Democratizing the police in Europe
with a particular emphasis on Greece
what the particular steps in that direction can be will heavily depend on a clearer understanding of the contradictions residing in the police apparatus and on how they can be activated as issues to be resolved in the political arena.

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Comparative policing themes

Our brief survey suggests that, even though police systems invariably gravitate towards the modern institutional forms underpinned by bureaucratism and juridicopolitical ideology, history and the particularities of national contexts weigh heavily on their outlook. The latter is a concrete expression of how social and political struggles impact the articulation of the hegemonic security apparatus in each capitalist society. These characteristics define the general margins for the subsequent development of those systems and also for the nature and direction of police reform within the established sociopolitical regime. Within these margins, it is possible to conclude that certain configurations are more conducive to reform in a progressive direction, precisely because their elements are more accessible (or amenable) to social and political struggles of subordinate populations.

While change in centralised and heavily bureaucratised systems is slow and often more responsive to the needs of the state than to the needs of citizens, decentralised systems featuring local control of the police service offer more possibilities for further and substantive democratisation, as they present a degree of flexibility and openness to experiment with new approaches to organisation and oversight. The cases of France and Greece (discussed elsewhere in this Report) are indicative of how organisational change is driven primarily by internal forces leading to the refinement of the repressive capabilities of the police. Institutional change enables higher levels of responsiveness and accountability but this has failed to gather pace.

It is the case that more decentralised models permit greater openness to reform, particularly when questions of policing become politicised. In England and Wales the introduction of elected police and crime commissioners has been a response to the intense politicisation of questions of law and order and, theoretically, an evolutionary step within a system featuring high levels of local control and accountability. The politicisation of policing in the United States continually since the 1960s has engendered higher levels of scrutiny as well as the move towards community policing, which, at least theoretically, espouses police decentralisation, de-bureaucratisation and community involvement. Such developments present opportunities both for further democratic reform or for a strategic re-adaptation of the repressive apparatus, as the role and organisation of policing become politically contested issues to be resolved by political means. Any democratisation must be substantive and penetrative of institutions of policing.

It is unfortunate that the Left, particularly in societies featuring heavily centralised state police, has barricaded itself behind an instrumentalist view of the police and has thus eschewed the task of developing a detailed programme on the question of security as a public good to which every citizen is entitled. It is true that the Left’s constant exposure to the iron hand of the police cannot but dictate a radical and possibly unreflective oppositional stance. However, the politicisation of security depends not on reactive protest alone, but on whether questions of policing and its delivery are embraced and fought out by wider social alliances, social movements and more generally the people whose lives are typically more exposed to the reactionary effects of police paramilitarism and bureaucratisation. If the Left is to develop a strategy for intervention into these important fields of struggle, then it must reappraise its theoretical understanding of the question of security and study the characteristics of the production of security by the contemporary police organisation, its social composition, the division of labour within it and so on. The strategic direction towards which the Left should pursue police reform is the radical decentralisation of the governance and the organisation of the existing police service, but deciding...
Over the past 20 years the aggressive reassertion of neoliberalism, the renewal and expansion of repressive state capacities and the effort of the establishment to contain growing popular unrest in the wake of the current financial crisis has resulted in an inevitable escalation of conflict between the Left and policing organisations throughout Europe. These developments raise serious questions about the evolving nature, direction and intensification of police coercion. The current conjuncture has produced the very real possibility of electoral majorities by progressive Left parties on the heels of police coercion. The current conjuncture has produced the very real possibility of electoral majorities by progressive Left parties on the heels of police coercion.

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Of course, there are conditions of pay and work, it is often the case at the state and local level that police personnel are able to bargain collectively, even though some policy areas are excluded from the process. Police unionisation has made progress since the 1960s but representation is fragmented and there is no national police union in the US.

Police accountability is an important and highly politicised issue in the United States. Although the professional model is explicitly and highly prescriptive about police ethical conduct, the progressive insularity and prevailing mentalities in US police organisations have been responsible for significant biases in the delivery of police work up to the point of engendering considerable strain in the relations between police and the public. The professional model typically espouses a great degree of autonomy for the police and the use of internal administrative procedures for the control of the police forces on the basis of written rules and regulations, but this model is considered responsible for considerable failures in many critical respects, such as the use of force, respect of human rights and so on. Scrutiny of US police practices has relied heavily on judicial recourse, via constitutional, tort and criminal law, and some landmark decisions of the US Supreme Court laying down fundamental rules for police procedures, such as Mapp v Ohio and Miranda v Arizona are well known well beyond the US. External control of US police organisation some time involves ad hoc inquiries typically following incidents causing significant public concern, and increasingly since the 1980s the creation of independent ‘civilian’ agencies with a remit to review and investigate citizen complaints. The demand for meaningful ways to audit the police externally has been a direct consequence of the politicisation of the issue of police accountability, particularly in the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

In the municipal departments, which constitute the majority of police organisations in the US, hiring is controlled by city government and chiefs typically report directly to the mayor or council. As regards the conditions of pay and work, it is often the case at the state and local level that police personnel are able to bargain collectively, even though some policy areas are excluded from the process. Police unionisation has made progress since the 1960s but representation is fragmented and there is no national police union in the US.

Executive summary

Various political audiences that are potentially open to the political message of the Left and are key to its electoral success are unwilling to endorse a negative view of the police role that offers no vision to its electoral success are unwilling to endorse a negative view of the police role that offers no vision to its electoral success.
2002. The IPCC has national jurisdiction and is able to oversee the handling of complaints by the police and also to investigate complaints independently. Under this system, police forces retain the responsibility to deal with the bulk of citizen complaints against their actions, but complaints or incidents involving deaths, serious injuries, assault and corruption must be referred to the IPCC. Additionally the IPCC take over an investigation when alleged police misconduct has raised serious public concerns. The IPCC has developed its own infrastructure and special personnel to perform its role.

Case 4: United States

A discussion of policing in the United States, albeit necessarily brief is almost mandatory for three reasons. Firstly, key developments in the organisation of the police force have taken place in the U.S since the beginning of the twentieth century and there is an extremely developed body of thinking and research on policing; second, as the US rose to a hegemonic position in the international system in the post-WWII era, it has influenced directly and indirectly the organisation of police forces around the world, in the process of doing so today; and, thirdly, because crime and crime control has been a markedly politicised issue in the US, clear politically opposed ways of thinking have developed over time so that a robust, rich and creative progressive reform of the police does not merely consist on besieging the police mechanism from outside by introducing elements of democratic oversight and control, but also to democratize the division of labour and the systems of work within the police organization. The same applies par excellence to corporate security where, we suggest, the most precarious and alienated forms of policing labour exist today.

While we emphasize that Left strategies for police reform must actively seek to establish a decentralized system of citizen consultation, oversight and control that will complement the system of legislative and judiciary controls that typically exists under conditions of liberal democracy and which aim to enhance local responsiveness and accountability of the police. Such a system can involve the establishment of elected police boards at national and local levels. Internal police procedures should also be integrated with this system of external controls so as to offer a higher degree of protection and autonomy to individual police officers.

4. Implement democratic restructuring: democratization of the police organization should generally follow the individualistic, centralized and administrative decentralization. It should involve a reallocation of police resources towards front-line units responding to community needs and priorities, as well as a strengthening of the ability of front-line personnel to take initiative and formulate effective responses in consultation with communities.

5. Facilitate citizen participation: in line with the previous tenet, a Left strategy for police reform should actively explore ways to strengthen and generalize citizen participation in police decision making, and even operations. These participatory structures could involve the introduction of local meetings between police, citizens and other organizations during which formal decisions


about local policing priorities should be made and subsequently reviewed. A further step may involve the introduction of part-time and auxiliary personnel which will be recruited from the local citizenry and will be integrated with police operational units as much as feasible; and, 6. Engage directly with private policing: the Left must acknowledge that even an extensive restructuring and reallocation of public police resources, this may not immediately eliminate a reliance on private security, which is an important and perhaps irreversible characteristic of contemporary policing. The Left should pursue the introduction of a regulatory regime that renders the functions of private security compatible with the principles and priorities of the public police system as they emerge from the preceding tenets—in this respect, there exists a considerable margin for innovation. In general, the strategic role of private security organizations, encouraging more democratic forms of ownership such as worker-owned security cooperatives, division of labour and accountability.

In the particular case of Greece, a Left strategy for police reform must take into account certain characteristics emanating from the historical development of Hellenic policing in that country. The police in Greece exhibit the traits of a ‘continental’, state-controlled, militarised police bureaucracy (a brief survey of different police models can be found in the Appendix), but these have been relatively brief. The weight of this institutional history continues to encumber progressive reform efforts in Greece not only must be more gradualist and carefully formulated, so as to nurture the development of alliances between the political Left and strategic segments within the Hellenic Police, but also in some important respects it must strive to achieve goals that in other advanced liberal democracies are already taken for granted. With the prospect of a government of the Left in mind, we propose a number of steps that could initiate this process. The reform programme should aim to:

- Establish a research and strategic unit guided by a team of experts, with extensive powers to collect, audit, report and share data on police activity and to monitor and evaluate police practice;
- Create a comprehensive and multi-tiered personnel system and database with a view to establishing a system of regular professional development planning and review;
- Establish an updated system of regular mandatory retraining as a distinct component of police academy training;
- Establish an independent National Police Board and bring the Hellenic Police under its immediate control;
- Commission a study for the restructuring and decentralisation of the Hellenic Police, in combination with a wide process of public consultation;
- Remove all paramilitary police units from regular service in everyday policing;
- Review, harmonise and codify all existing primary legislation, and bring the Hellenic Police under its immediate control;
- Commission a study for the restructuring and decentralisation of the Hellenic Police, in combination with a wide process of public consultation;
- Remove all paramilitary police units from regular service in everyday policing;
- Review and revise the system of incentives and rewards applying to serving police personnel and relate it to the outcomes of their professional development planning; and,
- Revise and codify all legislation regarding private security, in accordance with the regulatory principles explained above.

over time. The centralising trends are not visible merely by the exercise of central government powers to establish general objectives and performance targets, to issue codes of police practice and general regulations regarding personnel qualifications, duties or conditions of work, equipment standards, and not least to allocate central government funds to local police authorities. Rather this influence has increased over time through the consolidation or development of nationally relevant structures, such as the Audit Commission or Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), ensuring external scrutiny of the police forces and therefore the diffusion of centrally set standards. Furthermore, a number of key policing areas, such as the suppression of serious and organised crime, border policing or cybercrime, have come under the remit of special bodies possessing national jurisdiction, particularly the National Crime Agency which has been given direct operational or cross-force coordination responsibilities. As instances of regional or cross-force coordination or cooperation have increased, there are also ongoing debates which are typically ignored by central government and regard the restructuring of the forces towards a smaller number of organisations covering larger areas and with a view to increasing operational capacity and efficiency. Within this framework, chief constables retain the control for operational policing, including decisions regarding the day-to-day management of the organisation and operations, the appointment of senior staff and the existence of national or local bodies that are firmly embedded in the current institutional design. The internal unity and discipline of the uniformed element of the English police system is secured by special regulations that apply to the recruitment, training and career progression from the rank of constable up to the senior ranks. The organisational structure typically includes staff formations and support units for the entire organisation. The delivery of core police services and the interfacing of the police with local communities is performed by units serving particular smaller geographical areas. While the operational independence of the uniformed element is largely undisputed along the above lines, there are aspects of the system that moderate this monopoly to some extent. Since the 1990s there has been a renewed emphasis on the local delivery of police services and continuous attempts to reinforce the relation of frontline policing with either local communities or local stakeholders by means of crime and disorder reduction partnerships or neighbourhood policing schemes. Related to this change has been the introduction of a new category of police personnel with limited powers, designated as Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), who are deployed in neighbourhood policing and are complementary of the core force. The English system also allows for a limited element of civilian participation in the form of Special Constables. These are volunteers who undertake to work with and support regular police officers for a few hours a week. Special Constables are uniformed and have the same powers as regular police officers. They are subject similar criteria for recruitment and similar rules of conduct and discipline as regular personnel.

There are two levels at which the accountability of the English police can be assessed. The above should have made sufficiently clear that external scrutiny of the police has intensified at a strategic level, since performance targets, objectives, strategies are increasingly set in consultation or collaboration with national or local bodies that are firmly embedded in the current institutional design. There is also a number of stakeholders in the form of professional bodies or associations, such as the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the Police Federation, the British Association of Women in Policing, the National Black Police Association and so on, which also contribute to the shaping of policing policies. On the other hand, the primary means of regulating and controlling police activity remains judicial redress. There are however elements complementing this system by organising an independent complaints process. The body currently responsible is the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) that was introduced in 164 Rob C. Mawby and Alan Wright, “The Police Organisation, the Primary Means of Regulation and Control,” Pp. 224–52 Handbook of Policing, ed. Tom Newburn, 2nd ed. (Cullompton: Willan, 2008).
sult, accountability is hierarchical and managerial, and largely dependent on legal redress retrospectively. A police union for the National Police exists but apart from giving a public representation to the moral and professional interests of its members, it is no formal part of police governance in that country.

Case 3: United Kingdom (England and Wales)

England is considered to offer a model of policing which is usually juxtaposed to the highly centralised state-controlled systems that have emerged and prevailed historically in continental Europe. It is true to some extent that early 19th century police reform in that country, conscious in its effort to eschew characteristics of continental European policing that were deemed undesirable in light of the English sociopolitical context, produced an archetypical civil police organisation in the form of the Metropolitan Police Service. The subsequent diffusion of this model across the county in the 19th century as a replacement of older structures has resulted in an configuration of the police institution which largely reflects local government structures while still permitting steering from the central government.160

Policing in England and Wales (separate legal regimes apply to Scotland and N. Ireland) still consists today of 43 territorial police forces each covering a particular police area and each governed by a separate police authority. Nevertheless, national ‘special’ police forces and agencies exist in the UK today, and until recently a gendarmerie-style militarised police force had been responsible for Northern Ireland. In addition, the increasingly active role of the Home Office (the English Ministry of Interior) is considered to signify considerable centralising trends.

The police system that largely remains in place currently was established in 1964. It has been generally known as the ‘tripartite structure’, according to which the responsibilities for the operation of the police service are divided between the Home Office, local police authorities and chief constables. Under this general framework, the chief constable is responsible for the direction and control of each force in operational matters, a local police authority has the responsibility for the general maintenance of the police force of its area, including the power to establish local policing objectives and to monitor police performance, while the Home Secretary has a general supervisory role as well as the general power to issue regulations regarding the government, administration and conditions of service of police forces.161

Before 2011, local police authorities were independent bodies of a mixed membership the majority of whom were representatives of the local government, while the composition of the remainder of their membership had varied—the original 1964 system included members of the local judiciary but over time the system shifted towards appointment of independent members. Local police authorities were abolished in 2011 and were replaced by officials directly elected for a four-year term, designated as Police and Crime Commissioners, and by new Police and Crime Panels, the majority of whose members is nominated by local government. Under this new regime, the local authority component retains the responsibility to establish a yearly police and crime plan relating policing and crime objectives, the allocation of financial and other resources and the monitoring of performance of the police, but the elected PCCs have a much more prominent and active role in the process. PCCs also have the power to appoint, suspend or request the resignation of the chief constable.162

On the other hand, it is today a largely undisputed fact that the influence of the Home Secretary in police governance has increased considerably


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1.0 Introduction

It may be said that the least theorized and understood state institution among the Left is that of the police. While radical thinkers for some time have grappled with the relative role of the state in a larger political context, the police have generally been viewed within an antagonistic lens based on a long history of struggle and direct experiences of infiltration, provocation, pacification, and the undermining of progressive social movements since at least the mid-1800s. As social movements of the Left have diversified their tactics with some success, policing organizations have similarly implemented more diverse and occasionally effective methods of pacification in response. The last two decades, in particular, have seen a re-escalation of conflict between the Left and policing organizations in Europe and around the world. This antagonism, while certainly justified in the context of struggle and resistance has also hampered the Left’s ability to produce a factional and historically informed analytic understanding of the police. As a result, despite advances in more nuanced thinking about the capitalist state and its role in the liberal international order among radical thinkers, a rather instrumental understanding of policing persists.

This lack of theoretical development is particularly disappointing because, as we shall argue, a complete understanding of the capitalist state and the functioning of the capitalist world economy is impossible without grasping the central role policing has played in the fabric of this global order.

Mara aptly observed in the mid-nineteenth century during the arrival of what we now understand as the first modern Anglo-Saxon constabulary, that “security is the supreme concept of bourgeois society, the concept of police.” Given developments in the world economic system, the role of Empire in the maintenance of the most elaborate global system of surveillance ever conceived, and the unabashed growth of public and private security forces in tandem with growing inequality, Marx’s pronouncements have perhaps never been more salient. There has, of course, never been a socialist police science. The prescriptive formulation of a system of social control for most revolutionaries is unthinkable, even abhorrent. As Harvey has argued, however, “one of the problems with lately lamented communism is that it didn’t ask these questions about everyday life.” It did not seriously query “what would a transition out of capitalism to socialism look like?” which, we would agree, “plays questions about everyday life.” It did not seriously query “what would a transition out of capitalism to socialism look like?”, which, we would agree, “plays a critical role in thinking about any revolutionary political project.”

As a category of personnel, radical democratic governments are unprepared to deal with the police because they have not applied themselves to a seri-

Italian Carabinieri and the Spanish Guardia Civil are similar gendarmerie-type police forces.

At present, France features two state-controlled national police forces, the National Police whose remit is to provide a police service to towns with a population of 10,000 or more, and the Gendarmerie, who are responsible for the policing of smaller municipalities and of the countryside. The National Police is a civil police force answerable to the Minister of the Interior. The Gendarmerie, while formally constituting a military body and part of the armed forces, is responsible to the Minister of Interior in matters of public order, to the Ministry of Justice for criminal investigations, and for all other purposes, to the Ministry of Defence. France also features numerous municipal police forces, operating in cities with a population of over 100,000 under the general police powers of the mayor. These three types of police in many cases coexist, since areas policed by the Gendarmerie have today become heavily urbanised, and municipal police forces operate in areas coming under the jurisdiction of the National Police.

From an organisational viewpoint, the organisation of French policing follows closely the structures of the French administrative system. The heads of other senior personnel of both forces throughout the organisation are appointed by the central government, whereas at local level police activities are supervised by the prefects, who are also officials appointed by the government as central state representatives in territorial administrative units (prefecture, cantons), and operate alongside elected local government bodies. Overall the Minister of the Interior exercises operational control in matters of public order and this authority is cascaded locally through the prefects, even though the Gendarmerie’s military hierarchical structure entails that prefect control is more direct over the National Police. Municipal police forces while accountable to the mayor and responsible for general police duties perform a largely ancillary role particularly in matters of criminal investigation according to the law they are required to immediately refer cases to either the National Police or the Gendarmerie. Police operations therefore are highly centralised around the two state police bodies.

Furthermore, a general distinction that applies to police activities in France is that between administrative police, pertaining to securing public order, including traffic and riot control, and judicial police, which includes criminal investigation, arrest powers and other related activity accorded to criminal procedure and under the supervision of the judiciary. The consequences of this distinction travel the French police not merely operationally, but also as regards personnel, since special procedures are required for any police officer to achieve the status of a judicial police officer and therefore to exercise the powers vested in that status. This differentiation also defines the conditions of police career, conditions of work and even appearance, particularly in the National Police. Officers who do not possess judicial police status have limited powers in this respect, and constitute a separate category of personnel. The same distinction also applies to the Gendarmerie but because this police force is organised along military lines and has retained a system of territorial presence by means of a large number of small units (brigades) which are dispersed throughout the country and perform all police duties, the division is less pronounced (e.g. all personnel is uniformed).

Overall, France presents the archetypal system of state-controlled policing as a condition of liberal democracy, as structures of police control and accountability are closely intertwined with the general structures of executive and judicial power. As a re-


3.01.551-5, Robert Reiner, “The Police in the Class Structure,” Historical Analysis,”


5 A continuously updated “Global Surveillance Disclosures” website in the aftermath of Edward Snowden’s NSA document leaks may be found here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glob_dal_surveillance_disclosures, %282013%E2%80%93present%29


7 See Harvey’s online lectures on Capital, especially Chapter 15: Machinery and Large-Scale Industry, Sections 1-3 http://davidharvey.org/2008/08/marx-capital-class-ch-08/

procedure. The chief commissioner has responsibility for the day-to-day operations and finances and ensures that operations are conducted effectively and in compliance with the law and that they are reported reliably and fairly. The local police board also has an assistive role.

The local police authorities are supervised by the National Police Board which is the central administrative agency for police services and reports to the Swedish Ministry of Justice. It is led by the National Commissioner and also features a governing board, all appointed by the government. The National Police Board also includes the National Criminal Police and the Swedish Security Service, which are agencies operating nationally with a special remit. The former’s remit pertains to serious organised crime, police intelligence and border controls, while the latter is a state security and counter-terrorism agency, and in practice functions as an independent authority.

The National Police Board, as central administrative agency for police services, has certain powers over the police authorities. It is responsible for developing and specifying the targets and guidelines that the Swedish Parliament and the Government decide for police activities and communicating them to the entire police organisation. It is also tasked with distributing the funds allocated to the police by the Government. The tasks of the National Police Board also include supervision and coordination of police services and the development and diffusion of standards regarding tactics, methods and regulations directed at individuals, municipal and county councils.

Police recruitment and training are centralised in Sweden. Admission to the police service is subject to formal qualifications and successful specialised tests and training. The service different types of employment and salary structures and benefits are decided by means of collective agreements at national and local level.153 Transparency levels are regulated by the Freedom of Press Act, granting to every citizen access to police documentation upon request and on condition that secrecy rules do not apply. The matter is decided by the local authority. Police authorities are expected to keep good order of their records and organise their own archives for the storage of public documents. The police service is subject to judicial control, according to the general rule that citizens are able to appeal against decisions of a public authority and seek judicial remedy. Procedures exist for scrutiny involving the parliamentary ombudsman and the chancellor of justice, who can receive and investigate complaints. However, these authorities cannot review or modify the decisions of another public authority or court.154

Current proposals for police reform in Sweden are in favour of the creation of a unified police service in that country with a view to addressing disparities in the service. The creation of an independent review body with a remit to supervise both the police service and the security service is also being considered.155

Case 2: France

France is often considered the main source for a modern model of policing. Since early as the 17th century a state-controlled centralised municipal police existed in Paris, along with archetypal mid-18th-century police forces, the Gendarmes. Historically, the former has provided a model for the creation of centralised bureaucratic state police forces, while the latter has provided an example for the organisation of a police force key to the pacification of the countryside and state building. The fusion of standards regarding tactics, methods and regulations directed at individuals, municipal and county councils.

2.0 Police science

“[a]ll the bourgeois economists are aware… that production can be carried on better under the modern police…” - Karl Marx

The Enlightenment period of the late seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries is often considered a period of European ascendance. Europe blossomed in the midst of devastating state wars, colonial exploitation and imperial expansion. This era also gave rise to what Foucault termed the arrival of “the disciplines” that included modern political philosophy, economic theory and international trade and finance. These disciplines laid foundations for the economic developments and accompanying scientific and political rationalities that are now endemic to contemporary ‘western’ civilization. During this time, important debates about the raison d’état, the efficiency of bureaucratic systems, and the most economical and ‘scientific’ means of governance took place within the rubric of a science of police.

Our approach to “police” in this Report, therefore, entails more than just the uniformed law enforcement functions we have now come to identify under that title. We are intentionally invoking a “pre-disciplinary”116 idea of police “before the police”11 in order to invoke a longer and more embedded interrelationship between police and capital. Such an approach is rare. Typically, the notion of police is presented as a nineteenth cen-

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153 Swedish National Police Board, The Swedish Police—an Introduction (Stockholm: Swedish National Police Board)

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46.1 (2006): 78-96

8 A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (Chicago: C.H. Kerr, 1904) Ch. L part 1
9 Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980)
tury project doggedly pursued by forward-thinking reformers such as Sir Robert Peel12 or, to a lesser extent, as a class-based initiative13 aimed at the moral and political control of an increasingly unruly urban proletariat. There is considerable truth to both of these approaches and we are certainly very sympathetic to the latter but we also aim to demonstrate policing as a grand intellectual project linked to state formation, prosperity and security in Enlightenment thought. In order to achieve this, theory and planning are considered in the sense that private individuals or legal persons should encompass a policy for the reform of both. Public police organisations possess a wide remit to uphold domestic order, public safety and security by preventing or suppressing violations typically falling within the general domain of criminal law. But it is not unusual for police activity to extend in the domain of state security engaging in activity against undesirable or subversive political activity.15

While the precise remit of and division of labour within police organisations is heavily dependent on national and institutional histories, our brief survey focuses on those aspects of police organisation and structures of accountability that bear heavily on the everyday experience of policing for the vast majority of citizens. Our concern is to interrogate certain key types of police systems, to establish whether there are characteristics more conducive to democratic control and accountability and under what conditions. The Swedish and French systems are representative of a ‘continental’ police model, while the English and US systems, while significantly different between each other, are representative of a more ‘decentralised’ police system. As we have seen, Greek policing is also a typical example of a ‘continental’ system.

Case 1: Sweden

Sweden features a state police service comprising agencies with territorial and national jurisdiction. The service consists of 21 territorial (county) police authorities, which are responsible for police operations in their respective jurisdictions. Each authority is directed by a chief commissioner and a local police board, all appointed by the government. Local police authorities decide on the operational plan, budget, internal organisation and rules of

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security are common for all governments, the immediacy of which are often distracting from long-term reform projects such as this one. This is to be expected but it should not stop the effort. What we have offered is skeletal. The specifics of the political, economic and social context will often mediate what is possible.

been “transformed beyond anything recognizable to earlier writers on police powers” – it has become a “backwater” field. The second, English notions of police were based on a foreign, Continental ‘other’ viewpoint which significantly shaped considerations of the role of police and the legitimacy of the state. In this sense, thinking about ‘what the police ought to be’ was also thinking about ‘what the state ought to be’. The project of police, when viewed from this etymological perspective, is implicated with the project of nation-building since police seemed tied to national self-identity and wealth creation. To a great degree, this liberal compulsion still haunts national identities today – e.g. the westward marching RCMP, the friendly ‘Bobbie’, the nation-forging Carabinierie, etc.. Indeed, if and when state police monopolies are threatened, new calls emerge for their re-consolidations in order to defend or re-establish the ‘public good’.

The founding political economists of capitalism and the leading police intellectuals who first argued for a salaried, centralized and professional police all harkened back to the notion of police science. There were schools of Polizeiwissenschaft in Germany, the seminal Traité du Police in France, and, of course, a ‘political arithmetic’ in England that led to the first pauper police specifically geared to managing Britain’s dispossessed after their forcible removal from subsistence living. Similar patterns of transition were being experienced across the globe. Thus, to trace the historical development of police science is to trace the managerial and intellectual foundations of capitalism. The rise of police science in the eighteenth century was an idea that included both the thinking and implementation of a system necessary for capital accumulation, which has long subdued developments in the world economic system. We can say that these ideas about police and their relation to economics may be divided into three general schools: 1) Mercantilism, which encouraged protectionist economic policy and whose general propensity was that of placing capital in the service of the sovereign; 2) cameralism, the closest German equivalent to mercantilism, which sought to create a science of maximizing the collective welfare of all through state regulation over, among other aspects, trade and commerce, and finally, 3) liberalism, which advocated the individual over the collective and reversed the logics of mercantilism by placing the state in the service of capital. These modes of economic priority and their relationship to the political body were always considered through a language of police science and were aimed at the enforcement of a transition. These are not, of course, discreet phases of economic thinking for they persist to the present in various forms (from modern industrial protectionism in Germany to Keynesianism in England and Austrian liberalism throughout the globe) but in considering the specific transition from the previous two systems toward the promotion of the third we can better understand the modern capitalist policing model and the political and economic basis of neoliberal policing today.

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have offered is skeletal. The specifics of the political, economic and social context will often mediate what is possible.
3.0 Capitalist policing

It is admittedly very difficult to establish a single criterion or model for clearly isolating what we might now consider general policing activity within the broad sweep of human history. Conducting organized patrols, keeping the watch, and generally making one’s encampment, fortification or village safe from attack and disorder is probably an activity as old as human societal cutting across diverse political structures and modes of production.32 Nonetheless, in terms of a system of thought called ‘police’ and a body of officials by the same name, the emergence of a modern form of organized security and crime prevention in Europe can be traced back to the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century.28 Before the feudal production based on kinship in an agrarian system did not require a specialized policing system. Value was based on land. Surplus was realized locally and enforced domestically and imperially by lords and their vassals. Labour was largely static and manufactured goods were not abundant which did not necessitate a ‘general police’.

The dissolution of the feudal system and the intense social disorganization that early capitalism unleashed created widespread instability and crises of order. This internal instability was coupled with a renewed external stability achieved through the 1648 Peace of Westphalia which ended the Thirty Years War and the signing of the 1659 Treaty of the Pyrenees that ended the war between France and Spain. These treaties solidified the notion of state sovereignty and signalled a European-wide search for a new domestic order in the aftermath of incessant conquest. The economic and political needs for stable trade and commerce, and for centralized power systems capable of enabling capitalist growth and imperial conquest resulted in new state experiments for adequate systems of order maintenance to guarantee prosperity through the maintenance of productive workforces – this was, as we have seen, a direct impetus for the search for an adequate science of police.30 Moreover, this emergence of police science coincided with the defining characteristic of the Enlightenment period: the birth of the scientific method – collecting as much empirical information as possible, attempting to link all constituent parts of a whole, and using knowledge to calculate and analyze in order to predict events with regularity. The birth of ‘political arithmetic’ and the invention of statistics allowed for the study of the ‘body politic’ in the form of “population.”31 Under this intellectual re-casting, political subjects were tuned into aggregate objects of analysis as an essential step in making police science possible – what Foucault called bio-power.32

While the organization of the first bona fide modern state police can be traced to Continental systems, especially in those in France and Germany, we can find no better exemplar of how a truly liberal and capitalist model of policing operates than that of nineteenth century London, and particularly the bodies of police that immediately predated the Metropolitan Police. The 1830 London constabulary of Scotland Yard were preceded by an array of private, public and quasi-public forms of “monied” police administrators. These should be made available electronically and the public should be made aware of routine police practices in their area through online reporting.

2. Create a comprehensive and multi-tiered personnel system and database including all existing records of experience, qualifications and discipline and establish a system of regular professional development planning and review for existing regular and new part-time and auxiliary services. Inspectors and supervisors can review as a discrete component of this system essential for promotion and annual or biannual review.

3. Establish an updated system of regular mandatory retraining as a distinct component of police academy training. Officers sent for retraining should be detached from their units and should be able to focus on reassignment. Academy training should build awareness in recruits and existing rank-and-file of their duties as state "workers" and as members of an extended democratic policing network with obligations to the public and the Hellenic Constitution devoid of political partisanship. Political partisanship among the police should come to be viewed as a betrayal of democratic policing and the Hellenic Police.148

4. Establish the National Police Board and bring the Hellenic Police under its immediate control. All remaining administrative services of the Ministry of Public Order should be distributed between the ministries of Interior and Justice. The police should be unshackled from military hierarchies and national security issues as much as feasible.

5. Commission a study for the restructuring and decentralization of the Hellenic Police and launch a parallel consultation program under the authority of the National Police Board. Local police boards with democratic representation and some budgetary control to initiate crime prevention programs should be established at the end of this process. The existing rank structure of the police should be flattened and demilitarized as much as possible.

6. Remove all paramilitary police units from regular service in everyday policing and establish levels of staffing appropriate for a use of these units under the principle of ‘last resort’ and reassign superfluous personnel to fast response units and other decentralized services. Make extensive use of auxiliary and part-time police to augment the Hellenic police as necessary, in the process structurally interposing police service with civilian parapolice.

7. As a necessary step toward the modernization of the Hellenic Police, revise, harmonize and codify all existing primary and secondary legislation governing policing and parapolice. Consider radical changes that all subsequent legislative changes are made with reference to this codification. At the same time launch a consultation program leading to the revision of all regulations relating to workload, overtime and other conditions of work within the police service. Invite the police union into a lead role in any changes.

8. Review and revise the system of incentives and rewards applying to serving police personnel and relate it to the outcomes of their professional development planning.

9. Revise and codify all legislation regarding private security. Update legislation and regulations as needed to provide structural and economic incentives toward the creation of competitive worker cooperative security firms. Ensure that all security guard licensing is tied to a proviso that no security guard may act at the behest of a private client that undermines the public interest.

These nine platforms for action are certainly not exhaustive and in any case crises of policing and
consequences of these current developments unless backed by a carefully implemented (and carefully timed) intervention in the structures of police governance and organization in the country. In Greece, the additional challenge is that a Left strategy for reform must at once check the advance of the far-right among police personnel and generate the conditions for a democratizing and thus opening up of these structures.

7.4 A Left strategy for police reform in Greece

Part of the problem for establishing a set of reform initiatives along the lines of a democratic Left in Greece is that the Hellenic Police, for the most part, have yet to be fully integrated within liberal democracy. It is surely easier to initiate change when, at the very least, the tradition one is seeking to reform – at least in principle if not practice – proffers the narrative identity of non-partisanship and pluralism in their history and guiding mission. This is clearly not the case in Greece where we are witness to the ease with which Golden Dawn has enshrined itself among the police and the widespread support that the far right has enjoyed among officer ranks and file. It might seem tempting in the aftermath of a Syriza General Election victory, to initiate a purge of the established police executive and declare the police on their way to reform – this would certainly be the normal course of affairs in Greek politics but it would not result in lasting and meaningful institutional change.

Thus, while the Left must adopt an unambiguous set of principles guiding police reform in Greece, the precise nature and timing of each step will depend on the evaluation of existing conditions within the organization of the Hellenic Police. In some cases this can be a simple as merely modernizing elements that have little or nothing to do with a politics of police. In others, it will mean a philosophical shift in priorities and a wholesale change in how those priorities are identified in the first place.

The main challenge for the Left is to mobilize its political forces in the direction of engendering wider consensus among the public regarding the necessity of police reform and to create pertinent, strong alliances within the police organization. Police unions will be key to the latter goal and should be carefully conscripted in the formulation and the implementation of the reform program.147 In fact, it would be far more permissible for a party of the Left to engage in sustained and overt political maneuvering at the union level than anywhere else and to use this as a method of leveraging reform throughout the Hellenic Police. In addition, the wider change in the social composition of police personnel since the mid-1990s can be assumed to entail that various priorities will follow different patterns depending on the support reform pursuing a strengthening of new police professionalism under a different policing model. In short, any changes to be initiated must be accepted by rank and file officers as benefiting them directly and that their interests are furthered by advocating reform. In line with the analysis in previous parts of this report, the implementation of such a program could take the following steps:

1. Establish a research and strategic unit guided by a team of experts, with extensive powers to collect, audit, report and share data on police activity and to monitor and evaluate police practice. This is an essential first step in building an alternative police science that works toward the holistic decrease of harm and fosters a stronger sense of public safety and democratic support for the police. It should have under its remit all crime analysis units and a decentralized executive mechanism. It should track crimes silenced by existing class-filtered measures including white-collar fraud, and political and corporate malfeasance. All new pilot projects and crime reduction plans should be assessed so that the future development of democratic policing initiatives can be evaluated and shared with policing boards, the public and

147 This does not mean that the platform on which police unions typically campaign should be accepted unconditionally. In fact, the strategic documents adopted by POAST (the largest police union) appear to espouse changes of a technical nature rather than a more fundamental change of the policing model, see for example Greek Centre for Criminalology, Report on the Re-Structuring of the Services of the Hellenic Police (Athens: Report commissioned by the Greek Federation of Police Officers. Sociology Department, Panteion University (in Greek), 2001), and Papapantelis, Proposals for the Reform of the Hellenic Police.

and notorious “thief-takers”33 privateers not seen in other parts of Europe until the more recent rise of neoliberalism34 and the dissolution of Soviet state capitalism. This boon in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century private policing can be directly attributed to London’s slow and reluctant adoption of a centralized, public policing system already well established in France, Austria and Prussia. By 1800 the Thames River Police, under the direction of the famous police intellectual and magistrate Patrick Colquhoun began to patrol the docks, quays and hulks of London’s shipping artery. It was a private police force under legislative authority, with four-fifths of its budget financed by the West India merchants. The Thames River Police can be viewed as a capitalist model of policing par excellence but we must also remember that the lineage of police thinking that gave birth to this first audacious security experiment is very long and links back to a political economy that was part of the planning and rationale for the emergence of a mercantilist state. Indeed, over a century and a half before the emergence of this first privately financed, yet legislatively formalized, uniformed, salaried, commercial police, Sir William Petty was laying out the groundwork for a “political arithmetic” that would help change Enlightenment thinking about governance. Petty has long been appreciated as the “founder of political economy” and the “inventor of statistics.”35 His Natural and Political Observations on the Bills on Mortality (attributed
of England’s Subjects, to earn two Millions per annum more than they now do; and that there are also Employments, ready, proper, and sufficient, for that purpose.  

Sir William Petty’s abilities at surveying and urban planning were thus aimed at eliciting the maximum level of productivity from subjects of the English Crown, including those who lived in cities. Not only is this expressed in Petty’s design of the Irish town of Kenmare but even more so in his detailed plan for the city of London including especially the erection of an encircling wall. He argued that this ‘London wall’ should be “100" foot in circumference, 11 foot-high, two brick thick, in a fortification figure, with 20 gates, worth 20£…”. But what would the purpose of such a wall be? For the security of the city? In part, but this seems only supple- mental to the primary function for Petty. Thus, the function of the wall was “[t]o take an acccount of all persons and things going in and out of the City” and to provide “[a] foundation of liberties, securites, and priviledges” which included who may be allowed into the city, how their possessions should be catalogued, a taxation system, a system of manumission for those who were not productive, a licensing system for beggars and so forth. William Petty’s London wall is an architectural design that goes far beyond bricks and mortar.

For the first time in recorded history a city wall was to be erected not for the purposes of fortification and defense but rather as a method of surveilling and exacting a much more austere system for delinquents and debtors in Ireland, including that “all men be bound to keep Acompts of their Receipts and Issues, Gayn and Losse, Debts and Credits, in mony, Cattle & Goods, and where they were at noon and every night every day in the yeare, with mention of what deeds here hath made or witnessed”. No house would stand alone nor outside the call of some other house in order to ensure effective communi- cation in times of crisis and to allow for a system of surveillance and apprehension. Finally, Petty proposed in the middle of the 17th century what has now become a common refrain among the security establishment: a national identification system so that “[e]very man carry about him an uncounterfet table Tickett, expressing his name, the number of his House, his Age, Trade, Stature, Haire, eye, and other peculiar marks of his Body.”  

Thus, not only was Sir William Petty the inventor of statistics, the founder of political economy, and early colonial surveyor and planner, he was also one of the initial architects of capitalism by arguing for the establish- ment and enforcement of a wage labor system. He thus laid the groundwork for the development of ‘police science’ to follow, very early recognizing not only that the new source of wealth under capitalist relationships would be ‘free labour’ but simultane- ously understanding the forms of surveillance and pacification necessary to make capitalism function.

While Petty is often recognized for his contribu- tion to political economy, his value in terms of his contribution to police science, the reverse is true of Patrick Colquhoun. Long recognized as the strongest proponent of the ‘new police’ that would eventually patrol the streets of London in 1830, most police analysts overlook his important contri- bution to political economy. Before Colquhoun was to become famous for his advocacy of police policies that was centralized, salaried, and professional he was a commercial master in the New England col- ony of Virginia, specializing in shipping and trade. As a loyalist to the Crown he also helped finance a Glasgow Regiment sent to put down the emerg- ing American revolution. Thus, before Colquhoun penned his famous Treatise On The Commerce and Police of the River Thames42 and his opus Treatise

43 except see George S. Rogers and Richard W. Hadden, „Crime, Capitalism and the Risks Society: Towards the Same Old Mo- dernity?”, Theoretical Criminology 5.1 (2001): 61-84
45 Papanicolaou, and Papageorgiou, “The Police and the Politics of the Extreme Right in Greece”

initial policies can be seen as an attempt to suppress the relationship of the police with the political right as well as the conservative, ‘deep-state’ power centres operating within the police. However, the recent frequent instances of complicity between the police and Golden Dawn in the course of regular, everyday police operations (such as public order policing or even criminal investigation) indicates a renewed problem of a different order.

In Greece, to the best of our knowledge, no at- tempts have been made to connect the convergence between the far right and structures of militarism and bureaucratism in the Hellenic Police, a likely avenue to illuminate the conditions that underpin Golden Dawn’s popularity among rank-and-file police officers. Golden Dawn’s public presence in recent years has developed along similar priorities as the police: crime and insecurity in urban areas, the influx of undocumented migrants, and popular resistance against austerity. Arguably, the current patterns of police deployment and the development of new tactics aiming to address those issues have resulted in the forging of practical alliances between front-line police units and Golden Dawn which goes beyond the question of extant connections between high-ranking police and far-right politicians. Golden Dawn’s rhetorics appeal directly to the spontaneous ideology of police personnel which is already heavily skewed towards the right. As a result Golden Dawn has been increasingly seen by the police not only as ‘part of the gang’, but also as part of the solution in situations where front line police and emergency response police personnel are hard pressed to reassure a heavily agitated and polarized public.

Recent developments in Greek policing can be directly linked to this development.  

First, the political leadership has adopted (with the acquiescence of police leaders) a peculiar mix of re- assurance and suffocation in policing the inner city. The Hellenic Police already deploy a heavily mili- tarized presence in Athens which has now become generalized with the addition of city centre of riot police squads in full equipment. The newly formed 2,500-strong patrol and emergency response unit DIAS which relies exclusively on motorbikes has also become omnipresent in Athens and other large cities. The squad is armed and intended to provide ‘rapid and combative intervention’. But heightened militarization and unstructured exposure to street conditions are likely to further alienate already strained personnel and entrench the stereotypes around which their outlook is already structured. Second, the former Border Guards and Special Guards units have been fully incorporated within regular police ranks and are regularly assigned to regular city patrol units, including DIAS. As the background, training and career progression path of these individuals differs from those of regular police personnel, not only does it reinforce the militarizing tendencies of the Hellenic Police, arguably at the ex- pense of training and socialization into professional policing standards, but it also provings very fertile ground for Golden Dawn’s expansion.

Third, the very stance of the political leadership of the Ministry of Public Order may be having an important legitimizing effect on police practices influenced or inspired by Golden Dawn. The (for- mer) minister Mr. Dendas not only refused to in- quire into or even verbally condemn the frequently reported incidents of racist and xenophobic forms of harassment typically associated with Gold- en Dawn, but he also backed firmly the ‘Xenios Zeus’ police sweep operations against migrants. In the course of these stop and detain operations, large numbers of individuals of foreign origin are round- ed up, and those found to be ‘undocumented’ are then detained for months in concentration camps. Thus, serious concerns about racist and xenophbic police abuses are now widespread.  

In short, some deep-rooted authoritarian char- acteristics within the Hellenic police apparatus have been further reinforced organizationally and by its leadership, while far-right influence consoli- dates the dominance of a reactionary Weltsansoung among personnel. Clearly, a change in the political message conveyed by the leadership of the Minis- try of Public Order will not suffice to overturn the

preventive patrol, public order policing, traffic reg-
ulation and so on. On the other hand, there is public
and state security policing, which preponderantly
pertains to criminal investigation. The police in
this latter context may either independently initiate
a preliminary investigation as soon as a crime has
been reported, or they may conduct investigative
activity in the course of a formal criminal investiga-
tion under the direction of the investigating judge.
This functional differentiation of police activity as
established by law preserves the organization of the
Hellenic Police at central and regional levels and
units are organized accordingly. As a result, this
investigative distinction determines the degree of
specialization of each unit and also defines internal
practices, techniques, the use of technology, the
working conditions of staff as well as their approach
to contacts between the police and the public. The
law regulates the terms of police action explicitly and
the police are expected to adhere to the principle
of legality in the course of their activities. Neverthe-
less, practices, and, consequently, levels of discre-
tion vary according to the position of each unit in
the division of labour in the organization. General
policing personnel are uniformed, required to carry
specific equipment and use particular means in the
performance of their duties defined in detailed reg-
ulations. On the other hand, security policing units
operate under more relaxed conditions but the out-
comes of their actions are more strictly scrutinized
as they have to adhere to the provisions of penal
procedure.

The performance of the two categories of police
activity is externally driven by dynamics that cause
some divergence in the organization. On one hand,
since the early 1990s there has been a persistent em-
phasis on the public presence of the police, which
is deemed to contribute to crime prevention and
provide reassurance to the public. As a result, the
Hellenic Police has experimented with reinforcing
preventive patrol, neighbourhood policing schemes,
and new types of public order units. In practice, the
implementation of such efforts is heavily under-
pinned by the militarized outlook and mentality of
the organization. This can be seen in the evolution
of the deployment, appearance, equipment and op-
erational tactics of the different types of either riot
police or fast response units since the mid-1990s,
all of which are characterized by intensified para-
militarization. While there is little evidence about
the preventive value of such developments, there
are more indications that they lead to inefficiencies,
strain human and material resources and further
alienate the public. On the other hand, the develop-
ment of specialized units dealing with financial and
organized crime or terrorism has entailed the in-
troduction of new methods or technologies in parts
of the organization, but it has also rendered their
activities less conducive to effective external scrutiny.

Structures of accountability in the Hellenic Police
are internally managerial and externally hefty, if
not exclusively dependent on judicial redress. Po-
lice misconduct is investigated internally according
to disciplinary regulations but little information,
if any, reaches the public with regard to levels and
types of misconduct. The creation of an Internal
Affairs unit in 1999 was hailed as an important step
towards more effective scrutiny internally. Howev-
er, the service is only required to present an annual
report via the Minister of Public Order to a perma-
nent parliamentary committee and little informa-
tion is made available to the public. Whatever data
are available typically fail to inform public debates,
as these, to the extent that they occur, usually focus
on incidents causing major public concern and not
on wider issues. Furthermore, the Hellenic Police
is subject to external scrutiny by the Greek Ombuds-
man, an independent authority established in 1998
who has the power to investigate any illegal actions
or omissions of the police that citizens report. While
possessing the power to investigate, the Ombuds-
man at best offers an opportunity for medi-
atation between public authorities and complainants,
and any escalation of action must necessarily take
the route of seeking judicial redress.143

7.3 Current developments and the
issue of Golden Dawn

The historical ties of the police with the political
right in Greece should not be underestimated, and
cannot be presumed to have lain dormant or inac-
tive after 1974. Immediately after 1981 PASOK’s

143 Vidali, Crime Control and State Police: Ruptures and Continuities in Crime Policy (Vols. A and B)

45 Colquhoun, A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis, Etc.
46 Patrick Colquhoun, A Treatise on the Wealth, Power, and Re-
sources of the British Empire (London: Joseph Mawman, 1814),
p.49
47 Colquhoun, A Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the
48 Colquhoun, A Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the
River Thames, p. 128.

Books, 2011. 57-83
51 Colquhoun, A Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the River
Thames, p. 619.
52 John L. McMullin, Social Surveillance and the Rise of the
53 Colquhoun, A Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the River
Thames
54 Colquhoun, A Treatise on the Wealth, Power, and Resources of
the British Empire, 232
tion in the circuit of capital through the transport of commodities at the docks.\textsuperscript{55}

Contemporary empirical research has revealed a continued correlation between worker exploitation, household inequality and more policing, both internationally and in the United States over time.\textsuperscript{14}

These relationships persist even in divergent legal and political contexts with significant variations in institutional histories of policing. It seems that

\textsuperscript{55} For Marx, the system of distribution falls under Department II which means that no surplus value is realized at the point of sale since no additional value has been added by the retailer. Nonetheless, the transport industry was an exception to this for Marx as the movement of goods which included the expenditure of resources and labour to make commodities available for consumption certainly added to the exchange value of goods, making those working in the transport industry “productive.”


the more unequal a society, the more exploited the workers, the more dependent that society is on policing. More aptly put, the more insecure that ruling elites become, the more dependent they are on policing, both public and private. The historical development of police science as a system of thought, the first deployment of a capitalist police models and the continued resilience and growth of this model amid crises of capitalism demonstrate the close relationship between policing and the contemporary global economic system.

The interrelationships imagined by early police scientists on the Continent and England between police science and capital accumulation have remained largely intact. Indeed, the imperial nature of security has only accelerated after the events of September 11, 2001, legitimating a renewed expansion of the security-industrial complex. This amplification of risk mitigation, more security thinking and expenditures was well underway before 9/11. or restructuring existing units, such as the establishment of the Department of Special Police Controls, the evolution of the Border Guards branches into illegal Immigration Control Departments, the re-establishment of the Directorate of Special Crimes of Violence (anti-terrorist unit), the establishment of the Financial Police Department as an autonomous central unit and so on. These organizational changes do not merely reflect the increasing complexity of the operational environment of the Hellenic Police (the task of policing per se), but also the increasing complexity of relations of the police apparatus with the political leadership as well as with international power centres influencing national approaches towards issue areas such as serious and organized crime or border controls.\textsuperscript{141}

With regard to matters of personnel, the hierarchical organization of the Hellenic Police is reflected in the rank structure, which corresponds to that of the Army. As such, special rules apply to the performance of police duties and discipline while police officers are legally presumed to be constantly on a state of alert. The general rules regarding the status and obligations of civil servants in other government branches do not apply to police personnel. Police officers are regularly armed while on duty.

Regular police officers constitute the main but not the only category of police personnel. The Hellenic Police employs civilian personnel who are either permanent staff or contracted to perform support and auxiliary roles, such as craftsmen, cleaners and so on. Different categories of police personnel exist. For more specialized support roles, such as medical care, IT support or forensics, special rules for qualifications and recruitment exist and these members of staff are also incorporated into the rank structure. Another special category originates from the bodies of Border Guards and Special Guards, which were established in the late 1990s but have been subsequently incorporated into the regular police staff. Border and Special Guards had been introduced as lower-cost solution to border controls and the protection of vulnerable infrastructure, installations and public buildings. At the time of their initial recruitment, special selection criteria applied, prioritizing candidates with specific physique and military experience, and their training was fast-tracked. Additionally, the personnel of these special bodies were excluded from rank progression. After 2008 both categories were incorporated into regular police personnel as general duty police officers at the rank of constable. They were nevertheless not given the power to perform any tasks relating to preliminary investigations.\textsuperscript{142}

Regular police personnel are divided into the categories of officers (Police Second Lieutenant up to Police Lieutenant General rank) and non-commissioned officers (Police Constable to Police Sergeant). Different procedures exist for the recruitment of officers in each category and they are trained in separate police colleges. Since 1994 all personnel have been recruited via the higher education entrance national examination. The upwards mobility of non-commissioned personnel is restricted, as officers are either required to take a special entrance examination for admission to the Police Officers College or graduate from a special warrant officers school. A special examination is also required for the promotion to the rank of Police Sergeant. Although the introduction of examinations as a generalized procedure for recruitment and career progression is considered as an important step towards modernization, both training procedures and the criteria for rank progression have been criticized on a regular basis. This is criticism is particularly common in connection with the training in Police Colleges where there is a continuing emphasis on discipline and military-style conditioning, while the actual curriculum has been criticized as far too formalistic and inflexible.\textsuperscript{142}

Police operations in Greece fall into two general categories according to the law. First, there is general policing, which pertains to the protection of public peace and order, and involves such activities as

\textsuperscript{141} Rigakos, and Papanicolaou, "The Political Economy of Greek Policing: Between Neoliberalism and the Sovereign State."


\textsuperscript{140} Vidalı, Crime Control and State Police: Ruptures and Continuities in Crime Policy (Vols. A and B).
came progressively assimilated by the pervasive repressive orientation of Greek policing and its close interweaving with political power centres. These characteristics became untenable after the reestablishment of parliamentary democracy in 1974, particularly after the PASOK socialist party came to power in 1981. The amalgamation of the two forces placed the new unitary police force under the direct control of a political authority (Ministry of Public Order), aiming clearly to prevent the survival of the police mechanism as a relatively autonomous power centre. Since 1984 however, it is doubtful whether key structures, which determine the operational and functional orientation, the operational choices and professional attitude of the staff have been reformed successfully by the 1984 reform. Ultimately, in 2000 new legislation by the same PASOK party restored the institutional autonomy of the police by reinstating a separate police staff (the Hellenic Police Headquarters) as an independent command authority of the police.138

7.2 Structure

The Hellenic Police comprises central and regional units and it is organized hierarchically in terms of both its administration and the geographical distribution of its services.139 The internal division of labour and responsibilities also reflects this hierarchical cascading. For example, a directorate with a particular area of responsibility operating at a central unit has a coordinating or supervisory role over regional units conducting operations in the same area of responsibility. As the force’s top staff formation, the Greek Police Headquarters is the superior authority of all other services. It plans, directs, monitors and controls the activity of all police services and has overall responsibility for their operation. Other central units exist but their remit is specific to logistical support, police training and technical or scientific support of police operations (e.g. forensic laboratories), or, in the case of Office of Internal Affairs, to internal investigations across the organization. All other formations except those explicitly designated as central are designated as Regional Services and constitute the operational branch of the Hellenic Police. Their jurisdiction is also defined geographically and largely follows the general patterns of the territorial organization of Greek administration into regions, regional departments, municipalities and municipal departments. Accordingly, there are 14 General Police Directorates which, include their own staff formations as well as territorially distributed subdivisions, departments and stations. Special regulations apply to the organization of the General Police Directorates of Attica and Thessaloniki, due to the population size and heterogeneity of the operating environment of these regions.

From an organizational point of view, there has been a clear tendency since 1984 towards the development of additional staff formations and strategic units both centrally and at the regional level. Particularly since the 1990s this trend has been complemented by the creation of new special units at central and regional level by means of upgrading

4.0 Security as hegemony

These are difficult times to be opposed to the global economic system. Capitalism has ostensibly survived another crisis for which the long-term repercussions and the potential for another abrupt decline are still looming. In light of this apparent resilient fragility and the apparent absence of a ready alternative to neoliberalism, this ideological reassessment itself, doubling down through austerity and the ramping up of an ever more bloated security-industrial complex. The answer to this insecurity is again more security which is always by definition insecure. This cycle of risk mitigation with its ideological “bottomless barrel of demands” has myriad consequences for the environment, the economy;57


66 Richard Hardiz and Negri, Empire


58 Richard V. Eyre and Kevin D. Haggerty, Policing the Risk Society (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997)


66 Richard V. Eyre and Kevin D. Haggerty, Policing the Risk Society (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997)


69 Harid and Negri, Empire


the aggregate effect of alienation.70 This alienation, in turn, is the ideological and cultural manifestation of commodity fetishism that stems from workers being divorced from the fruits of their own labour and from how other commodities are produced – otherwise understood as the mystification of production and consumption. Most of us are keenly aware that we are living in an era that is defined by consumption and that this consumption helps make up our identities.71 Of course, the effect here is that the ubiquity of security and risk management means that the entire production and consumption process is saturated with security considerations72 that seem aesthetic. Places of consumption must seem like safe places to shop: places where “our type of people” venture. Increasingly, societies are based around consumption practices that are structured by security logics. Ideologically, whether at the national, international or local level, security in this context must be said to be hegemonic.73

Against this hegemony a new understanding of security must be built that represents nothing less than a police system that facilitates a transition to a new democratic economic order in the same way that police science fabricated a new order for feudalism’s transition into capitalism in the eighteenth century.

72 These security considerations are as macroeconomic as securing supply routes, securing oil fields, securing trade markets, etc. and as microeconomic as building in product security at the design level to offset the potential for litigation, selling the aesthetic of security and safety as part of the enticement to buy the product in marketing campaigns, creating product guarantees and establishing industry security ratings like five-star safety ratings and so forth. These security considerations extend to consumption as well. It envelops the entire circuit of capital. Areas of consumption such as malls and Business Improvement Districts, for example, are quite obsessed with security.

7.0 Democratizing the Hellenic Police

The aim of this section is to briefly consider the Greek context specifically and, in light of the preceding analysis, to develop a set of programmatic goals for police reform in Greece. A Left strategy for police reform in Greece must deal with a series of obstacles that are both objective and subjective. On the one hand, the police have historically served as a key instrument of authoritarianism in Greece in its various royalist, outright dictatorial or reactionary forms. Tight control of the police by these regimes has resulted in an organization which has proven particularly resistant to reform. On the other hand, the long history of right-wing partisanship by the police has equally resulted in a long history of well-earned Left-wing hostility against them. Beyond entrenched militarism and bureaucratism, these relations present an additional structural obstacle for the democratic reform of the police in the sense that the very possibility of reform is likely to be a contested issue not merely among the general public but also among sizeable segments of the Left.

A further recent difficulty arises from the active role that the police have assumed in suppressing popular dissent against the ongoing extreme austerity programme implemented by the right-wing government under the superstition of the IMF-ECB-European Commission ‘troika’. Political polarization in Greece appears to be fostering increased levels of extreme-right (Golden Dawn) influence among front-line police personnel,155 and compelling evidence of police and Golden Dawn complicity have repeatedly surfaced in the national and international media.156 While this suggests that


156 The current police system in Greece features a single national police force, the Hellenic Police. Responsible for core police services as well as state security functions throughout the Greek territory except ports (which are under the jurisdiction of the Coast Guard), the Hellenic Police is an organization distinguished by military hierarchy, and disciplinary organization in the tradition of Continental gendarmeries. It is a service of the Ministry for Public Order and the Protection of the Citizen, which is a branch of the Executive separate from the Ministries of Defence and of Justice.

Historically, the Hellenic Police originated from the merger of Greece’s oldest and largest police force, the Gendarmerie (1833–1984) and the more recent City Police (1920–1984). The former was established immediately after Greece became a sovereign state in 1833 by the Regency regime along the lines of the French gendarmerie. The militarized, bureaucratic and hierarchical organization of this body proved a key tool for consolidating state sovereignty and the pacification of the countryside, particularly for the suppression of local revolts and banditry. The latter, had been the result of the work of a British police mission to Greece and emerged as a response to the modernization of policing in the rapidly developing urban centres in the first quarter of the 20th century. Formed as a “civil police” force along the lines of the Metropolitan Police in London, it represented a conscious effort at a distancing from the gendarmerie style of policing. Despite initial plans its jurisdiction remained limited to only a few major urban centres (excluding Thessaloniki).

While the City Police retained values and standards aspiring to police professionalism, it too be-
strong policy preferences to privatization, continue to underpin its growth. There is significant variation across national contexts regarding the level of acceptance and legitimacy of private security services and the extent to which they are regulated. The expansion of the availability of private security services for functions, beyond specialized ones, akin to those performed by public police means that they are established today as an discrete and important component of the production of security in society. Functions and the structure of the industry, which beyond the big corporate entities typically also includes a considerable number of SMEs, entail that a democratic Left programme for reform in the area of public safety cannot simply reaffirm the primacy of public policing. Even though the democratization and strengthening of the delivery of public police service may potentially temper the levels of demand and reliance on private security, many functions will unavoidably remain part of private policing work. Additionally, a new approach in the allocation of police resources is likely to redefine the position and rationalize the involvement of private security, particularly in the process of the procurement of technical equipment and systems as well as the contracting out of services.

Another vital step would be to encourage the development of alternative industry structures aiming to instil a degree of democratization and promote better standards of service. While the established norm is that private security is entrepreneurial and thus governed by the logic of profit maximization, there is no reason why state policies should not actively encourage the creation of worker cooperatives, subject to the same regulatory regime but allowing members direct control over training, procedures and quality of service. Cooperatives are known to be more enduring structures, they are driven by the common interests of their members and when they are operated locally they are also likely to be more responsive to community conditions and needs. Cooperatives, exactly because of their nature, would be brought more easily into partnership schemes for the delivery of local police services and offer better standards of service and transparency and accountability. Moreover, such cooperatives undercut the dominant model of capitalist policing and surplus-value in the process.

5.1 A Left politics of policing

Let us first start with the basic principle that a Left approach to democratizing the police must include a coming to terms with the fact that the police can no longer be treated as the enemy. The public police must now be appreciated as nothing more than a vehicle for establishing and enforcing a social order that while institutionally aligned with the interests of the capitalist state today are not necessarily endemic to it. Second, it must also be accepted that there will always be a form of what we now understand as policing “after the revolution”—no matter how far-reaching this revolution is imagined to be—given the development of the division of labour in advanced understanding. It is therefore incumbent on the democratic Left to seriously consider the role and organization of the police in a system where the mode of production is supposed to be transitioning from capitalism.

Police institutions are not easy to transform but they are not monolithic either. There is often dissent within the ranks and various practices and deployments are often criticized by line officers. As in all complex organizations, there are political ruptures throughout. There are examples of the police defying the orders of authoritarian capitalism including refusing to board rail cars to smash strikes, aligning with the interests of a particular caste of workers to fight off scabs or even joining a General Strike on the side of workers. Indeed, the local police often proved so unreliable as strike breakers during North America’s early industrial era that perhaps the most significant development in police transformation reflected the need to create detached and easily mobilized state, federal or private police.

134 Security contracts are typically exempt.
to quash local unrest in lieu of the military – the implications of which were well understood by the labour movement of the early twentieth century. The police line of course, has become a science unto itself and while it is on the whole, less lethal than it was in the past,66 it has become far more obviously militarized.86 insidious87 and wide-ranging, casting a fine net over activists and protesters and radially expanding intelligence-gathering and surveillance before and after confrontations.88 It is the kind of field where the police have become far more obviously militarized in recent years, especially at Summits.88 The Left ought not to be surprised by any of these politics. Police agencies of different types have performed as functionaries of order enforcement for a wide gamut of political regimes. Closest to home and in recent history, when East and West Germany were unified after 1989 their respective East and West Berlin police shared a common police culture and political understanding of public order that are firmly entrenched.66 East German police were also astonished at Summits.66 The policing of protest today, of course, has been facilitated by new technologies, but it is also a product of the broadening of the role of the police agency, and the way in which this has become a science unto itself and while it is, on the one hand, a tool for facilitating the delivery of the service, the overall aim is to enhance the rapport of front-line policing with already existing citizen activism, to encourage a greater number of citizens to participate in the identification of issues and the formulation of responses, and finally to introduce an element of direct citizen involvement in the delivery of the police service itself.

The decentralized, geographically focused structure of front-line police units should be matched with the development of more formal structures at the same geographical level in which police and citizens can meaningfully consult with each other. These structures can take the form of regular open meetings, where citizens have an opportunity to reflect about the authority of the police and the laws they are required to enforce, and to express their views on the police’s role and how the police as institutions can better serve their communities. Such structures can be a cost-effective way to boost the delivery of local services according to local conditions. Local schemes may also benefit from volunteering which may extend to the staffing of partnership structures or even some local police agencies.

Finally, serious consideration should be given to the development of an auxiliary operational component recruited directly from the local population, drawing inspiration from special constable systems that exist in various countries. Auxiliaries and part-time police, if given training and allowed to be more tightly integrated with operational police units, can be a cost-effective way to boost the delivery of local police service and at the same time they open up possibilities for a higher degree of diversification, awareness and responsiveness and build a structural integration between police and the public. Every effort should also be made to allow their integration into the existing police union system with adequate democratic voice. The more diversified and integrated with the community both the police and their associations become the better for democratic policing in the long term.

6.5 Facilitate citizen participation

The strengthening and generalization of structures aiming at encouraging and strengthening citizen participation in police decision-making is a necessary complement for achieving organizational change in the delivery of the service. The overall aim is to enhance the rapport of front-line policing with already existing citizen activism, to encourage a greater number of citizens to participate in the identification of issues and the formulation of responses, and finally to introduce an element of direct citizen involvement in the delivery of the police service itself.

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6.6 Engage directly with private policing

The private security industry is omnipresent in everyday life and a series of factors, including

91  Although even here there are interesting ruptures forming. The Ontario Provincial Police Union (the union representing the Province of Ontario’s police service) recently ran a very public ad campaign during the 2014 provincial election in opposition to proposed austerity measures by the Conserva- tive Party. See: http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ ontario-votes-2014/ontario-election-2014-opp-officers-union/ 192  By 1872, Marx complained in his speech to the General Council of the International Workers’ Association that “[t]rade unions are praised too much; they must in the future be treated as affiliated societies and used as centers of attack in the strug- gle of labour against capital.” Karl Marx, On Wages, Hours, and the Trade Unions Struggle,” Pp. 90-91 Marx and Engels on the Trade Union, ed. K. Lapides (New York: Praeger, 1987).
can be understood, supported and, ultimately, em-
operational concepts and managerial structures that
will depend heavily on how it will be translated into
traditional approaches to which the average police
develop approaches and solutions appropriate to
collaboration with citizens and other stakeholders
to allow frontline personnel teams to work in close
cooperation with other pertinent agencies in the imple-
mentation of local strategies. A change in this di-
rection may also entail a degree of despecialization,
either in the form of a direct reduction of the num-
ber of specialized units or in the form of a widening of
the remit of specialized units towards crime prevention
and problem solving. Despecialization does not mean dilution of skills and experience, but
rather facilitates the nurturing of a more generalist
type of police officer who will be more knowledgeable
about the local community, its people and its
problems. What is intended is a more strategic and
deliberate organizational design that focuses on
substantive outcomes rather than functional differ-
entiation according to formalistic criteria.

A more gradualist approach ensuring that coali-
tions between the political leadership and the police
are built and that each step in the introduction of
changes in role descriptions, work methods and
supervision styles will be clearly communicated and
supported by training, in-house research to identify
issues and appropriate adjustments in performance
assessment and reward structures will also be nec-

left little choice but to ideologically (and sometimes
physically) ally with whatever constituency shows
its support – even Fascist elements. It should come
as no surprise, therefore, that the most ideologically
right-wing regime of the last four decades—the
Thatcher government—set about providing the
English police huge contractual concessions almost
as soon as it came to office in exchange for their
support in crushing unions throughout the country
including especially the miner’s strike of 1984–85.93
The shift from anti-interventionary right-wing police
cially been neocorporative in nature, which
differs from its newer neoliberal manifestation.94
The neoliberal orientation, in the parlance of Austrian
economics, is quite uncomfortable with accepting
government alliances with public sector institutions
looking for “rent-seeking” agreements. Under such
thinking, even public policing ought to be subject
to market forces95 and should not have a monopoly
over public safety which brings the historic alliance
between the Right and the police into an interesting
period of flux. There is an opportunity, therefore, to
undercut the historic alliance between the Right and
police by seizing upon the police front line officer
as worker—who works in an intensely stressful job
with little respite and recourse to outside supports96
and deeply dependent on police executive deci-
sion-making.

There is some narrative building that must be
developed here in order to forge such an alliance
but there are ample stories of police solidarity
with workers throughout the Western world. In
some countries, notably in such a relationship between
police and the Left seems historically entrenched in
the Cold-War politics of regional stabilization leading to
a Civil War period and junta creating even starker
divisions.97 But these tensions must now necessarily
be viewed as antiquated and a democratic Left must
overcome them in forging a new state organization.
Alliances with the police are vital for the success
of any political order and this begins at the both
the top and the bottom of the police organization.

5.2 Policing as labour

Policemen are workers. They may be said to be "producers" or even "supervisors" in a very nar-

93 The historic Tory-police union pact in the UK appears to be

95 The historic Tory-police union pact in the UK appears to be

94 The historic Tory-police union pact in the UK appears to be

97 George S. Rigakos, “Policing the Nightclub: Surveillance,

create surplus-value such as CCTV.\(^{104}\) The police must be made to realize the irony of their alliance in upholding a politics that under neoliberalism today is applied to anyone who they likely know usually at the behest of a foreign corporate owner contract - ed to a landlord who likely exploits his friends and neighbours. This is a deeply alienated existence for any security worker who stops to contemplate their situation and certainly an opening for the Left to interrogate. Understanding the security guard as a worker just like the police officer is imperative to building a strategy for the Left.

5.3 Democratic control

There is an English liberal sentiment about the police that continues to circulate and is probably more myth than reality. Perhaps more accurately, it speaks to a nostalgia about the modern police force that was first invoked as the Metropolitan police mustered at Scotland Yard in 1830. Known as Peel’s central principle\(^{105}\) and named after the Home Office Min- ister who championed the first modern police it states: “The police are the public and the public are the police.” It should not be overlooked that this principle was born at the moment when the old feudal system of social control had been systematically replaced by a centralized, sala- ried and specialized force made necessary to safe- guard and promulgate a new economic and social order.\(^{106}\) It replaced a voluntary, uncompensated and duty-bound system tied to manorial protection by the peasantry tied to land—a system common among other agrarian, monarchical socie- ties.\(^{107}\) The idea that the police and the public were one in the same was being conjured at the precise moment when the police and the public were, in fact, no longer the same at all and more accurately marks a milestone when the state became increas- ingly insecure about legitimizing and enforcing a

should otherwise be appreciated as the natural and communal act of ensuring public safety. Instead, security guards protects property not their own, their family’s nor anyone they likely know usually at the behest of a foreign corporate owner contract - ed to a landlord who likely exploits his friends and neighbours. This is a deeply alienated existence for any security worker who stops to contemplate their situation and certainly an opening for the Left to interrogate. Understanding the security guard as a worker just like the police officer is imperative to building a strategy for the Left.

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Independent scrutiny of the police can be achieved at the national and local level with the introduction of parallel structures of citizen oversight, author- ized to review and investigate police misconduct and complaints against the police more generally. These civilian oversight bodies should also be able to receive complaints from police officers, acting as a mechanism to deal with police executive malfeance or harassment against front line officers. It is a technical matter whether these bodies will constitute a discrete component of the police board or a separate public body—the critical element is the possibility and guarantee of independent review enabling these bodies to investigate cases and evaluate practices from the viewpoint of rights and fairness in a timely fashion, with full cooperation of the police and without the restrictions typically present in judicial procedure. Considerable expe- rience has been gathered in the area of citizen oversight, which allows a variety of technical solu- tions regarding the precise remit, organization and procedures—including guarantees for the rights individual police officers—of such bodies.\(^{110}\)

Internal police procedures must be adjusted to integrate with these external controls. Both external control systems and the police internally have the responsibility to oversee police activity in accord- ance with the same system of principles and guar- antees established by the constitutional order and it is clearly in the best interest of police organizations to ensure that both legal standards and public expectations are met. The problem with internal disciplinary procedures is that they are reactive and only effective at the level of individual officers. While this is an important and well-established form of accountability, our call for an intensification of data gathering regarding police activity and the thickening of external monitoring and controls would facilitate the introduction of internal proce- dures more conducive to organizational change and operating in a proactive fashion too. There is now good evidence that most effective and produc- tive personnel assessment systems can lead to the early identification of issues not only at the level of individual officers but also across the organization. Such systems not only allow a less punitive, less disci- plinary approach towards officer misconduct but they can also be tied to systems of internal rewards and the development of good (or best) practice guidelines. The available evidence points to positive outcomes on the quality of police service, as well as to positive impact on the nature and quality of personnel supervision.

Our final point is that all the above steps are syn- ergistic: existing police organizational structures and established procedures are deeply rooted in the institutional reality of contemporary liberal democracies and cannot be simply by-passed. The point of strategy for the democratic Left is to ex- ploit all possible avenues towards the strategic goal of a more transparent, responsive and accountable police system.

6.4 Implement democratic restructuring

If the call to democratize the police has as its end the creation of a police service that is more respon- sive and answerable police service to the people, it also aims at the creation of a police organization that is more responsive to the needs and aspirations of its own people. It is doubtful whether a system of democratic external controls will alone suffice to engender lasting and profound organizational and cultural change in the police, if it is not comple- mented with a bold and wide-ranging challenging of the characteristics of traditional bureaucracy that still prevail in police organization. A Left strategy for police reform calls for a generalized paradigm change that entails a drastic departure from the


\(^{108}\) There are nine in total. See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peel’s_Central_Principle.


A democratic Left programme for police reform could, depending on the characteristics of the particular context in each case, be built around the democratization and expansion of police boards or councils articulated at the levels of national and local government and embodying the general idea of a ‘triparite’ system. A national policing board will oversee the strategic planning of the police service at the national level, and be given the responsibility and authority to define strategic goals, policies and guidelines, such as the use of force or stop and search. Pertinent measures of police activity at various levels must be agreed on the basis of the widest possible political and technical consensus and the relevant data in statistical and in narrative form must be freely available and accessible public- ly without the need of freedom of information requests. Particularly in areas of activity which the public deem necessary to prioritise on the basis of strategic considerations, every interested member of the public must be able to access information evidencing the need for the particular allocation of human and material resources to that end.

Decentralization is key for enhancing the local responsiveness and accountability of the police. If a requisite of democratic policing is that police forces cannot be insular or cut-off from the communities that they police, an idea that has gained renewed prominence under the rubric of community policing in the past thirty years, it only follows that structures of police governance must possess the capacity to steer police priorities in accordance to local needs. As such, national police forces incorporate elements allowing strategies articulated at national and organization-wide level to be adapted or adjusted to local conditions. The question is the extent to which the prerogative of the centre is to be preserved. Undoubtedly, certain strategies will be better served and economies of scale will be achieved more easily by the retention of a number of central services, particularly support and training units. Therefore, structures of democratic accountability with a national remit would be more relevant that local ones. However, as the bulk of police services are delivered locally, there is much scope for local structures of police steering and accountability to be given the widest possible control over local police forces or formations.

The national policing board will also have the responsibility for accreditation and monitoring of security providers such as worker-cooperative security firms, part-time or volunteer police or agen- cies involved in the development, performance, training and funding of the police service, and also to control appointments at the highest level of police hierarchy where a national structure exists. It will have the responsibility to coordinate other national bodies involved in the monitoring of police activities or the implementation of policies pertaining to crime prevention, criminal justice or social control, such as a national police complaints authority, the prosecution service and so on.


110 A new, unjust economic formation—the new insecurity of capitalist property relations.111

The democratization of policing, therefore, should be understood as far more than simply accommodating “public input”, facilitating adequate civilian oversight and even directly electing some police leaders.112 These are laudable liberal initiatives that must not be abandoned by the Left but they do not achieve a truly democratized policing model. Such a model would have to contemplate facilitating intentional democratic control among the police membership and even the ability of police officers and security guards to appeal to civilian bodies for redress against their masters. Policing workers, like other workers, must be empowered and protected by the Left and in order for them to begin to self-identify with the Left’s. Civilian control and oversight must come to be seen as a protection and a service to policing workers and not just a committee of critical reviewers.

Policing also cannot be democratized if, as in the case of private security, it is specifically organized around a corporate structure that simply replicates existing modes of capitalist exploitation. We have made it clear that structures of policing are intimately linked to the development of capitalism (the police-capital connection) and that police science can be seen as capitalist science and the foundation of modern disciplinary sciences. Any attempted change from the current system of policing without simultaneously challenging its political economy misses the point of a democratic Left alternative. The left must seek to control the replication and preservation of private capital facilitated by the neoliberal divestment of state authority to private agents and instead should seek the promotion of alternative business structures that promote the public good. To date, there are no recorded instances of worker-cooperative private security firms.113 There is no reason why a democratic Left government cannot give primacy to contract security provision of state facilities to such worker-owned democratic firms thus giving birth to a new, nimble and competitive business entity that undercuts the entire model of capitalist policing and surplus-value in the process.114 Both ideologically and structurally this will have a significant impact on the industry. Public tender contracts for security services are a large share of the market and could have a substantial effect on the high-turnover, low-income and alienating position. Many of the expensive but relatively simple guard functions now undertaken by the state police could easily be transferred to worker-cooperative security companies that have democratic ownership and no need for unions.

Of course, the more concrete, long-term economic and ideological intervention for the Left is to make use of part-time and voluntary policing bodies as part of the network of state policing vision. The best way to ensure civilian sensibilities and a democratic understanding of police work is to divest its culture and bureaucracy from an isolationist notion and build a working solidarity with non-civilian security and police work as part of their national sense of service. This is where there will likely be significant push-back from state police unions but there is no reason why part-time and voluntary police cannot be included into the union structure. In fact, this is preferable as it will significantly alter the political conservatism and democratic functioning of these organizations. The Left must insist on the significant democratization of these union organizations in order to make alternative and progressive voices heard within police associations.

Finally, if the Left is to be serious about the inter-relationship between the public and private policing


110 As is now the case in some jurisdictions in the United States

111 Neocleous, “Theoretical Foundations of the “New Police Science”.”

112 As is now the case in some jurisdictions in the United States


114 Security contracts are typically exempt
6.0 A platform for action

The preceding sections have outlined the set of structural, historical and practical factors that a democratic Left programme for policing must acknowledge, confront and overcome. To be sure, the theoretical fact that the police function and the ideology of security is deeply intertwined with the liberal process of capitalist reproduction may represent an absolute limit for reforming the police in capitalist society. Nevertheless, the set of historical and practical factors leading to the entrenchment of the police within a particular institutional role and within particular organisational forms under conditions of liberal democracy should be understood as posing a series of barriers rather than limits. This means that there is a considerable margin for reform along the lines of a democratic Left vision of the police prioritising security as a public good and fostering social fairness, integrity and democratic control.

As we have articulated above, the Left’s platform for action on policing ought to proceed within an approach that prioritizes: (i) the politics of policing; (ii) policing as labour; and (iii) the need to establish strong mechanisms of democratic control. With this general approach in mind the Left should consider the following tenets in forming a more specific platform of action:

- Re-frame public safety;
- Re-define the professional police;
- Establish a dense network of external controls;
- Implement democratic restructuring;
- Facilitate citizen participation;
- Engage directly with private policing.

Implicit in our analysis is the idea that policing is very much contingent on context. Developments, particularly in the second half of the 20th century, have it made more evident that policing too is not immune to the economic, political and ideologically-related relations of dominance and dependency that shape the global system. In policing, the hegemonic discourse of security, the ascendancy of technocratic-based learning and training must be introduced.

As we have already noted, the potentially critical contribution of police unions must also be fully acknowledged. Today, when unions enjoy institutional legitimacy and formal recognition, they are at best pursuing a role in defending the occupational rights and conditions of work and pay of their members. In the public sphere, they are forced into the straightjacket of managing the image and other consequences of the occupational isolation engendered by the prevailing police models. The fact remains that police unions are best placed to represent the collective experience of police personnel and to handle critical discrepancies among categories of police personnel in terms of gender, race and even rank. Not only should their growth should be encouraged but police unions should be fully integrated into the circuits of professional development both within the police organization and in collaboration with external agencies.

6.3 Establish a dense network of external controls

As we have indicated, democratizing the police entails an institutional redesign that renders the police more responsive and more accountable to those receiving the police service. At the level of constitutional principle, the police are positioned as a branch of the executive and are thus subject to the system of checks and balances that typically characterizes the organization of powers in liberal democratic politics. The police are subject to the laws governing their activity and it is for the courts to decide whether a violation of the law has occurred in the course of police activity. This general configuration of power typically allows a considerable margin of discretion to police organizations. Those higher up in the hierarchy of the executive can lay down the strategic goals and targets for the service but it is typically for the police to decide on the particular goals, means and methods they deem necessary for carrying out their mission and duties. Judicial scrutiny is retrospective. One of the consequences of prevailing notions of police professionalism is the idea that the police have the responsibility and the right to manage their domain of activity and that this can and should be achieved by means of internal rules and procedures. The influence of external agencies is undesirable and whenever it is exerted, it is seen as an intrusion.

This general regime grants the police operational independence in principle, even though its precise margins can vary across jurisdictions. It is of course possible to adjust the institutional design around the police in order to achieve tighter strategic control, whether on police activity as such, by developing further the system of legal regulation governing it, or police organizations more generally, by setting out more elaborate targets or installing budgetary controls and so on. On the other hand, courts can play an important role precisely by adjudicating on conditions governing the application of legal norms pertaining to police activity. These paths of exerting control over police activity are constitutionally sanctioned, and established. Depending on the particular context, they have proven to be largely effective, particularly under conditions of heightened popular pressure. But the problem with the solutions emerging from these paths is that they tend to be reactions to issues that have become highly visible and widely acknowledged. They do not necessarily ensure the higher levels of responsiveness and accountability desirable for democratic policing insofar as they are less likely to bring about lasting organizational and cultural change. There is a difficult balance to be achieved that involves the retention of a healthy concept of police professionalism and the challenging of the police managerial prerogative under conditions of scrutiny.

One of the absolute requisites for democratic reform has to do with the recognition that the problems of policing are not technical issues to be decided by experts and technocrats. If the purpose of policing is to ensure the conditions of peaceful coexistence in society, then the questions of values, interests and priorities it involves must be resolved politically by an informed and empowered citizenry. This requires consistently high levels of transparency, firstly in the sense that detailed information about the methods and outcomes of police activity must be widely available. Although

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perpetuation of fiscal crisis call for organisational efficiencies and ‘streamlining’. A tendency towards legalism is underpinned by the very institutional pervasiveness of marketization and privatization,117 all reinforce the sense that it is irreversibly subject to homogenizing forces that traverse national contexts. Post-9/11 developments, combining a police response both to the perceived threat of international terrorism and the higher levels of popular mobilization against austerity are also characterized by a regression to more paramilitarized, intrusive, violent and unaccountable forms of policing. Ultimately, however, police systems continue to reflect the characteristics of their particular social formations. In what follows we flesh out the six tenets we list above, but we wish to warn in advance that their precise elaboration requires additional reflection on the national context in each case.

6.1 Re-frame public safety

It is imperative that the democratic Left whether in opposition or in government establishes a set of fundamental principles guiding its approach towards the police. In capitalist societies, the police is made up of a constellation of institutions that are deep-rooted and essential to the state which cannot be abolished or radically reformed in an instant. The Left cannot afford to adopt a political practice of permanent radical opposition against the police. Such a stance is likely to alienate, and it has already alienated social groups that are critical for the construction of a wide political alliance sharing an egalitarian and emancipatory social vision. The longer the Left ignores what social order will look like the day after being elected the longer it relativates itself to permanent opposition. An understanding and communication of how “public safety will be better,” and how “streets will be more peaceful” and personal safety enhanced must be articulated to the general electorate not because it is a useful plank but because the democratic Left should have an agenda for making this happen. The Left must acknowledge, become aware and study carefully the contradictions that traverse the police apparatus, as any programme for police reform, however gradual, must be articulated to their exploitation. Such contradictions are gendered by both the social composition of police services as well as their institutional mission and history. The modern police is decidedly not an elitist institution: it recruits widely from popular social strata and therefore its organizational membership is by no means foreign to the conditions of everyday life, the problems and sensibilities of the people.118

The structure of police work involves a constant interfacing with these very same conditions and therefore it is untenable to think that these subjectivities are permanently and irreversibly alienated upon entering the police service. It must be understood that forging of an outlook of the police as an organizational entity and the historical and cultural necessity of their membership into the ideologies that organize the apparatus. Much of this is achieved through practice. They are instructed to crush strikes, smash protests and form up phalanxes against todays social movements. But a significant aspect of understanding such deployments concerns appreciating


117 Marx and Engels were wrong when they attributed reactionary violence from Bonapartists and other counter-revolutionaries as emanating from the lumpen and criminal classes. On the contrary, the evidence shows that they were rather recruited from the working classes who wanted the restoration of order. See: Brownvork, Frank, “The Rehabilitation of the Rabbke: How and Why Marx and Engels Wrongly Depicted the Lumpen-Proletariat as a Reactionary Force,” The Netherlands Journal of Sociology/Sociologica Nederlanda 20 (1984) 13-41.
the characteristic of all bureaucracies to neutralize external influences by means of ideological indoc-
trination, material rewards and the rationalization of organizational structures and practices.120

The police are an essential component of the in-
stitutional apparatus of liberal democracy that must adhere to its principles and values. Yet while these principles of legality, due process, civil and human rights, equality, democratic rule and transparency are standards by which police activity is routinely measured, both legally and informally, liberals do not own these principles. They are universal attributes of human aspiration that have simply been coopted into liberal discourse and tied to property rights.121 In many cases they have been appropriated from socialist struggles. They need not be set asunder by the democratic Left. In terms of policing they simply need to be pushed further and developed with principles of a new economic system within which policing will necessarily play an essential role.

Policing is controversial and prone to scandal precisely because there is an active contradiction between perfecting the repressive function of the police and the ideological structures by means of which consent of the masses is elicited in a capitalist social order.122 This means that the general tools conducive to a democratization of the police apparatus are already readily available under conditions of liberal democracy. The point is not to appeal to those principles abstractly and in a defensive manner, but rather to bring them at the core and reshape them in a way that is truly socialist government would have little need to deploy the police as strike breakers because the capita-
list-worker distinction will disintegrate as work-
er owned enterprises begin to flourish. On the other hand, it is hardening of police presence and response have been modelled on the template of the military—the modern police vocabulary and mentalities. This is not to say that the police have not always been understood as part of the war apparatus, only that their use and deployment in this manner has never been so overt and unabashed in modern history.

From an organizational viewpoint, this model aims to establish effective steering from top to bottom by means of centralization, performance measures, and the development of elaborate rules of conduct and procedure and ultimately disciplinary action. It has engendered a constant preoccupation with technology, the introduction and deployment of ever more sophisticated hardware, from weapons, to communication systems to IT intended to maximise operational effectiveness and efficiency. Importantly, it has reinforced the notion that police affairs can and should be reduced to the basis of internal procedures, in separation from reg-
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ditionally, all these characteristics have been deeply ingrained in systems of training and career progres-
sion and are thus reproduced and perpetuated at the organizational level and in police mentality.

To be sure, the external influences contributing to the reproduction of this model cannot be easily dismissed. The modern police have clear and strong connections with what today can be called the secu-

6.2 Re-define the police professional

An explicit commitment to public safety as the defining core of the police mission would entail a

significant reconfiguration of the mentalities and modes of work of police personnel. Historically, the provenance of many police bodies and their adherence to principles of bureaucratic organiza-
tion have entailed that police organizations have been modelled on the template of the military—the archetypal modern bureaucracy. The typical out-
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tary template. It is true that where police structures akin to military ones did not occur via a process of historical development, police reformers turned to such models looking to reinforce the coherence of the police organization to reduce the impact of external influence and instil public confidence to the police.125

But the war metaphor, it seems, has taken over reality—the metaphor of war, on crime, on drugs, on terrorism and so on, has been naturalized in police vocabulary and mentalities. This is not to say that the police have not always been understood as part of the war apparatus, only that their use and deployment in this manner has never been so overt and unabashed in modern history.

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125 See, among others, Deviance et Societe

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