C1 Divesting Funds from Police Forces and Investing in communities

Proposer: Kelsey Trevett (Oxfordshire Green Party)
Agenda item: C Resolutions of Executive Committee Priorities

Summary

The Young Greens support campaigns to divest funds away from police forces, border enforcement agencies, and other carceral institutions. Noting that police forces and other carceral state institutions are violent by design, and that opposition to social violence is a defining principle of Green politics, we call on our wider movement to support campaigns to oppose state violence and dismantle the institutions responsible.

The Young Greens notes:

- Opposition to systematic violence across society is a fundamental principle of Green politics;
- The Green Party has a proud history of calling for the abolition of violent state institutions including, in a 2019 Conference co-leader's speech, the Home Office;
- Police forces routinely engage in racial profiling, with black people being nine times more likely as of 2018 to be stopped and searched;
- Since 1990 significantly over 1,500 people have died in police custody, with only one police officer subsequently being convicted;
- Young people are among those most acutely affected, with young black men disproportionately subject to state violence;
- The UK government spent £18 billion on policing in 2019/20 — the highest for almost a decade;
- That police are frequently responsible for the descent of peaceful demonstrations into physical confrontations, and frequently use such confrontations to discredit campaigners;
- That the persistent use of carceral approaches to social problems in other spheres directly harms young people from marginalised communities, including the use of exclusions in state schools.

The Young Greens believes:

- Violence inflicted by the state should be opposed, as a key principle of Green politics;
- Violence inflicted by the state on people should not be understood as uniquely legitimate or justified because it was performed by the state;
- Police forces and other carceral institutions are fundamentally designed to contain, suppress and even inflame the discontents caused by an unequal system, rather than address their causes;
- As the climate crisis intensifies states are increasingly turning to carceral institutions, such as militarised border control and police action, to control its discontents rather than addressing the crisis at the root;
- Funding spent on carceral approaches to containing social problems could and should be directed to services that address the causes of such problems;
- The persistent focus by politicians, media institutions, and others on carceral approaches to containing social problems distracts from the real solutions that are needed;
- Police forces in England and Wales, and around the world, are institutionally racist, perpetuating structural oppression, and leading to increased danger to the lives and wellbeing of black and minority ethnic people;
- Drawing down funding to police forces and other carceral institutions would benefit those groups, including people of colour, travellers, women, LGBTIQA+ people, and the working class, who are most acutely affected by the harms they cause.

The Young Greens resolves:

- To proactively support campaigns to draw funds away from police forces, border enforcement agencies, and other carceral institutions;
- To campaign for the reinvestment of funds into public services and communities, for purposes including but not limited to housing, employment, youth services, healthcare, and ending poverty.

Supporters

Rosie Rawle (Oxfordshire Green Party); Matthew Hull (Camden Green Party); Orla MacMahon (Bristol Green Party)