

Off the Pigs

Fifth Estate Collective

Editors' Note: The so-called "riot manual" described on the opposite page [FE #84, July 24-August 6, 1969] should be seen for what it is—a battle plan for the subjugation of the black community, demonstrators, and anyone who challenges the way this system is run. Its ruthlessness and cynicism should be ample evidence that the police are not an agency to protect the people, but rather to terrorize them.

Similar to the military establishment in Washington, local police forces have become a Frankenstein's monster which have taken on an independent life of its own and is not responsive to needs of the citizens, but to the interests of the ruling class of this country. Action must be taken immediately if there is to be any hope of stopping the trend of the police toward becoming a paramilitary instrument of reaction and returning them to the proper function of peacekeeping.

As this is being written hundreds of groups are meeting in Oakland, California at the call of the Black Panther Party for a United Front Against Fascism. The main emphasis of this conference will be to push for community control of local police forces through amendments to city charters such as the following suggested by the Black Panther Party:

This amendment to a city charter would give control of the police to community elected neighborhood councils so that those whom the police should serve will be able to set police policy and standards for conduct.

The amendment provides for community control of the police by establishing police departments for the major communities of any city; the black community, predominately white communities, the Mexican-American community, etc. The departments would be separate and autonomous. They can, by mutual agreement, use common facilities.

Each department will be administered by full time police commissioners (not single police chiefs). The commissioners are selected by a Neighborhood Police Control Council composed of fifteen members of that community elected by those who live there.

The councils shall have the power to discipline officers for breaches of department policy or violations of law against the people. They may direct their police commissioners to make changes in department-wide policy by majority vote.

The council can recall an appointed commissioner any time it finds that he is no longer responsive to the needs of the community. The community can recall the council members when they are not responsive to it.

All police officers must live in the department they work in and shall be hired accordingly.

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<https://www.fiftheestate.org/archive/84-july-24-august-6-1969/off-the-pigs>
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