"We are so fortunate to have this new edition! Robyn Maynard's clear, compelling book is a must read for organizations, households, and anyone who fights for social justice."

—RUTH WILSON GILMORE, author of *Abolition Geography*

"Impassioned, capacious, and insistently grounded in the legacies of Black activism, the revised and expanded edition of *Policing Black Lives* offers a sweeping analysis of state violence across historical periods, linking this phenomenon with impoverishment, surveillance, colonial dispossession, and the failures of educational institutions. Robyn Maynard remains an essential voice for our time, urging us 'to build futures that sustain rather than destroy life' and 'to build worlds in which all of us are free.'"

—DAVID CHARIANDY, author of *Brother*

"Robyn Maynard's meticulously-researched and compelling analysis of state violence challenges prevailing narratives of Canadian multiculturalism and inclusion by examining how structures of racism and ideologies of gender are complexly anchored in global histories of colonization and slavery. This book should be read not only by those who have a specific interest in Canadian histories and social justice movements but by anyone interested in the abolitionist and revolutionary potential of the Black Lives Matters movement more broadly."

—ANGELA Y. DAVIS, author of *Abolition: Politics, Practices, Promise*

"Timely, urgent, and cogent … brilliantly elucidates the grotesque anti-Black racist practices coming from the state, and other institutions imbued with power over Black people's lives."

—AFUA COOPER, Halifax's seventh Poet Laureate and the author of *Black Matters*

"Robyn Maynard offers powerful lessons for making anti-blackness in Canada legible to activists, scholars, policy makers, and community members committed to building a future nation — and world — free of racism, heteropatriarchy, xenophobia, and exploitation."

—ERIK S. MCDUFFIE, author of *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism*

"In this eye-opening and timely book, Robyn Maynard deftly and conclusively pulls back the veil on anti-Black racism in Canada, exploding the myth of multiculturalism through an emphatically and unapologetically intersectional lens. In compelling and accessible prose, Maynard provides a sweeping overview of Canadian state violence from colonial times to the present, seamlessly articulating the relationship — and distinctions — between settler colonialism and anti-Blackness, and centering Black women, trans and gender nonconforming people within the broader narrative. Through an analysis squarely situated in the global socio-economic context, *Policing Black Lives* explores parallels between state violence in Canada and its neighbor to the South, as well as the unique legal, social and historical forces informing criminalization through segregation, surveillance, "stop and frisk"/carding/street checks, the war on drugs, gang policing, the school to prison pipeline, welfare "fraud" and child welfare enforcement, and the conflation of immigration and criminality. The result is both eye-opening and chilling, firmly pointing to shared fronts of struggle across borders. *Policing Black Lives* is a critical read for all in Canada and the United States who #SayHerName and assert that #BlackLivesMatter, and essential to movements for Black liberation on Turtle Island."

—ANDREA J. RITCHIE, author of *Invisible No More: Police Violence Against Black Women and Women of Color*

"To understand this moment in Canada when Black communities are asserting that Black Lives really do matter, readers need this book."

—SYLVIA D. HAMILTON

"Grounded in an impressive and expansive treatment of Black Canadian history, Maynard has written a powerful account of state anti-Black violence in Canada. Empirically rich and theoretically nimble, this work is an outstanding contribution to Black Canadian Studies."

—BARRINGTON WALKER, Queen's University

POLICING BLACK LIVES

State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present

Revised and Expanded Edition

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PREFACE

Fall 2024

THE FIRST EDITION OF *POLICING BLACK LIVES* was published almost a decade ago. When the book came out, the world was still living in the wake of the global uprisings sparked by the murder of Trayvon Martin. A new generation had become aware that wherever we live, Black people are dying prematurely due to conditions of endemic anti-Black state abandonment and state violence. Refusing to allow the world to proceed as if Black life were disposable, Black people of all backgrounds took action to protect their communities. From Toronto to Baltimore, from Rio de Janeiro to Paris, ordinary Black folks transformed grief and outrage into creative, insurgent and disruptive action. With freedom-oriented practices spanning spontaneous uprisings, walkouts, occupations of police headquarters, highway blockades, die-ins and townhalls, Black people the world over were working to usher in more liberatory futures.

In the time of the book's publication, Black folks from all walks of life were coming together in old and new organizing constellations to make gains that had been thought unimaginable. The wins were significant. The Toronto Police Service was forced to end the brutal police harassment campaign that was facilitated by the Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy (TAVIS) squad, which was disbanded and defunded. The province of Ontario banned carding, the police practice of arbitrarily stopping, searching and recording information about individuals, which had been used to control Black people's mobility. Following generative disruptions by Black Lives Matter Toronto, Education Not Incarceration, Toronto Freedom School and others, Pride Toronto banned the presence of police floats at the annual LGBTQ pride parade, and Canada's largest school board — the Toronto District School Board — ended its police-in-school (School Resource Officer) program and committed to a process of eliminating the practice of streaming — long understood as a means of funnelling Black young people into "applied" programs. At various scales

and within various institutions, the terrain was shifting. Small parts of the mechanisms of anti-Black state violence were being decommissioned.

Then came the "Black Spring" rebellions of 2020 that set the world ablaze.[1] The police lynching of Breonna Taylor in Louisville and George Floyd in Minneapolis sparked historic urban rebellions across the United States and around the world. In Canada, Black-led but multiracial protests, the largest in the country's history, filled the streets. People were mobilized not just by their solidarity with the US protests but also by a series of police killings of Black and Indigenous people north of the border, including Regis Korchinski-Paquet in Toronto, Chantel Moore in Edmundston, Eishia Hudson in Winnipeg and Sheffield Matthews in Montreal. These protests illuminated the limitations of some previous movement "wins" and decades of tepid police reforms. The hiring of Black police chiefs in Toronto and Ottawa, the training of police forces in de-escalation and antiracism and the creation of boundless "community engagement" programs had done nothing to stem the tide of unrelenting violence against Black, Indigenous and other marginalized communities. The demands needed to go further, ask for more. And they did.

I knew we were on new ground, however temporary, when I found myself on primetime national television with a large graph of the municipal budget behind me, explaining to journalists how we could better reallocate the 70 percent of taxpayer money that was going toward the police budget in Toronto. This change reflected the public demonstrations. The signs in people's hands and the chants reverberating in the streets made clear that people's demands for justice had sharpened as they articulated a more transformative vision: Defund, dismantle and disarm the police. The times were marked by an increasingly widespread awareness that policing itself was the crisis. Police stations were aflame, and the Minneapolis police department seemed poised to be dissolved. Community meetings, public presentations, books and articles, reports and flyers explained how the police could be defunded and disbanded, while envisioning vibrant futures where Black, Indigenous and other communities could live in safety. The mass movement on the ground demanded futures beyond policing, a mass divestment of the billions of dollars spent each year on the institutions responsible for the mass surveillance and murder of Black folks and a parallel investment in long-needed community-based supports.

Abolition. Now.

This was the demand coming from the streets, supported by wide swaths of society and embraced by a generation of young people. Abolition — as critical analysis of carcerality, a theory of change, a praxis of world-making and a radical vision — had entered the popular imagination and lexicon and expanded global visions of what was possible. Tens of thousands came together to insist there is nothing natural or necessary about pouring billions of dollars of public funds into policing and prisons while homeless shelters overflow and communities are increasingly living in or near poverty without basic access to healthy food, transportation or a safe place to live. The once marginal demand to make police and prisons obsolete moved into the common sense; communities put together people's budgets and advanced wildly popular demands to divest half of the budget allocated to police and reinvest it into communities. In Halifax, activist pressure led the police board to create a committee to develop a road map for defunding the police, with El Jones, Tari Ajadi and other Black scholars playing leading roles. People demanded — and won — the creation of nonpolice responses to mental health crises (e.g., in Toronto) and the removal of police from schools (e.g., in Hamilton and Winnipeg). We lived, if momentarily, on an altered terrain.

Grassroots organization centring the lives of Black and Indigenous people advanced careful and thorough platforms that outlined what real safety could look like. Groups such as Toronto's Not Another Black Life, Police-Free Schools Winnipeg, Defund YYC, Yukon's Northern Voices Rising, Montreal's Coalition pour le définancement de la police, Vancouver's Cops Out of Schools, Toronto's No Pride in Policing Coalition, Hamilton's Defund HPS, Ottawa's Criminalization and Punishment Education Project, Ottawa Black Diaspora Coalition, Vancouver's Defund 604, prairie-based Free Lands Free Peoples, as well as Black Lives Matter chapters in Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph and Vancouver, all crafted new visions for a just society.

These visions resonated with Indigenous Peoples' enduring rejection of settler colonial sovereignty and its carceral institutions. In this new context, the term "abolition" increasingly became part of the language used to express longstanding demands. Indigenous organizers laid out what Emily Riddle called "The (First Nation) Case for Abolition," situating the contemporary crisis of policing within the longer history of policing of Indigenous Peoples, including clearing them from their

lands, criminalizing their ceremonies and stealing their children. As she put it, "Police will not help us address the crisis of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls; they contribute to this violence. They invade our sovereign territories to ensure pipelines are built. To me, the case for abolition is clear."[2] As written by Indigenous penal abolition group Free Lands Free Peoples, "Anti-colonial penal abolition work in Canada recognizes the genocidal function of the Canadian 'justice' system .... Not only is this system a direct violation of Indigenous sovereignty and inherent right to self-determination, but it is also antithetical to non-carceral Indigenous justice."[3]

Communities have not only issued demands for the end of policing as we know it but also made links to broader movements to seek an end to prisons and all forms of carcerality. A group of federally incarcerated Black prisoners wrote in a statement in support of the protests:

> We join the calls to defund the police, and we also say it is time to defund the prison. Canadians should ask themselves why so many Black and Indigenous people are incarcerated. You should ask yourselves why your money is going to a system that doesn't work to solve crime. You should ask why a prison is being built in your community and whether it will actually make your life better .... We have heard people say until all Black lives matter, no one's life can matter. Until Black prisoner lives matter, can anyone be free?[4]

From the streets to the prison, new visions for safety were emerging.

The fresh abolitionist organizing over the past several years comes from a long history of movement work and continues to grow — around the world. Though it has received less public attention, abolitionist movement and analysis has been on display in the Global South, where movements, building from previous generations of Black Power and anticolonial struggle, took up new and renewed visions and campaigns to end state violence. In Nigeria, following the police killing of young men in the Niger Delta area in 2020, mass numbers of young people came together through the #EndSARS movement, created in 2017 to demand the abolition of the country's Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a particularly brutal and repressive regiment of the Nigerian police force. Though SARS developed in the 1990s, the police force itself had been established under British colonial rule. Though a number of protesters were

arrested and incarcerated, the SARS program was disbanded. In Kenya, due to police repression and the failures of police reform spanning the colonial and postcolonial periods, organizers and scholars have called for a divestment from police and an investment in community safety.[5] Black Brazilians, building on decades of organizing against racist police killings so numerous the phenomenon has been described as a form of racial genocide, have advanced abolitionist visions for an end to state and state-sanctioned violence and militarization through Afrofeminist *quilombismo*.[6] In South Africa, Black feminists have described prison as "a place and institution … built to reproduce violence and to further the entrenchment of the racial hierarchy established during colonialism and apartheid" and therefore antithetical to racial democracy.[7] Maori organizers and scholars, who, like most global Indigenous communities, come from societies that functioned without police and prisons prior to European colonization, have anchored popular movements for police and prison abolition in the Pacific Indigenous experience. In 2023, political party Te Pāti Māori included in its platform a plan for the abolition of all prisons by 2040.[8] The world over, ideas that had been considered fringe rapidly entered the vernacular of the mainstream.

From Invisibility to Visibility

Things change. Before the first edition of *Policing Black Lives* was published, systemic anti-Black racism in Canada was still subject to widespread public denial. Like many other Black scholars, I was writing up against a wall of silence and silencing, contesting what I described as a generalized erasure of the Black experience in Canada. We have shifted from a time of denial to a time of acknowledgement, accelerated significantly by the uprisings of 2020.

The realities of institutional anti-Blackness are no longer hiding in obscurity, subject to denial due to "lack of data." In 2018, the government of Canada formally endorsed the United Nations (UN) International Decade for People of African Descent, committing to improving race-based data collection, addressing systemic racism in the criminal justice system and implementing other forms of support. That same year, the province of Ontario passed a regulation mandating the collection of race-based data in the child welfare, education and justice sectors in order to remedy systemic racism. Shortly afterward, the province of British Columbia and police forces including the Royal Canadian

Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Calgary, Ottawa and Toronto police services committed to collecting and disseminating race-based data.

In Canada, never before has so much accumulated evidence existed to highlight what Black people have known for over a century: Black people have been living and dying in a state of siege. A study of Toronto revealed that Black people were twenty times more likely than white people to be shot by police.[9] Studies of policing in Toronto, Halifax, Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa and Calgary have documented racist state violence in various forms. Black people are stopped, strip-searched, arrested, beaten, shot, tasered, pepper-sprayed, attacked by police dogs, placed in leg restraints and spit masks, charged, sentenced, and incarcerated at rates that dramatically outpace their representation in the general population.[10] Alongside the move from invisibility to visibility has been an institutional turn toward acknowledgement, and in some cases apology. In perhaps the largest admission of systemic racism in policing in the nation's history, the prime minister, provincial leaders and city mayors committed to making change. As Prime Minister Justin Trudeau put it, "Far too many Black Canadians and Indigenous People do not feel safe around the police. It's unacceptable. And it's governments — we have to change that."[11]

Some acknowledgement has occurred in the criminal justice system as well. In 2021, court of appeals in Nova Scotia and Ontario recognized the reality and impact of anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination in the criminal justice system. After decades of rote denial, mocking and derision, large police forces in Canada have changed their discourse dramatically. In 2016, Mike McCormack, president of the Toronto Police Association, told the press that police brutality against Black people was an American issue: "To say that we have the same issue in our Canadian policing model — I just totally reject that idea. The numbers don't back it up, the culture doesn't back it up."[12] Only a few years later, after the city's police were forced to reveal their own data — data that proved Black people were subject to massively disproportionate use of force and profiling — interim police chief James Ramer apologized to the Black community for the racial discrimination.[13] He was not the only one to do so. The Halifax police also formally apologized to the Nova Scotia Black community for street checks and racial profiling. In Montreal, police chief Fady Dagher has routinely acknowledged systemic racism and committed to changing the "culture" of policing.

Apology and acknowledgements are becoming the new normal, but there is a need to be clear-minded about what has and has not been achieved toward Black people's freedom in recent years. Collecting race-based data, acknowledging disproportionate violence and incarceration and apologizing for racism have been major capitulations from the state and institutions such as the police. This acknowledgement happened only because of the steadfast engagement of generations of community-based labour and the thankless work of scholars who sought, despite facing ridicule, scorn, and repression, to write their communities into the historical record. It is an achievement. But the achievement is not one that has made Black people safer.

Visibility is not freedom, and it does not stand in for meaningful change. Several years into its commitment to release race-based data and after it had banned carding, the Ottawa Police Service found in 2024 that while the number of traffic stops made by its officers had decreased overall, the disproportionality of traffic stops for Black people had actually risen to the highest rate in ten years.[14] Brutality remained endemic: Another study showed no improvement in police brutality from 2022 to 2023, as Black people still represented over a quarter of police use-of-force incidents, despite making up 8 percent of the city's population.[15] In 2023, a follow-up report to a landmark 2019 study on policing and racial profiling by the Montreal police found that three years into a new policy on police stops, rates of racial profiling were either the same or higher.[16] Data *measures* harm; it does not undo it. If visibility were causally related to safety, Black people in the United States would be the freest in the hemisphere. After all, the United States has no shortage of race-based data collection, yet Black folks there live in perpetually catastrophic conditions.

Even children can easily understand that "sorry" is meaningless if behaviour is unchanged. As longtime queer Black organizer, scholar and Caribbean feminist Beverly Bain told interim Chief Ramer, deftly and powerfully interrupting his apology:

> The Black community never asked for an apology …. We have been calling for defunding. We have been calling for having those funds divested to communities to create sustainable housing … to support communities. None of that has happened. What have we witnessed? An escalation in policing budgets! … What we have asked for you to do is to stop, stop

> brutalizing us, to stop killing us, to stop carding us, to stop continuously stopping us and harassing our Black children, our Black sons, our Black daughters. That is what we have asked for. We have asked for the preservation of our lives. And what we have gotten instead is much more police.[17]

In an era of institutional recognition, apology is worth nothing when violence is uninterrupted.

Black communities did not spend months — cumulatively, years — of their lives in the streets, face the elements camping outside of police stations and risk police tear gas, arrest and the threat of jail time so that anti-Black violence could be recorded more accurately in an annual report or so that police officers would apologize while escalating their violence against our communities. The demand was, and remains, the transformation of the conditions that imperil Black lives.

The New Carceral Consensus

We were promised a *new time.*

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Toronto police chief Mark Saunders took a knee for eight minutes and forty-six seconds at a Black Lives Matter protest to remember George Floyd. But this response by those in power obscured a near-total rejection of the content of the protests that had drawn tens of thousands into the streets for weeks and months.

In fact, recent years have seen an expansion of police budgets and police powers, and the structural conditions underpinning Black lives remain the same — or worse. Across the country, the state of police killings has further deteriorated, and 2022 became the deadliest year on record.[18] We are witnessing nothing short of a violent, institutional backlash in the wake of historic protests in defence of Black life. If racial justice movements coalesced around the understanding that policing and prisons are forms of anti-Black violence, the entirety of the political class, after taking a knee, has committed itself to securing and expanding that violence. In response to a number of moral panics promulgated by conservatives and right-wing forces, police unions and wealthy industry leaders, the current moment is marked by a renewed institutional commitment to using carceral "crime control" approaches to manage social, economic and racial inequality.

Despite ongoing popular backing for reallocating police funds to health and community supports, police budgets across the country have increased each year.[19] In 2021, after voting down a measure that would have reallocated 10 percent of the police budget to community supports, Toronto mayor John Tory increased the budget. In 2023, he voted against a measure to spend $1.6 million to keep warming centres open 24/7 during the winter months, but opted to add eighty police officers to public transit at the cost of $1.7 million per month in overtime pay.[20] The Toronto municipal government, where 30 percent of the homeless population is Black, decided in 2021 to spend $2 million clearing homeless people from three large encampments in a series of violent police raids rather than invest in safe and secure housing.[21] These actions represent a clear political choice of violence and penality over support: Homeless shelters have been over capacity for years and regularly turn away dozens or hundreds of people each night, while social housing has years-long waitlists. Also in 2021, Ontario premier Doug Ford promised to invest $75 million to fight "gun and gang violence" and establish a new Office of Illicit Drug Intelligence,[22] ignoring decades of research demonstrating that "wars" on drugs and gangs are counterproductive and intensify the policing and incarceration of Black communities.

It is not only conservatives pushing for police and prisons. We are witnessing nothing short of a renewed carceral consensus that crosses ideological lines, from conservative to liberal, moderate and progressive. The consensus represents a full-scale assault on the same Black and Indigenous communities who were so recently promised change. In a callous usurpation of the concerns of their racially diverse and left-leaning bases, nominally progressive party leaders on both sides of the border are steadily rolling back long-fought-for and evidence-based reforms and shifting toward mass criminalization. While conservatives build power by ramping up racist tropes about Black-coded crime or "illegals" and promising more aggressive responses, liberals and social democrats advance markedly similar policies. In the wake of the George Floyd uprisings, US President Joe Biden campaigned on the need to, in his words, "fund the police." His approach was soon surpassed by the failed presidential campaign of Kamala Harris, whose platform was straight from the conservative playbook: law and order, tight borders, and unconditional support for Israeli war crimes. It is perhaps unsurprising that Canada's federal Conservative leader and prime minister hopeful

Pierre Poilievre has campaigned on "tough on crime" and antimigrant measures that would effectively bring back the war on drugs while sealing borders even more tightly. As for the federal Liberals, like the Democrats in the United States, they have conceded to the ideological framework of the right. After experimenting with a slate of minor but significant shifts toward racial and economic justice, they walked back a proposed mass regularization of immigration status, leaving over one million migrants in limbo, and they forwarded $390 million toward an expansion of the so-called Gun and Gang Violence Action Fund, the majority of which will go to police coffers. Those concerned with racial justice face a moment when few progressive alternatives to guns and cages are available.

Liberals and progressives have not only failed to fight back and protect decades of evidence-backed moves toward decriminalization and harm reduction but also bolstered criminalization efforts known to disproportionately impact Black and Indigenous communities. In 2024, the New Democratic Party (NDP) in British Columbia reversed its support for evidence-based drug decriminalization by empowering police to resume arrests for small-scale drug use and possession in public spaces. After taking office, Wab Kinew, Manitoba's first Indigenous premier and provincial NDP party leader, increased spending on policing by $29 million, the first significant boost since 2017. He further expanded police powers through *The Unexplained Wealth Act,* allowing police to seize property from individuals suspected of having possessions whose source cannot be explained. Legal and human rights organizations have criticized this form of legislation for serving to "erode privacy rights, undermine the presumption of innocence, and subvert the rights that shield people from unreasonable search and seizure."[23] Similar legislation to facilitate police abuse of Black communities has been widely documented in the United States, essentially legally sanctioning police officers to steal cars, jewellery and other goods at their discretion while having no impact on public safety or crime.[24] At the municipal level, the same betrayals are evident. In 2020, Valérie Plante, Montreal's nominally progressive mayor, expressed an openness to redistributing funds for police to community supports.[25] Instead, she oversaw among the largest increases to police budgets in any Canadian municipality three years in a row while providing only minimal amounts to address homelessness.[26] She did so as her office continued to invest in and defend police practices

and programs linked to the extensive racial profiling of Black communities.[27] Plante's government provided substantive funds to antigang policing programs including the Eclipse Squad, which had been subject to calls for its dismantlement in the 2010s because of its association with marked forms of racial profiling.[28] Plante's government also voiced support for the Montreal police's refusal to enact a moratorium on street checks, even after a court ruling and a number of studies highlighted that the practice facilitates racial profiling of Black communities, and in the face of legal and community advocacy for enacting a moratorium.[29]

The evidence is clear: The cross-party carceral consensus will have deadly outcomes for Black folks. Particularly after 2020, naivete can no longer serve as an excuse for the moral bankruptcy of the political class, who heard the calls from the streets and did the opposite, knowingly sacrificing Black and Indigenous lives at the mantle of "public safety."

On the Expanded Edition

My only hope in writing *Policing Black Lives* was that it would be useful. It was the first full-length book in Canada to address the past and present policing of Blackness in the country, identifying that policing has always been materially and ideologically rooted in anti-Blackness. The 2020 protests brought a renewed interest in the text. Three years after its initial publication, it went back onto every major bestseller list and stayed there for over a month.

In 2020, I lost count of the number of webinars, podcasts and teach-ins I had been asked to do situating the policing of Black life in Canada within a historical perspective. Like many other Black women at that time, I was working on the fly, providing research for movements across the country who were seeking the empirical and moral grounds from which to craft their demands for abolition. The book was helpful, but I felt it wasn't enough. The task of that moment was clear: We needed to understand the past, but we also needed to build new futures. This work required diving into municipal, provincial and federal budgets on policing and prisons and learning from the many evidence-based but underfunded alternative forms of safety. For this reason, when I was approached about a new edition of the book, I felt I couldn't say no to the opportunity to create an updated version that would engage some of the most important issues of the contemporary movement against policing.

It took an enormous amount of willpower not to rewrite the entire book from scratch. Some of the ways I would have drafted the text differently are merely a factor of the changing times. Today there is less need, perhaps, to so exhaustively "prove" the realities of anti-Black racism in Canada, so I would linger less on the details of brutality, lest these re-create dehumanization. But the work was, and is, a product of its time. Writing it anew would have felt inauthentic. Instead, I focused on updating facts and noting major new developments, including the dozens of important studies that have emerged in most areas of policing. I also added two new chapters and an updated conclusion. I hope the chapters will help materially ground our past and present conditions in order to fashion more emancipatory Black futures.

The first new chapter is called "Against the Romance of Police Reform." The central purpose of this chapter is to inoculate readers against the false promises of police reform — the central mechanism used by political leaders to subvert the more radical demands for transformation in times of unrest. Given that political leaders in 2020 betrayed movement demands in favour of "police reform," this undertaking seemed urgent. If we are attentive to the history of police reform in this country, it is clear that police reform is part of the problem, not the solution. There is nothing new about the police reforms ushered in during the #BlackLivesMatter era. Police reform has been central to the management of Black rebellion in Canada since at least the late 1960s. The leadership of law enforcement agencies has been remarkably adaptive, understanding that it is politically useful to embrace rather than reject calls for "modernization." It is not that nothing has changed; it is that police have routinely rejected and undermined any changes that would fundamentally alter the balance of power in favour of the communities they ostensibly serve. Instead, almost seventy years of police reform in Canada have relegitimized police access to already highly surveilled communities under the framework of "dialogue," contributed to the rise in police funding and power, and helped facilitate the attendant rise of criminalization and brutalization of Black folks en masse.

The second new chapter is called "Futures Beyond Policing." One of the most central questions I have been asked in the years since *Policing Black Lives* came out is "What next?" The first edition made the case that the abolition of prisons and borders is prerequisite to ending the terror constitutive to the policing of Black life. Yet this exploration felt

incomplete. Since the publication of the first edition, Black, Indigenous and other antiracist movements have changed, grown and dramatically expanded the horizon for what feels possible to imagine, demand and create. It felt only right for a book that argues policing is and has only ever been racial violence to also help establish the grounds from which to build something else. If police reform has failed to bring us anything that could approximate freedom, what would it take to finally end the centuries-long crisis facing Black lives? Do we dare to imagine cities where public funding goes not to law enforcement and its attendant violences but to community centres, safe housing and health supports? Can we imagine people experiencing a mental or physical health crisis such as overdose or a suicide attempt — the majority of police calls to service — having their needs met by community and health supports rather than men armed with guns and teargas? Building from the extensive research I have conducted over the past four years, this chapter provides a material and empirical basis for making policing obsolete, advancing means for addressing violence and harm in society that do not require Black folks to live under siege.

The Global Scope of Struggle

We are living, as Gramsci once wrote, in the time of monsters. The sense of possibility that permeated the summer of 2020 has been transformed into a "fascist nightmare."[30] At the time of writing, the ascent of the far right has put left movements of all stripes on the defensive, and the just societies that movements have been steadfastly working toward feel increasingly distant. The time of massive public struggle has waned, though it is too soon to say if the Black uprisings have abated or merely entered a dormant phase. Africa's Arab Spring (2010–13) has been largely annihilated by authoritarian regimes, and Sudan's December Revolution (2018–19), which ousted the rule of longtime autocratic president Omar al-Bashir, was replaced by what leftist Sudanese intellectuals have termed a "counterrevolutionary war."[31] Though the twentieth century saw historic breaks with formal colonialism, generations of Black and Red Power movements and a Third World struggle that spanned the globe, the twenty-first century has been marked by multiple genocides and imperial catastrophes in Palestine, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lebanon and Haiti with the active support of Western governments. And it is policing that has served as a central anchor of repression against every movement toward change.

Today, the increasingly violent and repressive targeting of Palestine solidarity protests has impacted Palestinians as well as Arab and Muslim communities. Yet the repression also targets a significant number of young Jewish and white people who are outraged by apartheid and genocide. SWAT team raids — a form of police terror previously reserved by and large for working-class Black folks and Indigenous land defenders — have been deployed toward the repression of a global anti-war movement. Protesters, including Jewish university professors and middle-class white folks, have had their doors broken down in predawn raids by tactical squads for the alleged offence of using posters and red paint to protest the complicity of the owner of Canadian company Indigo in funding Israel Defense Forces soldiers through her charity.[32]

As June Jordan puts it,

> I can't think of a single supposedly Black issue that hasn't wasted the original Black target group and then spread like the measles to outlying white experiences.
>
> If slavery was all right, for example, if state violence and law could protect property rights against people, then the Bossman could call out the state against striking white workers. And he did. And nobody bothered to track this diseased idea of the state back to the first victims: Black people.[33]

The police war on Black folks inevitably boomerangs back onto the wider population.

At the same time, this new era of repression has made clear how domestic policing shores up imperial violence both at home and abroad. This role of the police ought to come as no surprise. The RCMP boasts on its website of its role in overthrowing the Métis and Cree rebellion that led to the execution, in an RCMP training camp, of Métis leader Louis Riel. It also hails its role in reinforcing British imperialism in South Africa during the Boer War, in which the British oversaw the deaths of approximately twenty thousand Black South Africans in internment camps.[34] Canadian police forces have been trained by the same US National Guard that unleashed the assault on Black folks in Ferguson, Missouri, and they have conducted trainings and delegations with Israeli police and security forces, including those accused of extra-judicial killings and other rights abuses.[35] As Just Peace Advocates wrote in its submission to Ontario's Independent Police Oversight Review,

"It is worrying when tactics and technology used by Israeli police and military forces becomes a part of Ontario and Canadian policing."[36] The same police forces who profile and brutalize Black and Indigenous people in Canada have been deployed, and sometimes accused of a litany of harms, in imperialist projects in Haiti and Mali.[37]

If the forces of state and imperial violence operate transnationally, so must our movements. While *Policing Black Lives* focuses largely on the underaddressed conditions governing state violence and Black life in Canada, the need to protect Black lives, and all lives, cannot stop at the border. Traditions of Black radicalism demand of us that we have the moral strength and clarity to condemn racial violence and brutality everywhere and anywhere they emerge. Abolition is necessarily expansive: The project of Black freedom is incomplete when our pensions and institutions are complicit in the destruction of Black and Indigenous and other oppressed peoples' lives and livelihoods the world over.

As I write this foreword, Canada is legally, financially and morally implicated in nearly every major crisis facing Black people globally. Canadian-owned firms have sold armoured vehicles to Sudan despite an export ban and made hundreds of millions of dollars from building gold mines in Sudan,[38] a country facing the world's largest displacement crisis and a possible genocide in North Darfur.[39] In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a mass displacement crisis is fuelled by extractivism and resource looting in the scramble for the country's resources.[40] Along with US-based companies that rely heavily on Congolese cobalt such as Apple, Volkswagen and Tesla, Canada-based mining companies including Banro and Ivanhoe Mines have a strong presence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where they have been implicated in mass forced displacement.[41] These companies profit while contributing to the conditions under which an average of three million people were internally displaced each year from 2021 to 2023 — with over two million people internally displaced in just the first six months of 2024.[42] After working with the United States and France to demolish Haitian democracy by orchestrating the 2004 coup against the democratically elected president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Canada has spent over $100 million on policing, prison and border investments in Haiti to prop up a police force known to violently repress leftist dissidents.[43] With the United States and other Western countries, the Canadian government continues to dictate Haitian affairs through participation in the Core Group,[44] an imperial

force using mass violence facilitated by the postcoup chaos to justify a new generation of Western domination.

Western countries, including Canada, continue to maintain an imperialist system that imposes violence and plunder not only on Black folks but on the people living on the other side of what W.E.B. Du Bois called the global "color-line."[45] The consequences of this system are most visible today in the West's support for Israel's genocide in Gaza and military campaigns in the West Bank, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Yemen and Jordan. Canada backs Israel in material and symbolic ways while acknowledging the Palestine solidarity movement in ways that mirror its response to the Black struggle. Foreign affairs minister Mélanie Joly has expressed empathy, saying too many civilians have died in Gaza, while rejecting the widely supported demands of Palestinians, such as a two-way arms embargo. Canada has failed to use any mechanisms of soft power to end the genocide, even as the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Israeli leaders for war crimes and crimes against humanity, and the International Court of Justice has ruled Israel's actions amount to a plausible genocide. Black folks living in Canada experience state violence, but we are also implicated in the actions of our country abroad. In the latest counterinsurgency, Blackness is enlisted to do the bidding of Western imperialism. Given how Kamala Harris's identity as a Black woman was used to deflect the racist dehumanization of the Israeli–US genocide in Palestine, the Canadian federal government sent a Haitian-born Member of Parliament to the United States to tell Haitians not to migrate to Canada, and the United States and Canada have funded a Kenyan-led security force to put a Black face on the reoccupation of Haiti, it is politically urgent not to be distracted by a shallow politic of representation.[46] We are ethically required to refuse to support the use of Black faces to shore up imperial and racist violence.

The global stretch of imperialism and anti-Blackness, incredibly visible today, has long been recognized and challenged by Black liberation struggles. Black people organizing against police brutality in Canada have consistently understood their struggles as tied to an end of oppression and imperial domination throughout the Black world. The Black Youth Organization, which organized protests against police in Toronto in the late 1960s and early 1970s, raised funds in its newspapers for the national liberation movement in Angola and protested Canada's failure to take meaningful action against apartheid in South Africa:

"It is our duty as Black people in Canada to expose the racist attitudes of the Canadian government" in its actions in the Black world, the group wrote.[47] Rosie Douglas, writing from Leclerc prison in Quebec, where he was incarcerated for his role in the historic Black student protests of 1969 at Sir George Williams University, described how Black organizers involved with the African Liberation Support Committee organized thousands against the exploitative activity of Canadian-based multinational companies in South Africa and against Canada's complicity, through NATO, in the "fascist regimes in Southern Africa."[48] In the summer of 1988, Toronto's Black Women's Collective, key architects of the antipolice brutality movement, published statements linking Black women's struggles against systemic racism in Canada to women's liberation struggles in Palestine, Namibia, Western Sahara, South Africa and El Salvador.[49]

Black radicals have long understood that it is folly to advocate for the safety of Black lives only within the confines of a nation, that across borders our lives and fates are entangled. The struggle for Black liberation is part of a global movement to end to all forms of racist dehumanization and every form of race- and caste-based domination including anti-Palestinian racism, Islamophobia, antisemitism and anti-Black racism. This solidarity is born not from altruism but from a deeply felt knowledge that our survival is linked. The genocide and occupation of Gaza and the West Bank and the war, militarism and occupation in Haiti, Congo and Sudan are struggles to control land and the resources that lie beneath them. And so, in a time of climate crisis and mass human atrocity, we are engaged in what Audre Lorde described as "a war for survival in the twenty-first century, the survival of this planet and all this planet's people."[50] Defence of land and defence against state violence, war and militarism — these are part of the same project at the root: to build worlds in which all of us are free.

Traditions of Black radicalism show us that it is entirely possible, and indeed necessary, to demand the impossible. We cannot demand more visibility, more acknowledgement or more reforms that simply legitimize the weapons of state violence domestically and globally. Today, we hear Black folks in increasingly large numbers join a chorus of people whose struggles reverberate across multiple geographies: "Free the people; free the land in Congo, Palestine, Haiti and Sudan."

Generations of people now understand the interplay of state abandonment and state violence and believe in the possibility of a world

liberated from racial hierarchies. Their vision is divestment from policing and prisons, war, imperialism, militarism and extractivism — to build futures that sustain rather than destroy life. The possibility of this world beckons all of us.