

## HIGHLIGHTS AND TAKEAWAYS - MOVEMENT PULSECHECK II

### **What does this moment reveal?**

- the cycles of state-sanctioned violence, economic insecurity, and racism
- the need for abolition, which at its core is the recognition that reform is not enough but rather alternative structures for long-term, sustainable change
- the opportunity for raising mass critical consciousness for building structures for self-determination
- the need to be vigilant in not replacing police with expanded use of surveillance

### **What does the work look like in Minneapolis right now?**

- Minneapolis activists are working toward defunding the Minneapolis Police Department to give our communities more resources to determine for themselves safety and security--with a hyper focus on our young people.
- Before the killing of George Floyd, there was already groundwork for demonstrating how police policies and Minneapolis schools had long been discriminatory against Blacks.
  - The City had developed a tool to assess policies, an equity diversity assessment tool, which identified the school policies that perpetuated discrimination in punishment against Black students. The U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights [revealed](#) in an investigation that the district schools disproportionately disciplined Black students.
  - The schools had refused to push for broader changes and instead pursued reforms that failed to change outcomes: training, changing the uniform policies, etc.
- School activists are demanding the following data to push for alternative structures:
  - data on what happens to students who leave school property by the hands of School Resource Officers
  - data on how many hours of instruction lost by people due to SRO actions
- School activists are fighting to do the following:
  - to overhaul leadership and clean house: "We cannot have the same people leading us to the solution that maintained our status quo."
  - to divert resources to community practitioners who are more than equipped to address the concerns young people are facing
- School activists caution against replacing physical policing with technological policing.

### **How can restorative practices support self-determination?**

- It undoes the mindset of what justifies the presence of police.
- It requires restoring people back to their original greatness--pre-colonization
- It is a healing and a self-determination practice that is grounded in relationship and the values of the people who have been long harmed by our systems
- Restorative practices is a collective work which holds all systems accountable.

## **How can democracy alternatives support self-determination and what examples/models can we use as a reference?**

- In Jackson, Mississippi, [Cooperation Jackson](#) works to uphold three pillars of their co-op:
  - Economic democracy and a solidarity economy
  - People-centered decision-making
  - Independent political party
- They started with developing a farming cooperative, calling it the Fannie Lou Hammer Cooperative, based on the traditions of black farmer co-ops during the Civil Rights Movement. They then developed a catering co-op. Their co-ops use a circular system that uses the trimmings from landscaping and composts for food.
- Their economic democracy included the following activities:
  - Cop watching
  - Workshops on black disposability--regularly exploring ways to make sure the community is not etched out by automation and emerging economies.
  - Plans to build out a digital production lab
- The necessary framework of the co-op work involves both building and fighting and the various different skill sets that come with that.
- Art and culture has a role to play because it can spark different imaginations that can push for things beyond the current status quo.

## **How can pushing for a technology co-op support self-determination as a practice of collective liberation?**

- A technology co-op would aim to integrate and organize the skills for cyber security, data science, technology development, and placing them into the hands of black, indigenous, and poor white children. It can advance efforts to build digital defense methods for personal and collective security against the mass surveillance and mass weaponization of data conducted by the police.
- It can help us push back on the increasing levels of surveillance used by police and police vigilantes, which have accelerated over the last decade with every protest against the City's violent confrontations with black and indigenous communities. Cities use mass protest to justify an increase in their law enforcement budgets to deploy more technology and militarization equipment.
- It can help us prepare to endlessly engage in the violence that images with our community continuously.
- It can confront the white terror on the streets and online.
- It can help us dispel the fallacies of the City's marketing data that is used to exploit our public school system and communities.
- It will help us change the philosophy and ethics and practice around technology.
- It will help us set up cyber maroons - hackers in the hood - who we need to set up shops of small contingents to be trained in these skills and in defense of these people
- We have to work in both worlds and we need to make space for a world for us to go into.

### What are the calls-to-action for technology companies?

- Share with communities your client data
- Redistribute the money received from Boeing, NSA, etc. to help create hackers in the hood and open schools for technology for our youth
- Use your skills to develop tech that supports participatory democracy - and that extends democracy beyond city council
- Get out of the way. Tech companies cannot be the ones raising the initiatives. They must be held accountable to the collective wisdom of communities.

### Things to keep in mind for building new structures:

- **brandon king said:**

- It takes different skills to do the building aspects. Co-op development requires different skills than activism.
- Recognize the dynamics of people in the street - they are reaching out and crying and their rage is something that is righteous. The dichotomy between good protester and bad protester reveals American values in equating defaced property with loss of human life.
- **It's important that the nonprofit industrial complex does not quell what is happening in the streets.** We have the opportunity to seek broader changes. We can be strategic and that requires staying in the streets because that alone is a strategy to bankrupt the city budgets to pay police in overtime.

- **Dr. Talaya Tolefree said:**

- Restorative practice must be true to indigenous and African traditions and practices to be effective. We cannot afford to use the colonized version of these practices.
- Restorative practices cannot be used as a curriculum but as a way of being. You can't pull it off at any given time.

- **Duaba said:**

- Defining characteristics around technology is rooted in white supremacy and has been centered around slavery, using artificial slaves to further the aims of white supremacy. "Robot" has Czech etymology origins that mean "forced labor" and it is drawn from the Slav *robot* which means servitude or hardship. Slaves as enslaved chattel are rooted in control. The computer's mother's board reinforces the concept of control over robots which has a meaning rooted in slavery.
- **If we use technology as a practice of self-determination and liberation, we do not run the risk of using the master's tools like Audre Lorde cautioned in her statement: the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.** Black people have long been the master's tools. To the extent that we repurpose ourselves as the tools and change the master's plan, we won't be reproducing slavery.