

Hello everyone,

Our upcoming LRNA educational discussion will be titled, "Re-imagine the Police, Re-imagine Society", part one of a 3-part series. In the midst of this intense process of COVID and social change, this is an opportunity to deliberate together in a respectful way, to move forward. Second & third sessions will include "how the ruling class works to divert, divide & confuse the movement", and "what kind of world can we create?"

This session will be Saturday, July 25th, 11am - 1pm (we can continue later, if people want), so please mark your calendar.

best to all, and hope to see you on the 25th! Peter, for the LRNA CLEO Committee PS - note the new email address! cleo.lrnaoakland@gmail.com

Reimagine the Police, Reimagine Society A Three-Part Political Education Series on the Politics of Basic Needs

Session One

Defund the Police Question: What would Community Control Look Like?
Saturday, July 25, 2020 from 11:00 am - 1:30 pm via Zoom

Purpose: For over five months America is still struggling under the threat of the global pandemic. During this short period the country has witnessed the death of George Floyd and is grappling with the explosive social response in its wake. Demands to change the ways police interact with our communities are heard across the country. The call to "Defund the Police" are being discussed, interpreted and defined. What does this call to defund the police mean? What should it mean? How is the response being used to keep us divided? Having an answer to, and understanding these questions is critical to having meaningful change to an institution that has historically been used for terror and control of black and brown communities and the poor. In this revolutionary time, revolutionaries have a responsibility to address the problems on how they're perceived and to expose what is really going on.

The main reading for this lesson: Rally Comrades! Article "Mighty Force Rising for a New Society" <http://rallycomrades.lrna.org/2020/07/mighty-force-rising-for-a-new-society/>

Agenda

Session 1: Defund the Police Question: What would Community Control Look Like?

Distract/divide how it is used to keep us from forming politically as a class.

What would it take to get community control? Defund the police question

Vision Forward: How do we recreate a government where it protects and serves the people

Mighty Force Rising for a New Society

It started as an explosion of agony and righteous anger at the police murder of unarmed African American George Floyd. It became a rebellion against the police, systemic racism, and the government bolstered by and defending them. The demand to defund the police envisions a new society. It calls for cities and other public entities to divest from armed law enforcement and invest in human needs: health and mental health services, housing, education, jobs, drug treatment, community-controlled public safety, and other vital social services.

This movement's daily collective actions are in the context of the coronavirus pandemic that has taken over 129,000 U.S. lives (increasing daily). Impoverished workers with disproportionate numbers of Black, Latinx, and Indigenous people die at over twice the rate of the wealthy. The protests today are spurred by our government's response to both the Coronavirus and murders committed by police.

Despite the recent spike in COVID-19 cases, our state and federal governments prioritize profits over human lives by forcing the "reopening of the economy." Working-class people who still have jobs and are unable to work from home must choose between risking their lives with COVID-19 or risking their family's economic survival. Over 45 million Americans have become jobless in the past three months, with no guarantee of those jobs returning.

If the government can use trillions of our money to bail out the banks and corporations, it can certainly take care of us. The people are starting to understand this: A new poll says that 82 percent of Americans want a monthly stimulus check to continue until the end of the COVID-19 lockdown. About 80 percent want universal healthcare, 55 percent say that mortgage and rent payments should be frozen during COVID-19, and 63 percent say that student loans should not have to be paid now.

The movement against the police and to meet basic human needs is on a collision course with the capitalist system that prioritizes private property over human lives. This system is particularly brutal in its disregard for Black lives, but the lives of all

Oklahoma, despite the warnings of public health officials. The attendees had to sign liability waivers stating that they cannot sue if they catch COVID-19.

Why doesn't this ruling class care about Black lives or the masses of unemployed and destitute of all backgrounds? Why aren't there adequate masks, ventilators, testing, or treatment? Why are politicians sending us back out to work even though the COVID-19 death toll is rising? Because a ruling class that doesn't need us will not pay to keep us alive.

Automation of the means of producing goods is step-by-step, eliminating jobs. Digital technology, such as computers and robotics, can produce more cheaply and efficiently than human labor. They don't require wages, but they also do not consume what is produced. . .

The elimination of jobs by new technology creates a new class of workers that cannot survive under these conditions. As ever greater sections of the working class are pushed out of the economy, they are driven to confront a system that will no longer provide food, homes, healthcare, and education. The capitalist ruling class is increasingly viewing this growing class with open antagonism.

Fascism is the only way the ruling class can maintain an economy of private ownership when the system of jobs, bribery, and capitalism itself is no longer sustainable. The police, courts, prison system, and institutions of force are not the same as 30 years ago. The U.S. capitalist State is reorganizing itself as an unrestrained apparatus of coercion to contain and control the social revolution set in motion by these revolutionary changes in society.

The military-style of policing imposed on Black and Latino communities is used more and more against other sectors of American society. While most sharply targeting Black and Latinx communities, deadly force and brutality are becoming common wherever the new class is found. If you are in the new class, you are a target.

We are witnessing this new class acting as a social force driving an objective revolutionary movement. Members of the new class are leaders within the

movement motivated by the murder of George Floyd and so many others. Their fight for justice, healthcare, housing, education, and an opportunity to contribute to society reflect the new class's demands that can only be achieved with a transformation from a system of private property to a cooperative system organized in the interests of humanity. . .

Break and video

The movement in the streets has pressed the government to pass several new laws. The Louisville City Council unanimously passed Breonna's Law banning no-knock search warrants after the killing of emergency room technician Breonna Taylor in March. The use of chokeholds by police is illegal in Miami and New York. Several cities, including Austin, Seattle, and Berkeley, have barred police from using tear gas on protestors.

Plans to defund the police are being considered, though details of the investment in human services have not been specific in most cases. The Minneapolis City Council pledged to end the city's police department and invest in a "new transformative model for cultivating safety." The Los Angeles City Council voted to redirect \$150 million from the LAPD budget to disadvantaged communities. New York City and San Francisco have similar proposals. The defund police motion includes public schools and colleges where armed police forces have increased over the years, contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline. In Minneapolis, Minnesota, Portland, Oregon, and Oakland, California, the police have been kicked out of the public school districts. In terms of basic needs, the California legislature is considering ending the ban on affirmative action, which increases access of people of color and women to jobs and education. In Kentucky, the Governor has pledged to provide free health care for all Black Kentuckians who need it.

As we fight for control of our communities, we must keep in mind the big picture. History has shown that replacing one police chief with another, regardless of color, guarantees nothing. Under a private property system, the police's role is to protect private property and control the population. Today the movement demands that the community should control the police, not the other way around.

The stability of having a job is gone and, with it, the ability to secure the pursuit of happiness. The only real solution is a complete transformation of society.

As a core of the current movement against outright murder of our brothers and sisters by police, and for the containment of the pandemic, the new class is forming itself up as a social force that can lead the fight for a cooperative society. In the daily battles, this social force is broad, working-class, multiracial, and learning to unite around its own interests.

Notable definitions

Fascism: *Economically, fascism is corporate economic power merged with the political power of the State. Politically, fascism is the substitution of one form of class domination - bourgeois democracy - by another. The objective foundation of fascism is the capitalist class's inability to rule any longer by "democracy." Fascism is State intervention in every aspect of the economy and society to protect private property. The new class must fight for its very existence, must fight to meet basic human needs in a system controlled by a ruling class that no longer needs it to make profit. The ruling class is countering that response with direct force - with the erection of a fascist State.*

Democracy: *The American people have a long history of fighting for the ideal of democracy, of rule by "we the people." Democracy is more than the right to vote. Economic democracy is the guarantee of a decent life for everyone: a quality home, education, and health care, plus more. There can't be political democracy without economic democracy. In a society based on slavery, (ancient Greece) only the slaveowners have democracy. In a society based on an economy of wage-slavery only those who own the means of subsistence have access to democratic rights. Whoever controls your bread and butter controls you.*

"Bourgeois democracy" allowed for certain rights and an illusion of fairness. Housing, food, medical care were always sold for profit; however, a majority of workers were able - through selling their labor - to buy these basic things. This kept the system going and ensured a measure of social peace.

Today, electronic production is eliminating workers, and the rulers can't allow the poor to assemble or express any semblance of independent demands. History has shown that if voting or free speech stands in the way of the corporations' property and profits, they will eliminate it altogether. Today we are seeing the rise of fascism—the takeover of the government by the corporations. The Supreme Court and the Citizens United decisions have given the rights of citizens to corporations—'corporate personhood.' Militarized police forces act as occupying troops in poor neighborhoods,

where they kill at will. The criminalization of the poor and dispossessed – from the various laws against homeless people’s acts of survival, to the rise of the privatized prison industry that profits on slave labor – all represent this move toward a fascist police state.

True and universal democracy can only exist in a society where people have full economic and political rights, based on public ownership of production and distribution— “to each according to need” — not for the private profit of the few. Democracy, in the final analysis is rule by the people. Only with an economic system that no longer depends on exploitation can we fulfill the promise of democracy—a cooperative society based on distribution ‘according to need,’ collective control over the necessities of life. The struggle for reform and for democracy is now in reality a revolutionary one — to remake society along cooperative and truly democratic lines.