



## Starting a Dialogue: From Radical Criminology to Critical Resistance An Interview with Tony Platt

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The George Floyd Rebellion brought a heightened level of street militant tactics and confrontation with carceral state institutions reminiscent of the last wave of struggles in the late 1960s. The Black-led and multiracial protests unfolded in large cities but also in small towns across United States of America, drawing in large numbers of white Americans and challenging the very base of the “law and order” coalition—working class and middle-class whites who were successfully won over by U.S. ruling class elites to revanchist politics that justified the building of a larger security and carceral state.<sup>1</sup> Most importantly, the demands of the protest movement shifted away from liberal reforms like police body cameras towards defunding and even abolishing the police. These slogans captured the enormity of the crisis which has increased the material, social, and political power of police institutions at the expense of structural disinvestment in the social safety net of millions of working-class Americans, especially of Black people and communities of color. The

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<sup>1</sup> See Jarrod Shanahan and Zhandarka Kurti. 2020. “Prelude to A Hot American Summer.” *Brooklyn Rail* <https://brooklynrail.org/2020/07/field-notes/Prelude-to-a-Hot-American-Summer>



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revolutionary core of the defund movement has drawn from political organizing of small abolitionist collectives and the theoretical insight of critical intellectuals of policing and prisons who have spent the last decades writing about the rise and reconfiguration of the carceral state. The interest in police and prison abolitionism are often traced to the 1990s with the rise of collectives like *Critical Resistance*. But abolition has been continuously worked out since the 1960s and 1970s when revolutionary movements sought to not only challenge racist police violence and overturn the capitalist status quo but also simultaneously work towards building alternative social institutions of dual power. For these reasons, we wanted to open up a dialogue across these generations. So, we sat down to talk with Tony Platt who since the late 1960s has been writing, teaching and organizing against the carceral state from a Marxist perspective. Platt's political life and intellectual work is inspiring to say the least and he offers important lessons for new generations of abolitionist organizers and scholars to take up and engage with.

Starting in the late 1960s, Platt became a part of a cohort of academics and political activists associated with "radical criminology" in the United States, which included Paul Takagi, Hi and Julia Schwendinger, Bill Chambliss, and a group of student activists associated with the Union of Radical Criminologists and the journal *Crime and Social Justice*, founded in 1974. As Platt makes clear in this interview, radical criminology was rooted in the social struggles of oppressed groups in the United States of America who have also been historically the target of state surveillance and social control. In the United States, radical criminology was initially housed at UC Berkeley School of Criminology,<sup>2</sup> a department that was first imagined in the early 20th century by Berkeley's Police Department Chief August Vollmer, who strove to professionalize California's police forces through teaching "police science." As Platt argues, criminology as an academic discipline "was little more than a technocratic instrument of state rule." But starting in the 1960s this narrow and conservative field came under scrutiny due in no small part to the widespread rebellions and social unrest that gripped the country and the world.

Given their professional training, political ideologies, and class interests, most criminologists chose the status quo and would dedicate their careers (especially over the counterrevolutionary decades that followed) to help build a more effective and efficient brutal social order. But those who were inspired and involved in the political movements of the day decided to use their position inside universities to speak out and organize against state violence. Tony Platt was a part of a small and growing cohort of Marxists who challenged Berkeley's focus on narrow police science and the wider field of criminology for its complicity in maintaining a status quo buttressed by state violence and institutions like policing and prisons. Thus, emerged radical criminology.

In the 1970s, as part of the larger counterrevolution that swept the country, radical criminology was purged from the Berkeley campus. Their intellectual and organizing work inside and outside the university was deemed a threat; people were fired, denied tenure, and kicked out, and others killed in stand-off protests defending student movements on campus. Yet despite the

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<sup>2</sup> For a history of the struggle that defined the origins of Radical Criminology, see <https://www.socialjusticejournal.org/SJEdits/06Edit-1.html>

attempts to squash them, Tony Platt and a handful of others continued to write, providing insightful analysis that would shape future generations of police and prison abolitionists. As many radicals grew weary and gave up on revolutionary politics, Tony Platt remained a committed left Marxist intellectual who continues to shape our thinking about the carceral state. His most recent book is *Beyond These Walls: Rethinking Crime & Punishment in the United States*, published by St. Martin's Press (January 2019)<sup>3</sup> captures the historical and global dimensions of the American carceral state and embeds its development in a larger context of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary movements. Decades later, he has ironically returned to Berkeley's Center for the Study of Law and Society as a Distinguished Affiliated Scholar.

We are excited to share this interview with Tony Platt.

*ZK: I would like to start off by asking you about your own political development and how this shaped your commitment to anti-capitalist struggles, Marxism, and to radical criminology.*

**Tony Platt:** We don't choose when and where we are born. That I was born during World War II and came of age in the 1950s and 1960s allowed me to be greatly influenced by the extraordinary transformations taking place all over the world. These transformations sometimes get mistakenly framed as "the 1960s," but they really need to be understood as a wide sweeping set of events from the end of World War II to the 1970s when the counterrevolution begins. This is a period of extreme upheaval but also a period of optimistic times in world history. Looking back on the counterrevolution that took place all over the world, it is hard now to imagine the era that preceded it as an optimistic moment.

For those of us who became activists between World War II and the 1970s, we had to make decisions about what kind of activism to embrace. My parents in England in the 1930s faced a similar issue and chose the Communist Party for a while. For me in college in the 1960s, political activism was equally compelling. To ignore it was an impossibility. Some chose the Right, everybody made choices. You were constantly asked, where do you stand, what side are you on, what do you think about liberalism within the Democratic Party or about the Panthers, are you a feminist? You had to be intellectually and politically informed.

In the post-World War II period, you could find your inspiration in a variety of movements for structural change. If you were a leftist and Marxist you could look to communist regimes in Soviet Union and China, or to smaller countries like Cuba and later on Nicaragua that were experimenting with new kinds of socialist politics. For some of us, our inspiration came from the solidarity movement with national liberation struggles in former colonized parts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Liberated nations not only promised to get rid of western colonialism but also offered new visions of what a nation-state could be. For activists in the social democratic tradition

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<sup>3</sup> A detailed list of Tony's other works appears at the end of this interview, titled "Further Reading."

in the West, the struggle was to expand voting rights and broaden access to public services, and make government meet people's needs for education, healthcare and social services. Many of us worked politically on many fronts simultaneously.

My own organizational trajectory went from the academic caucus, to anti-war and anti-racism social movements, to political collectives, to Marxism. I was never drawn to the Communist Party nor did I regard the Soviet Union as the beacon of progress. I studied the U.S. Communist Party in the United States because they had once been at the forefront of civil rights and political and labor struggles. But for me and other activists of my generation, the CPUSA was too uncritically dependent on the Soviet Union's bureaucratic communism. As was the case with just about everybody in the U.S. left, I embraced ideas and rhetoric of the Chinese revolution, but did not commit to Maoism. For a while, I stuck with political collectives—such as the journal *Crime & Social Justice* (now known as *Social Justice*) and the Center for Research on Criminal Justice (author of *The Iron Fist & The Velvet Glove*).

*ZK: How did these movements affect life on the Berkeley campus and what would become the radical wing of the School of Criminology?*

**Tony Platt:** I arrived at Berkeley first as a student in 1963. I left in 1966 to do my postdoc in Chicago and I came back to start teaching in Berkeley in 1968. In addition to profound changes taking place throughout the world, the university was itself a site of struggle. The 1960s student movement opposed the draft out of self-interest and anti-imperialism. But it also wanted to change how universities functioned, especially elite universities that were bastions of a white male professoriate. The struggles involved expanding bodies of knowledge and diversifying the student body and faculty. Until then, there was no Ethnic or Women's Studies programs. When I started teaching at Berkeley in 1968, we developed xeroxed books of readings because we couldn't find textbooks that spoke to the demands for new kinds of knowledge. We just did it because no one bothered you about copyright laws.

When you engage in political action in terms of your own immediate self and collective interests, it gives you a different relationship to politics and activism than if you are doing it simply out of support for other people. Of course, solidarity was important. People in Berkeley went to the South to fight alongside Black Americans for voting rights and took on the issue of police brutality by working with the Black Panthers. But a great deal of political energy also went into changing the university as an institution itself. This helped to create organic political relationships between intellectuals, students, and grassroots movements. We didn't feel as if we were only doing solidarity or altruistic work but that it was "one struggle, many fronts." The battle over People's Park in Berkeley was an example of this kind of unity. For me, this is the larger context in which the Berkeley School of Criminology developed a radical wing.

There is a mythology that the university administration closed down the School of Criminology because of a takeover by radicals. In fact, it was a very pluralistic department, with criminalistics faculty, police science folks, liberal social democrats, and a small number of radical

faculty supported by a sizeable group of students. The School was full of arguments, debates, not always civil—ideally, what an academic department should be. It was a lively, engaged place. Everyone was very much committed to their political worldview and to engaging students. It was out of this climate that the radical criminology movement developed. We just wanted a little space in academia. The University did not so much close down the criminology program as sanitize it and put its survivors in the re-named Jurisprudence & Social Policy program under the guardianship of the law school.

Often these days, I look at the people with whom I once had fierce debates and political differences, social democrats and Marxists of a different stripe, and realize that we all got it wrong. Rather than blaming the other side for their failures, we should perhaps try to understand why we all failed.

*ZK: In your opinion, what were the strengths and weaknesses of radical criminology?*

**Tony Platt:** The strength of the movement in its early days, as I mentioned, was that it had very close, organic ties with political organizing and political organizations that were forged in our experience outside and inside the university.

Secondly, it had a very strong intellectual commitment to a historical perspective which at the time was unusual in criminology. We were reading and studying Rusche and Kirchheimer and debating their perspective vis-a-vis Foucault; and then later closely following the work of Stuart Hall and the team that brought a cultural analysis to *Policing the Crisis* in England; as well as British labor historians who gave us a way to understand the link between criminalization and the emergence of capitalist relations of production. Criminology in the United States was for the most part anti-historical. There were very few scholars in the field that took history seriously. My dissertation and then book, *The Child Savers*, was part of a larger body of work that promoted revisionist histories of the United States. This was happening in criminology, sociology, social work, law and society, and American history.

Thirdly, we embraced a global perspective that emphasized our location in the “belly of the beast,” namely the United States as the leading imperialist power of the era. We took seriously our obligation to expose and write about U.S. war crimes and militarism and to support anti-imperialist struggles in other parts of the world. Sometimes, though, we focused too exclusively on the United States, or too uncritically on socialist nations. There was a tendency to see the United States as a unique imperialist country and not to understand its global interrelationship with other nation states. A great deal that was written on Maoist China, for example, was not based on any research or direct knowledge of what was happening there.<sup>4</sup> Later, working with John Horton, I began to

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<sup>4</sup> On the U.S. left’s lack of knowledge about China, see Max Elbaum, 2018, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che*. New York: Verso

move away from a nation-centric to a world-system perspective in order to understand that problems of crime and injustice did not automatically wither away under socialism.<sup>5</sup>

*ZK: You mentioned your participation in political collectives and how that guided the birth of radical criminology. Can you say more about how this political work shaped the critiques you and others were writing of the emergence of what we would define today as the carceral state? Here, I am thinking more specifically of The Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove which is a classic for anyone trying to understand the historical development of policing and its relationship to capitalism.*

**Tony Platt.** I worked on *The Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove* as part of a large team of people in a political collective. Many of us shifted from independent work as intellectuals in universities because the space for radical intellectual work was being closed down. We had a small window in academia for a few years and once that closed, we had to figure out what other kinds of spaces we could operate in. The state, with support from university officials and faculty, had us under surveillance. My academic work was often criticized for being *ideological*. My FBI file includes selectively verbatim reports on my university lectures.

Once we lost our base in Berkeley, we joined or formed political collectives. So, we took the journal off campus. We created an organization to research and write *The Iron Fist and The Velvet Glove*. We tried to develop an alternative space for people wanting to do the work of praxis. In the mid-1970s, it was still, paradoxically, a hopeful moment in world history even as we faced repression at Berkeley and academic marginalization. In hindsight, I believed that if there were enough of us participating together in anti-systemic movements (from a nation-based social democratic or socialist or communist or national liberation perspective), the world-system would eventually tip from the capitalist world-system to some kind of socialist world-system.

It was then that I looked for a Marxist organization that combined theoretical work with organizing against the carceral system. I thought that we needed quasi-military organizations to take on a powerful repressive state. Some people joined the Weathermen, others went to the Communist Party, small Marxist parties, and solidarity organizations. In the early 1980s, I joined the Democratic Workers Party (DWP), a Marxist-Leninist organization that drew on world-systems for our perspective and was led by women. We worked closely with Immanuel Wallerstein and Andre Gunder Frank, who were fellow travelers of the organization. But the DWP ended badly, much like many other similar organizations: internally undemocratic, sectarian, and incapable of building a mass movement.

By the 1990s, the American Lefts were in disarray and the Rights were in ascendancy, laying the groundwork for Trumpism. The new generation of activists and organizations that emerged in the last two decades has been for the most part cut off from the efforts of my generation to take on the carceral state, not unlike how we were disconnected from struggles of the 1930s.

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<sup>5</sup> John Horton and Tony Platt. 1986. "Crime and Criminal Justice Under Capitalism and Socialism: Towards a Marxist Perspective," *Crime and Social Justice* 25: 115-135.

I am glad that you and I, your generation and mine, are starting a conversation about what needs to be learned and unlearned about the post-World War II movements. The mutual silence has been going on for too long.

*ZK: I totally agree. This summer's protests offer us an important opportunity to come to terms with these historical lessons but to also understand the uniqueness of the enormous crisis we face today and what it will take to advance a struggle for a new society. Going back to the 1970s for a moment, what was it like to take on criminologists in academia at that time?*

**Tony Platt:** We put a great deal of energy and time into going to conferences, debating established criminologists, and criticizing the work of Criminology. In 1977, Paul Tagaki and I wrote "Intellectuals for Law and Order" in order to demystify the work of liberal intellectuals and the role they played in legitimating state violence and the carceral state.<sup>6</sup> It was important to document the defeat of the semi-welfare state and expose how the liberal wing of the Democratic Party was becoming complicit in neo-liberalism. We were trying to find some political space and challenge the ideas of intellectuals such as James Q. Wilson who dressed up authoritarian measures in populist rhetoric. Our attack solidified the tense rift between liberals and radicals for many years, until both tendencies were able to admit our mutual failures.

We also paid attention to mainstream technocratic criminology. Most Criminology is devoted to professionalization, narrowly tailored training, and a blinkered view of the carceral state as a whole. Police science textbooks still begin the story of policing with their professionalization, ignoring social and political history. The faculty who teach in this huge field exemplify Gramsci's traditional intellectuals, magically thinking of themselves as independent and ideologically neutral.

Once you begin making links between the carceral system and how capitalism operates, you realize how much you need to know to pursue this analysis. This is a huge challenge if you have been trained in highly specialized ways. You have to study the basic stuff everyone knows in your field, but then on top of that you have to know political economy, history, global issues. To be a radical intellectual requires an interdisciplinary framework.

*ZK: This connection between carceral system and capitalist social relations is really at the heart of your new book, Beyond These Walls. What prompted you to write it?*

**Tony Platt:** The 1980s and 1990s were difficult times for our movements. I didn't want to just keep doing a critique of criminal justice agencies unless there was a movement which I could serve. When the Black Lives Matter movement erupted, I decided to write as a way to engage with

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<sup>6</sup> Platt, Anthony M. and Paul Takagi. 1977. "Intellectuals for Law and Order: A Critique of the New 'Realists.'" *Crime and Social Justice* 8 (Fall-Winter).

these protest movements, similar to when we wrote the *Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove* in the mid-1970s.

I wrote *Beyond These Walls* with several goals in mind:

To stimulate a conversation, like the one we're having now, about past and present, continuities and discontinuities, how much of the carceral state is the same, how much has profoundly changed.

To understand lessons from a long history of resistance against the carceral state that go back to the defeat of Reconstruction. To learn about prison struggles of the 1950s, not only the 60s, and about how prison abolitionism was articulated in the 1920s, as well as the 1990s. The point here is not to encourage political nostalgia or search for the blueprint of radical change, but to appreciate the deep provenance of the carceral state and the challenges faced by the movements for social change.

To illustrate the carceral interconnectedness of, for example, modern policing, the reservation, prisons and jails, immigration policy, the boarding school, and public welfare. And to encourage unity and cooperation between the millions of people demonized by these institutions.

To support praxis, the integration of theory and practice. It is both necessary and doable, as Ruth Gilmore demonstrates in her political organizing and intellectual rigor. Your generation of activists is opening up more and more space in academia. We need to repair the destructive divide between activist movements and progressive intellectuals that characterizes too much of our movement today. Most progressive academics, many of whom do important work, do not have organic, respectful, and cooperative relations with activist organizations. And many activists regard intellectuals as untrustworthy allies, limited by their class and career interests. I am glad to see the beginning of a conversation between my generation and your generation. Part of the problem is that we don't have an institutionalized left in the United States that serves as a repository of knowledge, lessons learned, strategies to share. We spend too much time reinventing ourselves.

*ZK: I appreciate your focus on the need for our generation to take up the interconnectedness of carceral institutions as an entry point to political organizing. On the one hand it's been really great to see critiques of mass incarceration become mainstream. We have really come very far from the 1980s and 1990s politically in terms of how police power and prisons have been publicly delegitimized to some extent. However, sometimes I fear that the catchphrases our generation has embraced to make sense of race and carceral system in particular doesn't capture the full complexity of how these carceral institutions exist to manage the misery of working-class life across the color line. And speaking of connecting theory and practice, it's amazing that abolish the police has entered the mainstream lexicon, pushed largely by small groups of abolitionists. But it seems that outside of militancy of the George Floyd Rebellion, there is little emphasis on class struggle that would make abolition a reality. Instead, the majority of abolitionists today have embraced non-reformist reforms in the way Gramsci understood them unfolding in advanced*



*countries—a war of attrition whose goals was to eventually undermine the viability of existing civil society and with it, dominant class rule. Do you have any thoughts on this?*

**Tony Platt:** Left and revolutionary organizations always imagine utopian goals. But it's a long journey and along the way, we work on fighting for reforms that hopefully take us in the direction of structural change. The Panthers shouted, "off the pig" and fought the police, but they also championed a breakfast program that not only fed poor Black kids, but also demonstrated politically what it means to live in a country where so many kids are going hungry.

We owe the distinction between reformist reform and structural reform to the ideas of Andre Gorz, a French Marxist intellectual who was writing about the labor movement. He grappled with trying to figure out which reforms would help to widen and deepen the labor movement and which reforms would make it more conservative. I think this is a helpful framework for understanding the difference between managerial reforms (such as the juvenile court with its coercive power framed as benevolence), do-gooding reforms that attempt to soften the hard edges of power (such as training police to recognize their unconscious racism), and structural reforms that serve the majority of people and change relations of power (such as abolitionism and defund the police).

I think it's also critically important to be visionaries and to imagine what a society based on equality, dignity, and justice would look like. Part of Trump's success was his ability to project a dystopian vision that mobilized more than seventy million people. Our greatest challenge is to develop a comparable utopian vision from the left while living now in what Gramsci referred to as an *interregnum*—an era when the old models of revolutionary transformation are in decline, new anti-systemic movements are struggling to emerge, and the most powerful nation states are battling for hegemony. So far, on a global level, the Right's vision prevails.

*ZK: It's so bizarre that social democrats in the United States look to Europe as a model for what our prison system could be like. Meanwhile, Europe is building a fortress around itself to keep refugees, immigrants, and Muslims from getting a piece of whatever is left of the social democratic pie.*

**Tony Platt:** Yes, the carceral state is becoming the norm, exceptional measures becoming unexceptional. The challenge is not just to figure out a reform strategy but what is the larger vision to which we aspire and what kinds of organizations are needed to sustain movements for social justice. The persistence, for example, of Black Lives Matter as a grassroots movement is extraordinary, but without organization it's hard to sustain. Moreover, progressive gains can quickly be reversed. We saw this after 9/11 with the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and an anti-terrorism discourse that replaced the possibility of substantive reforms with an unprecedented expansion of the carceral state. Today, in the wake of the "siege of the Capitol," government agencies are countering demands for abolition and defunding with ominous calls to "strengthen the guardrails of the Republic." If Stuart Hall was still with us, he would be urging us to pay close attention to the ascendancy of Trumpism without Trump.

*ZK: Let's talk a bit about law and order and carceral power. What are some of the shifts in law and order that we should be tuning into?*

**Tony Platt:** This is an important issue. How did the Trump administration build upon legacies of law and order, and what new forms of carceral power did it create?

One result of the urban and anti-war rebellions of the 1960s was a profound reorganization of the American state. On the one hand, the Johnson administration via the Kerner Commission addressed structural racism in its rhetoric and some of its proposals. On the other hand, a lasting legacy was its beefing up of policing, subsidizing of the police-industrial complex, and expanding the carceral state into welfare functions. From the 1960s to the present, policing becomes increasingly militarized, more and more dependent on technology, and more detached from the communities it patrols. These tendencies were present from the earliest days of police professionalization in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but their development has accelerated since 9/11.

*ZK: There was also a progressive, for lack of a better word, force within American policing in the 1960s and 1970s that you discuss in your book, *The Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove*. Can you tell us a little bit about this and why it was significant then to address it and examine the contradictions within police forces?*

**Tony Platt:** In the 1970s we asked ourselves, are the police working class or part of the petit bourgeoisie? This inquiry was influenced by Harry Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital* which distinguished the working class from the middle class by focusing on the managerial function of the latter. Some police have relatively privileged upper working-class jobs, with decent benefits and union protection. But many, including private security forces and sheriff's deputies, have lousy jobs.

Politics and ideology are key to understanding the class position of police. In the 1960s and 1970s, there were progressive organizations *within* policing that addressed issues of police racism, affirmative action, and civilian review boards. There were many young people who wanted to work in community policing in the same way that students joined the Peace Corps for idealistic reasons. From an organizing perspective, we tried to exploit these tensions within police organizations and to recruit progressive cops to progressive causes. We had some success then.

But that was short-lived. Grassroots reformers were quickly driven out of policing, police work became more Taylorized, recruits were trained to regard themselves as warriors engaged in a war on crime against criminogenic communities, and police organizations and unions for the most part moved to the far right.

*ZK: This has definitely happened under Trump, culminating as we all saw with the siege of the Capitol. Can you discuss more your thoughts on law and order under the Trump administration and to what extent that is a continuation or a break from the 1960s?*

**Tony Platt:** Yes, Trump’s law and order built upon the past but shifted significantly to the right. During the Obama years, in response to militant protests, the government assembled task forces, proposed liberal reforms, and oversighted out-of-control police departments. Trump not only undid these modest measures, but incorporated police organizations into his political coalition, encouraged rank and file police to act with impunity, and promoted racist tropes about criminal African Americans, rapacious Mexican immigrants, and degenerate delinquents.

We have a long history in the United States of government complicity with the fascist right. During World War I, the government encouraged nationalist organizations to go after German immigrants, pacifists, and socialists. In the 1960s, many members of the Los Angeles Police Department joined the John Birch Society and supported anti-communist witch-hunts. In recent decades, this collaboration has operated in the shadows. By contrast, the Trump administration encouraged the Departments of Homeland Security to go after Black Lives Matter “terrorists” and ignore the growth of white supremacist organizations. Despite the restorationist politics of the Biden administration, it will not be easy to marginalize a Right that has become used to being centerstage.

*ZK: How do you see this playing in the next years? We are also living through a global pandemic which continues to deepen race, class and gender inequalities. It seems like all kinds of things can happen.*

**Tony Platt:** We are living in a dangerous, unstable, and unpredictable time. Anyone predicting what’s going to happen is misjudging the uncertainty of this moment. The pandemic has deepened economic disparities worldwide, increased the racial divide, and set back women’s gains in the workplace and in the home, where their double work has trebled. The Trump administration has bequeathed, and the Republican Party has gladly inherited an increasingly rightwing judiciary, legislation in many states that curbs reproductive rights and protest, and political and cultural space for white supremacist, chauvinist, and white supremacist organizations. Globally, we face the twin dangers of the exacerbation of global inequalities by the climate crisis, and of the United States exerting military power due to its diminishing economic and political hegemony, as Britain did in Egypt in the 1950s.

This is a particular kind of deep and multifaceted crisis. Will Biden get pushed left in ways that Obama didn’t by the more militant wing of the Democratic Party? Will the Democratic Party coopt grassroots movements into managerial reforms? Will the neo-fascist right grow in political power? Will the social justice movements of the last few years become political organizations with staying power that offers hope of systemic change? Can we imagine solutions that are regional and global?

A crisis of this magnitude is an opportunity to think globally and structurally. No one thinks of the pandemic as a national problem. Trump tried to make it a China problem and came pretty close, but it was ultimately not successful. The next pandemic will also be global. The

environmental movement in its global manifestations gives us an opportunity to rekindle liberatory visions of social equality. An abolitionist criminology too should think beyond national boundaries for its radical visions and for understanding now more than ever how carceralism is a global phenomenon.

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