The police are ordinary workers just like us; they should be our allies. Unfortunately, there's a big gap between "should be" and "are." The role of the police is to serve the interests of the ruling class; anyone who has not had a bad experience with them is likely privileged, submissive, or both. Today's police officers know exactly what they're getting into when they join the force—people in uniform don't just get cut out of trees. Yes, most take the job because of economic pressure, but needing a paycheck is no excuse for excusing families, harassing young people of color, or pepper-spraying demon- strators. Those whose consciences can be bought are everyone's potential enemies, not allies.

This fairy tale is more persuasive when it is couched in strategic terms; for example: "Every revolution succeeds at the moment the armed forces refuse to make war on their fellowmen therefore we should focus on seducing the police to our side. But the police are not just any workers; they're the ones who chose to base their livelihoods upon defending the prevailing order, thus the least likely to be sympathetic to those who wish to change it. In this context, it makes more sense to oppose the police as such rather than seek solidarity with them. As long as they serve their masters, they cannot be our allies by denouncing the institution of police and demoralizing individual officers, we encourage them to seek other livelihoods so we can one day find common ground with them.

Even if there are some bad apples, but some police officers are good people. Perhaps some police officers have good intentions, but once again, insofar as they obey orders rather than their consciences, they cannot be trusted.

There's something to be said for understanding the systematic nature of institutions, rather than attributing every injustice to the short-comings of individuals. Remember the story of the man who, tormented by fleas, managed to capture one between his fingers? He scrutinized it for signs of fleas, managed to catch one between his fingers? He scrutinized it for signs of fleas, managed to catch one between his fingers? He scrutinized it for...