



## Coppism Concerns

2-8-24

\* This is from a letter I sent to a friend in early 2021. We were talking about the possibilities in a post-George Floyd America. \*

"... I'm sceptical of the congealing focus of events. I'm over the moon at the calls to defund police and abolish coppism, but far too often I've seen the energy of movements deflected from the problem of policing and punishment in general to what seems to me a short-sighted focus on racist policing. My more radical (should I say, "conventional"?) acquaintances assure that even a singular focus on racial injustice will still lead to the broader cultural shifts I long for, improving the conditions for everyone by eroding law enforcement as a whole. Sadly, I'm not convinced, and the whole theory smacks of old Reagan-era "Trickle down economics" to me. I'm very worried that any reforms or "realignment" of policing to address the very real problem of overpolicing certain poorer and typically darker-hued areas will ultimately strengthen coppism as an institution by providing an illusory "responsiveness" or a downright delusional sense of "police responsibility/accountability" that will merely comfort people right back into complacency. I wonder if there's an analogy to be drawn with corporate capitalism, like how the basic capitalistic mechanisms have defeated Marx's prediction of internal collapse from inherent "contradictions." Our economic system has adapted, morphed a bit, corrected in what appears to be the public benefit but which is always also ultimately self-serving compromise. Think of welfare, safety regulations, economic regulations... all the "voluntary" modifications to the pure profit model which sustained a system by mitigating tendencies toward recession and depression, leaving us today with the most colossal corporate behemoths imaginable, <sup>and quasi-public</sup> private centers of power like Amazon and Google and Apple, the likes of which could've only been the dollar-drenched wet dreams for the Carnegies and Rockefellers of yesteryear.

I fear the same paths ahead for policing: a seemingly competent response to the narrow claims of racial disparity, ultimately strengthening the authoritarian hand as a whole.