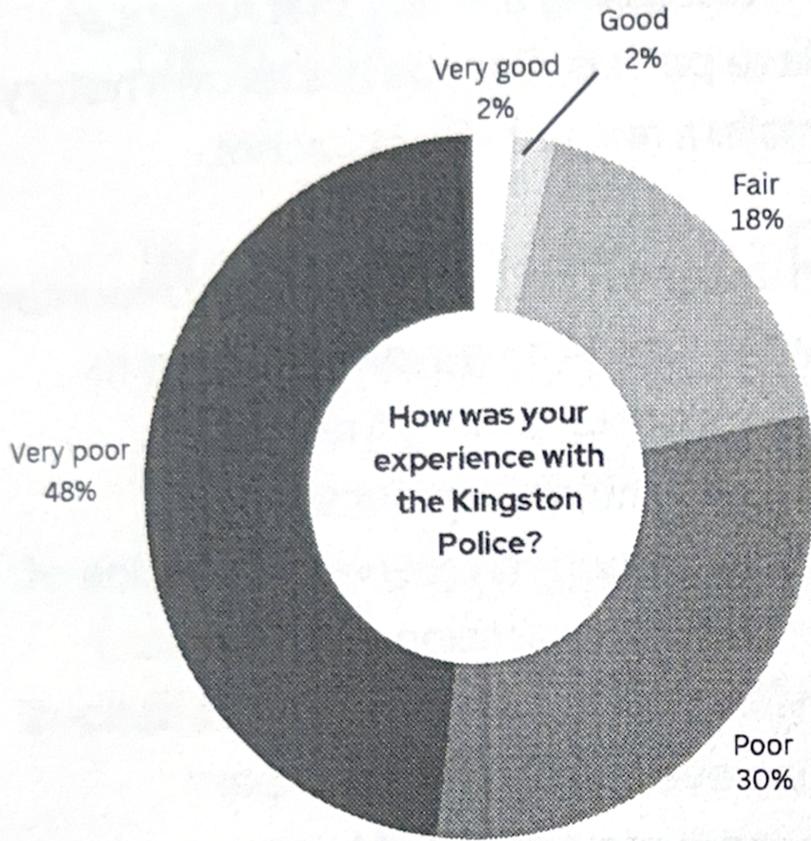
Many historians and activists have been discussing the fact that American policing has its roots in 19th-century slave patrols. Canada has its own history of policing rooted in both settler colonialism and anti-Black racism.

The North-West Mounted Police, forerunner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), was created in 1873 by the Canadian government and its infamous first prime minister, John A. Macdonald. One of their main purposes at the time was to support Western colonial expansion by displacing Indigenous people and restricting them to reserves. Genocide of Indigenous peoples through starvation and dispossession was legislated through a series of laws enforced primarily by what is now Canada's national police force. The laws included enforcing everything from the "pass systems," which criminalized the off-reserve movement of Indigenous people, to the infamous residential school system, in which police and other state officials kidnapped Indigenous children from their families and communities and sent them to abusive school-prisons.

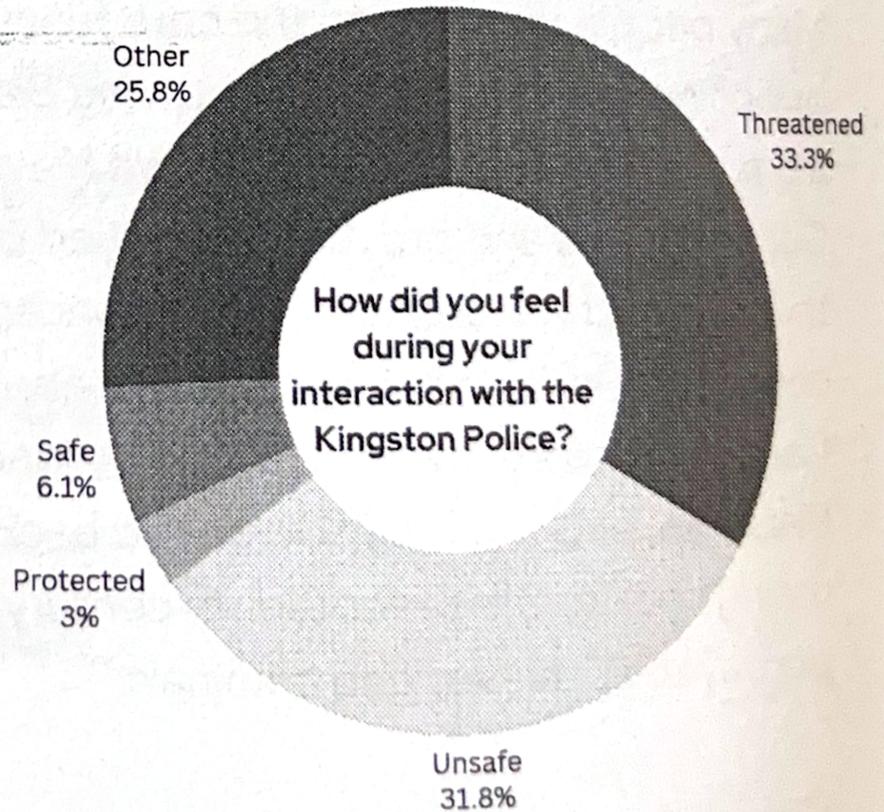
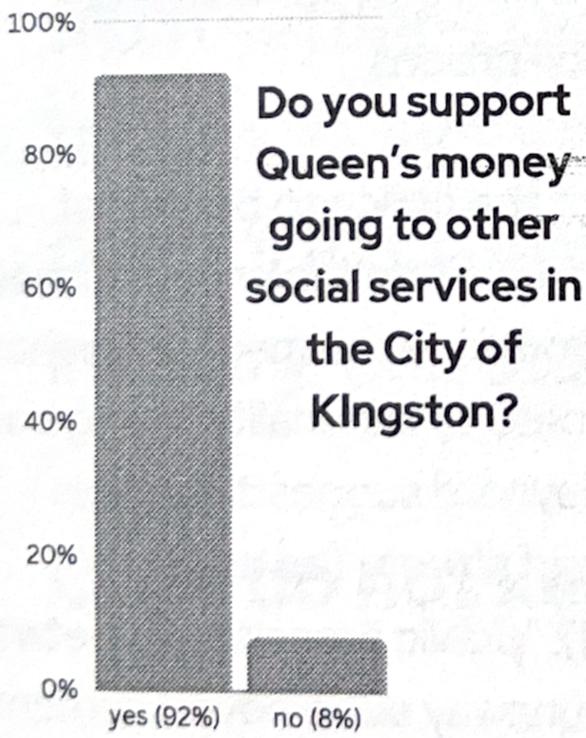
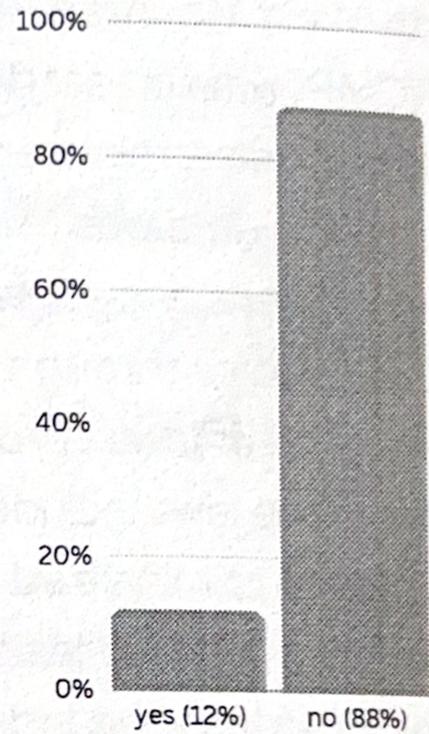
Many people understand the core function of the police to be that of opposing crime. In her book, *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present*, Robyn Maynard outlines the many ways that Canadian laws and practices have tied Blackness to criminality, laying bare the lie that criminality is a neutral concept. Maynard suggests that this connection in Canada predates the abolition of slavery (an aspect of Canadian history often purposefully ignored): "public associations between Blackness and crime can be traced back to runaway slave advertisements dating back to the seventeenth century, in which self-liberated Blacks were portrayed as thieves and criminals."

# Student experiences with cops

These results from two AMS surveys conducted in the 2021-2022 academic year about Queen's students' experiences with the police clearly demonstrate that the police do not keep us safe.



## Do you support Queen's money going towards the Kingston police?



## Student accounts with cops

taken from the same AMS surveys referenced previously

*"At the corner of Division and Johnson on hoco I overheard a conversation between a group of police officers. One officer had said: "I really want to put peoples faces into the pavement today," to which another one responded:*

*"I've smashed so many heads into the pavement today" and laughed. A different police officer then said: "I really want to slap someone." and one of them responded with: "Does it have to be a student?" and he said: "Yes".*

*"The officer yelled at me to "come here" and I stepped off the lawn onto the sidewalk to approach her. She then asked me for ID, which I told her I didn't have (I was just at a friend's house). I tried to give her my name and address, and she repetitively asked to see me phone and for me to prove who I was in an aggressive voice, and asked me to sit in the back of the police car. I followed her instructions and I showed her a photo of my ID on my phone. She took my phone from my hands without asking and brought it with her to the front of the cop car, locking me inside. She kept swearing and muttering things about obstruction of justice, despite the fact that I had followed all of her instructions politely. She then proceeded to tell me that I was going to "spend the night in jail" and kept my phone. None of my friends saw the initial interaction and spent the whole night looking for me. The officer and her partner took me to the station, where I was told I would have to stay "until I was sober" (it was 10:30pm and I had consumed half a vodka soda - I wasn't drunk by any standard, just very anxious). I was never formally arrested, informed of my rights, or given the opportunity to call anybody to let them know I was safe. I was released at 7:30 am the next morning with a \$65 public intoxication charge and a court order. "*

*"It was disgusting, the police were behaving as if they were above all other humans. They were tackling students walking on sidewalks and on private property. They targeted minority's in their arrest - I did not see one white person get physically touched but all minorities were tackled and pushed up against cars and taken away. Never have felt so unsafe in my life, police were being brought in from regions like york who probably needed their assistance more than students walking on sidewalks."*

# Queen's University and the Kingston Police

## What is the Nuisance Party By-Law?

The Nuisance Party By-law is an "enforcement tool" that provides police and Bylaw Enforcement with the ability, under one City-wide bylaw, to address the "nuisance behaviours" associated with large social gatherings, such as "public intoxication, property damage, and excessive noise." It is enforced all year round. ([bit.ly/citybylaw](http://bit.ly/citybylaw))

## What is the Student District Safety Initiative?

"In an effort to curb [nuisance] behaviours and their effects, the City of Kingston, Kingston Police and Queen's University have collaborated to introduce the University District Safety Initiative." It is enforced around Orientation Week, Homecoming and St. Patrick's Day. Its pillars are as follows:

- changes to how people will be charged for committing specific offences at certain times of the year and for any contravention of the Nuisance Party Bylaw occurring at any time,
  - these changes are made on a year-by-year basis. We have no way to prepare for these changes in enforcement as we don't know what they are until they are shared/enforced
- information-sharing between the City, police and the university, and
- potential university-related non-academic consequences for any Queen's University student issued a summons through the initiative. ([bit.ly/citydsi](http://bit.ly/citydsi))

## What do these mean?

Around Orientation Week, Homecoming and St. Patrick's Day, both the Nuisance Party By-Law and the Student District Safety Initiative have **compounding effects**. Thousands of dollars of "beefed up fines" are issued ([bit.ly/pandemicenforcement21](http://bit.ly/pandemicenforcement21)), armed and mounted police from different regions are brought in, and yet, student parties are not made any safer with increased police presence. Racialized and gender non-conforming folks in particular are put at heightened risk of violence from enforcement officers. The UDSI has, in 2024, been weaponized by Queen's security to suppress student movements on campus.

## 'Education' on 'enforcement'

In the lead-up towards St. Patrick's Day, 2023, "a door to door education and awareness campaign was organized in partnership with Queen's University. Representatives from the Police Liaison Team, Bylaw Enforcement and Queen's Student Affairs spoke with students in the University District to share important enforcement information. Police also presented themselves at public venues such as Starbucks to speak with students" ([bit.ly/stpatricksqueens23](http://bit.ly/stpatricksqueens23)).

In 2024, the Policing Liason Team was stationed around campus to "provide information on the risks students can encounter in large gatherings, as well as the enforcement piece to police presence at large gatherings" ([bit.ly/socialissuespyt](https://bit.ly/socialissuespyt)).

## Queen's spending on the Kingston Police

In 2022, Patrick Deane pledged \$150,000 to the city "to cover enforcement costs", every year for the next five - a total of **\$750,000** ([bit.ly/fundingsafety](https://bit.ly/fundingsafety)). In 2021, Queen's pledged **\$350,000** to the City of Kingston "to cover costs for pandemic enforcement", largely going towards "having more police officers on the ground" ([bit.ly/pandemicenforcement21](https://bit.ly/pandemicenforcement21)). In 2016, Queen's pledged **\$300,00** over 3 years towards "the city and Kingston Police" ([bit.ly/morefunding16](https://bit.ly/morefunding16)). Additionally, In the aftermath of St. Patrick's Day, 2023, Kingston Police issued over **\$19,000 in fines** ([bit.ly/stpatricksqueens23](https://bit.ly/stpatricksqueens23)), and in 2024 they have now added additional fees (\$90/cop, per hour) that can be charged on top of fines.

## The 'burden' and 'safety' narratives

Student parties "burden... city and other social services" ([bit.ly/fundingsafety](https://bit.ly/fundingsafety)). This narrative of students overcrowding city resources pays little attention as to how services such as healthcare are perpetually underfunded, contrasted to increased spending on police, especially in the context of COVID-19. Students are also pitted against non-student community members to justify further spending on and presence of the police. Kingston Chief of Police said, with regards to St. Patrick's Day 2023: "We are happy to report that, despite thousands of students pouring onto the streets, we were able to keep our staff and community safe". This alienates and villainizes students against "the community" ([bit.ly/stpatricksqueens23](https://bit.ly/stpatricksqueens23)).

In 2024, the narrative has shifted, emphasizing 'harm reduction' and as Queen's and the Kingston Police are "encouraging students to focus on well-being, respect, and responsibility" ([bit.ly/safetyandrespect-queens](https://bit.ly/safetyandrespect-queens)). The Police Liaison Team "are not enforcement officers, but communication officers" ([bit.ly/socialissuespyt](https://bit.ly/socialissuespyt)). Increasing police presence is not what harm reduction is - no matter how 'friendly' cops are.

## Students have always partied. We need liberatory harm reduction, not cops.

Harm reduction is an approach "that seeks to reduce the health and social harms associated with addiction and substance use, without necessarily requiring people who use substances from abstaining or stopping..."

Essential to a harm reduction approach is that it provides people who use substances a choice of how they will minimize harms through non-judgemental and non-coercive strategies in order to enhance skills and knowledge to live safer and healthier lives." (ontario.cmha.ca/harm-reduction)

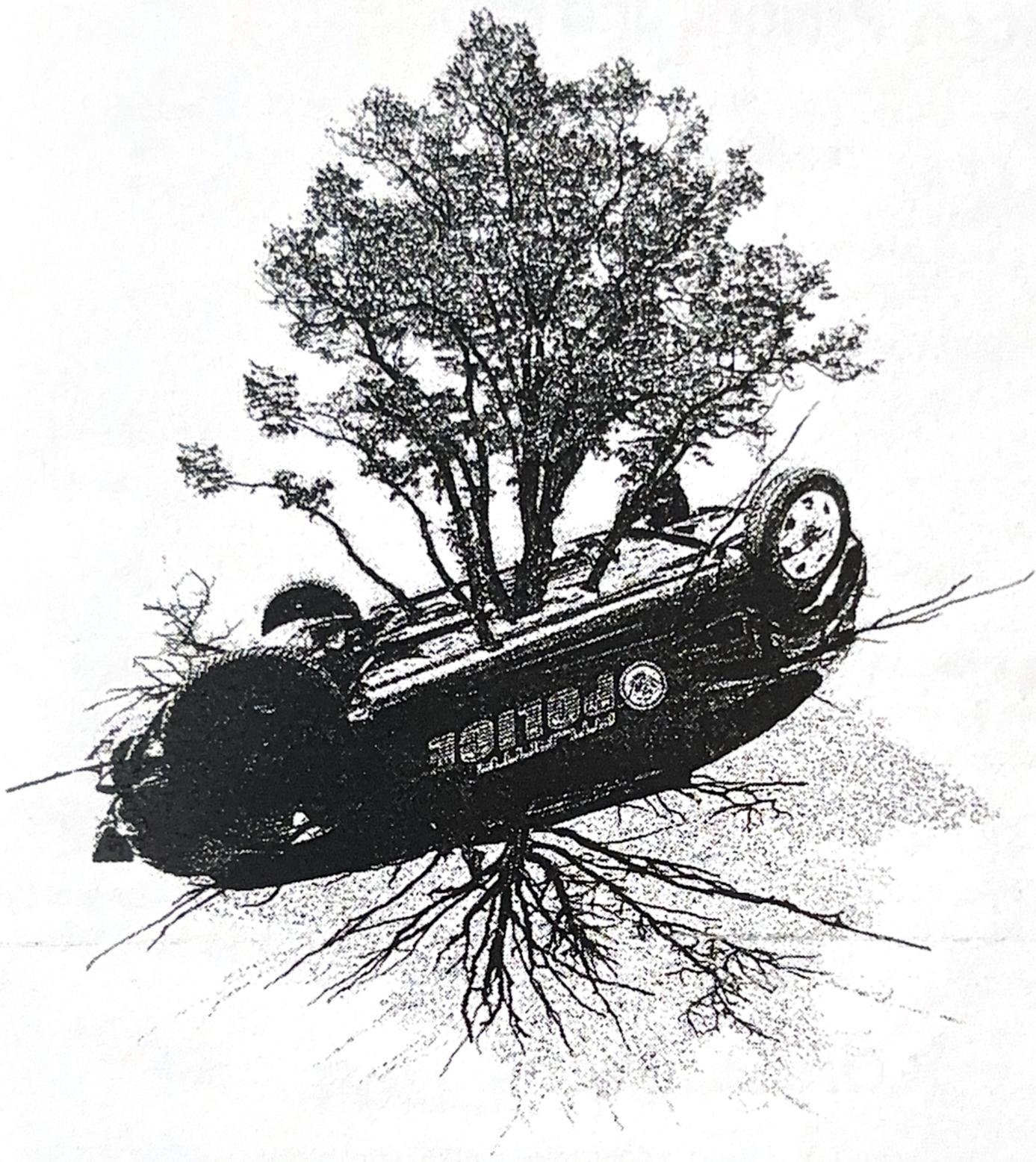
We can use a harm reduction approach to address the risks of students partying. Rather than attempting to punitively enforce measures that make it seem as though cops are necessary, we can accept that students do in fact party, and that we can help each other to reduce the risks for all without judgement or coercion.

Liberatory Harm Reduction is a philosophy and set of empowerment-based practices that teach us how to help each other as we address the causes of harm we face. We base our actions around values of non-judgement, non-stigma, and non-coercion, to reduce negative health, legal, and social consequences that result from criminalized and/or stigmatized life experiences (such as drug use, sex and sex work, surviving intimate partner violence, self injury, eating disorders) and any other survival strategies deemed morally or socially unacceptable. **We do not force others to change.** Liberatory harm reduction is true self determination and total body autonomy, and opposes systems of violence (such as police, surveillance and bigotry). (Adapted from "We Need Harm Reduction With a Liberatory Vision", an episode from Movement Memos podcast)

### **What can we do now?**

- Carry Naloxone and get trained to administer it
- Support marginalized students in their interactions with police
- Stop the policing of student parties
- Get police off Queen's Campus
- Advocate for and organize harm reduction efforts

Getting police off our Campus and investing in systems of care is harm reduction, as it creates conditions for safer partying in ways that address risks without coercion or judgment. Services like the Campus Observation Room (COR) have the potential to offer real harm reduction. The COR has a basis rooted in harm reduction, but often fails to put the basic principle of non-judgment into practice, which is why volunteers/staff would benefit from better training resources, as well as a widening of the scope of services (i.e. care for users of substances that aren't just alcohol).



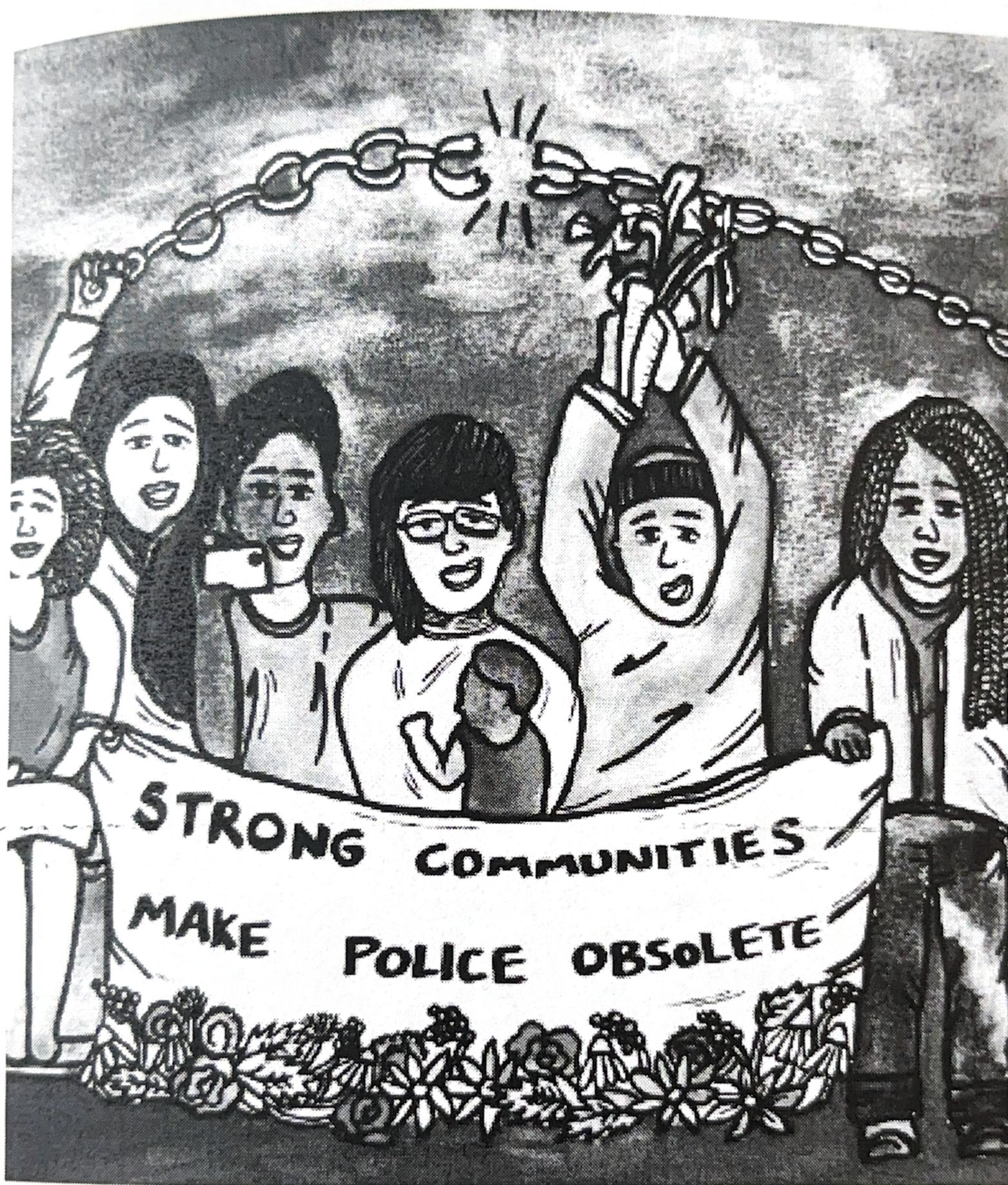
## Resources, Thinkers & Theorists on Abolition, Prisons and Police

- Ruth Wilson Gilmore: *Abolition Geography: Essays Towards Liberation*
- Robyn Maynard: *Policing Black Lives*, @policingblack
- Michel Foucault: *Discipline & Punish*
- Angela Davis: *Are Prisons Obsolete?*
- Ann Hansen: *Taking the Rap: Women doing Time for Society's Crimes*
- Victoria Law: *Resistance behind Bars*, victorialaw.net
- Mariame Kaba: *We do this til' we free us*
- William C Anderson: *The Nation on No Map: Black Anarchism & Abolition*
- Queen's Professors! Katherine McKittrick, (*Demonic Grounds*), Lisa Guenther, (*Solitary Confinement: Social Death & Its Afterlives*) among others!
- Jesse A. Goldberg and Marquis Bey: *Queer Fire: Liberation and Abolition*
- Various episodes of podcast titled *Movement Memos*
- Robyn Maynard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson: *Rehearsals for Living*
- Simone Browne: *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*
- **Abolition 101 FAQ - responding to harm**  
[merjireland.org/index.php/2020/11/20/abolition-101-frequently-asked-questions/](http://merjireland.org/index.php/2020/11/20/abolition-101-frequently-asked-questions/)

(Many of these books and others are available at Queen's & Kingston libraries or at Blue Heron Books & Zines, AKA Autonomous Social Centre, #1-75 Queen St., Kingston)

## Groups & Organizations

- Critical Resistance: U.S.-based organization with multiple chapters, active in prison abolition, founded by Angela Davis among others.
- P4W Memorial Collective: Kingston-based group made of women who were formerly incarcerated at the Prison for Women and allies. [p4wmemorialcollective.com](http://p4wmemorialcollective.com)
- Abolition Coalition: [noprison.ca](http://noprison.ca)
- Interrupting Criminalization: a project led by Andrea J. Ritchie and Mariame Kaba @interruptcrim
- [aworldwithoutpolice.org](http://aworldwithoutpolice.org)
- [yellowheadinstitute.org](http://yellowheadinstitute.org)





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