

Suggested readings & questions for LRNA Revolutionary Education Deeper Dive October 23 Conversation

3 questions for our conversation among revolutionaries

1. Why is the economic foundation of society moving the capitalist class as a whole – including both major political parties – toward fascist rule today?
2. How is ruling class motion toward fascism implemented – politically & ideologically – in mobilizing the social base for fascism and in controlling movements that oppose capitalism and corporate private property?
3. How will we make real and lasting our vision for the future – of humanity & the planet – that we need for survival & wellbeing?

1. A short definition of the state and state violence

“History shows that the state as a special apparatus for coercing people arose wherever and whenever there appeared a division of society into classes, that is, a division into groups of people some of which were permanently in a position to appropriate the labour of others, where some people exploited others. (p. 5)

The state is a machine for the oppression of one class by another, a machine for holding in obedience to one class other, subordinated classes. (p. 10)

..... [T]he essence of the state [includes] ...a special category of people set apart to rule others and who, for the sake and purpose of rule, systematically and permanently have at their disposal a certain apparatus of coercion, an apparatus of violence, such as is represented at the present time, ... by armed contingents of troops, [military & police], prisons and other means of subjugating the will of others by force. ...” – V.I. Lenin 1919, p. 5

2. Defining fascism now & then

Taking the Offensive to Defeat Fascism, Secretariat in *Rally, Comrades!* May/June 2021. vol.31. Ed3

<https://rallycomrades.org/2021/05/taking-the-offensive-to-defeat-fascismsecretariat-league-of-revolutionaries-for-a-new-america-may-2021/>

The stakes for our multiracial, multigendered and multigenerational working class are urgent and huge. It is essential to grasp the current conditions and to chart a strategic political path to our common future. Election 2020 offers lessons about class power rooted in the history of the U.S. South – in capitalism, white supremacy, and fascist rule, and in oppositional multiracial working class struggles across the centuries. The election also expresses the crises and contradictions of the current political moment. Today’s working class is increasingly impoverished and dispossessed because of the irreversible capitalist crisis based in the ongoing digital revolution. We are dying from COVID-19 and living on a planet in ecological crisis. The political crisis is on full display. ...

The Terrain We Are On ...

The ruling class and its two political parties are fraught with contradictions. The current moment has revealed the capitalist class interests in both the Democratic and Republican Parties and how they rule and control the working class. The center cannot hold. The polarization and fracturing within both ruling class parties and between the classes is erupting. The government's totally inadequate response to the basic needs of the people and the planet is in plain sight.

While the US working class is being thrust ever deeper into poverty and crisis, US billionaires reaped \$1 trillion since the beginning of the COVID pandemic in March 2020, with the stock market climbing to new highs. This absolute polarization of wealth and poverty has to be interrupted. The historic material and ideological reality of white supremacy and gender oppression within capitalism – from the earliest phase of colonialism, genocide, and chattel slavery to the present – is expressed in every aspect of our lives. The Biden-Harris administration is squarely in the Wall Street corporate wing of the Democratic Party and is proposing, at best, concessions that do not disrupt capitalism. The ruling class is fighting to protect their power, wealth, and private property. Fascism is the only political path open to the ruling class to defend their needs and interests, whether slow or fast tracked. But, fascism is not inevitable.

Working class forces are in the fight of our lives. In the main, we have been fighting tactically for our immediate needs and survival. It's important that our electoral participation and our defense of the right to vote not become a defense of bourgeois democracy, and that we move toward political independence from the ruling class. Our fight is ongoing. This moment is critical to lay out our bold vision of the world we want and need.

This is a powerful learning, teaching, and acting moment. None of us — regardless of our class – can do just what we want to do, because we want to do it. We can only do what conditions allow us to do. So we have to make a careful strategic analysis of conditions, forces, and motion. Strategically, we know that we have to overthrow the capitalist system and white supremacy, as an ideological and material force within it, in the U.S. and globally. To move toward this revolutionary resolution, we have to connect our tactics to our strategy. A few key tactical processes for working class struggle that fight capitalism and ruling class control include breaking from capitalist class political parties, making demands that confront the capitalist system, and political education that moves working class forces toward revolutionary class consciousness and struggle for the future.

Working Class Unity

Today's multiracial working class has to break from both ruling class parties. And we have to move toward forming a working class third party that is politically independent from the capitalist class. To accomplish this, we need to continue our participation in the electoral process and in the ongoing policy struggles around solutions to our problems. The demands and solutions we put forward have to fight capitalism and take our struggle on the offensive. Our survival depends on the protection of the earth, and the distribution of the vast abundance of goods and services based on human need, and not ability to pay. A few specific examples of political tactics to fight capitalism that various fronts of struggle are demanding include unified action as a political tool of working class power, abolition of the police and prison industrial complex including ICE, implementation of a green plan for a 100 percent renewable carbon free energy system by 2030, and honoring all Indigenous treaties and lands. We have to end our crises, not just lessen our pain.

We need a critical mass of working class forces with a shared vision of the world we are fighting for. This working class unity and class consciousness requires serious study along with political demands and electoral work and struggle in the street. Political education is an essential weapon in the battle for ideas, vision, and the future. We have to break with ruling class ideology and lies of white supremacy. We have to break with ruling class history and its practices of class exploitation, genocide, and gender oppression. To do this means to study society and the world as they really are and have been. It means to understand the revolutionary process and the qualitative change in the economy we are living through. It means to grasp our political task and political challenge of going on the offensive, fighting capitalism, defeating fascism, and winning and holding the future for humanity and our planet.

3. Healing the Metabolic Rift and developing Communism are co-requisite processes

by Patrick Baranovskis

The rift in the reproduction of the eco-social metabolism is coming to the point of intense scarcity. Capitalist industrial production is premised on the use of fossil fuels, endless extraction of natural resources, and the division between town and country. This is the metabolic rift. If we assert that a social revolution can liberate us into a communism based on “abundance” without accounting for the intense scarcity of ecological reproduction upon which that “abundance” is premised, then we are missing a key aspect of the necessary stages toward communism. The stark reality is that we have precious little time to orient the eco-social metabolism back to right-relation before we reach the point of no return. Catastrophic droughts, fires, winter storms, hurricanes, sea level rise, mass extinction events, crop failures, famine, etc. are all real and increasing in both quantity and quality.

There will be no abundance to distribute from automation in existence in 30 years if the ecological crisis isn't dealt with head on. The fact that we need to face is that these are the objective conditions, upon which a subjective movement toward a resolution is developing. The movement for a Green New Deal is an example of a necessary step which, to some degree, will likely receive some implementation, but is simultaneously being staged as a reconstruction of capitalist profiteering around new productive forces. If we understand, then, that the resolution to the metabolic rift also necessitates revolution, both technological and social, then we must try and understand that the integration of these forces together with the new class created by automation is essential to a livable future.

The metabolic rift theory also allows us to understand certain important nuances in our definition of communism. When we look at the writings and science around primitive communism, we see the existence of eco-social metabolic unity predicated on the communal ownership of the means of production and a lack of division of labor. Because society existed in collaboration and partnership with the reproduction of ecological processes, we could say that there was truly an “abundance” which we were able to distribute according to need, and that “from each according to ability” applied not just to humans but to the broader community of Life. Let us look at the destruction wrought by capitalist industry and ask ourselves whether our goal as revolutionaries is to better distribute the products of such a scheme, or is our goal not to, at least in part, return to right relation with the earth as first and foremost?

I grant that in practical terms this all sounds exceedingly complex. But let us now turn to the practical achievements of eco-social struggles around the world. Indeed, in many places on Earth there are unbroken lines of cultures, modes of production, thought, and spirituality based on metabolic unity (rather than rifts).

Almost without exception, these peoples have faced intense repression to maintain these life-ways in the face of colonization and capitalism. We need to look no further than the countless Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. We can emphasize the return to metabolic unity in the abstract easily, but practically, this return for us in the United States must be premised on the rematriation of lands with the Indigenous peoples who once stewarded them. Why? Because according to their traditions and histories, as well as to contemporary anthropology, the human influence upon the ecology here was foundational.

Whether it's the impact of controlled burns of grassland and forest for game, directed succession in forest agriculture, or any other countless examples of Indigenous reproduction of socio-metabolism, any attempt to reverse the ecological destruction of settler colonialism must center their holistic knowledge and sovereignty. In a sense, the Land Back movement is the subjective expression of an objective response needed to counteract the metabolic rift.

To quote from "*From Communism to Communism*" (Rally, Comrades! March/April 2016): "Today, we see a mass, objectively in motion towards communism, based on the new social division of labor. That is to say, the capitalists have all of it and can't use it; the working class has none of it and needs all of it."

What the nuance the metabolic rift theory provides in no way negates this basic premise, but rather, it isolates the eco-social relationship as having its own historical process of development, interdependent and yet separate from that of the productive forces. The development of technology is part of the foundational bedrock upon which social change precipitates. It has created a rift in the social metabolism by which the productive relations are out of sync with the productive forces. At the same time, there is a growing crisis in the *ecological* metabolism. What needs to be looked at is the possibility of class unity based on the socialization of not just the productive forces/relations, but the productive *conditions* as well, i.e. the qualitative and ecological circumstances which form the background of the productive forces/relations.

In other words, we are looking at a new class, not just as it's created by automation, but as it's created by the deepening of the metabolic rift. This may in fact be an abstraction which needs further scrutiny - ecological movements in some places have been marked by its bourgeois character. Yet there is something true and revolutionary about the global movements uniting around degrowth, ecosocialism, and the climate crisis generally.

We have to marry our analysis of communism based on abundance with the reality of the metabolic rift. In practice this may not mean doing anything different than what we are already doing. But we at least need to have a discussion which explores the nuance of control of production and healing the metabolic rift.

4. Corporate Evolution and Fascism: An overview

by Steve Miller & Joyce Mills

Periods under consideration	Features
*before - ca 1917	Corporate structure
*1920 - 1945	Technological base
*1945 - 1970 capitalism	Relation between financial and industrial
*1970 - 1994	Relation between capitalism and nations
*1994 until now (these dates are rough dates)	

Before ca 1917

Capitalism is still tied to the national market and most developed in Europe and North America. National industrial monopolies begin to form. Finance capital begins to become independent of industrial production. Trusts and cartels form. Railroads, large industrial steel production, skyscrapers and industrial manufacturing all begin to dominate.

Corporations are mostly nationally based. This is the era of the beginning of Imperialism and European seizure of direct colonies in Africa and Asia. Lenin described imperialism as the rise of **monopoly capitalism**, defining this as the merger of bank and industrial capitalism.

Fascism historically begins in the US south as a function of the defeat of reconstruction, escalating into a century of Jim Crow violence. White supremacy in new form penetrates government and the State.

1920 - 1945

General Motors becomes the model of **the modern corporation**, based on electrically-powered (V steam and or manual-powered) assembly line production. This corporate form is directed by a highly centralized top/down command and control structure that empowers the CEO to make any choice, at any level, from the design of the seat covers in next year's new model to beginning a line of pick-up truck production. Total authority is concentrated at the top, just as the military concentrates authority in a General.

Imperialism expands the system of direct colonialization, launching national liberation movements in the colonies and semi-colonies. Both the US and the USSR develop massive infrastructure (roads, dams, railways, water boards, dams) projects in order to power industrial production with electricity.

For monopoly corporations, a decreasing share of the capital for expansion belongs to the industrialists and an increasing share belongs to the financiers. The industrial wing of monopoly capitalism and the financial wing fight it out during the Depression and into World War II.

European Fascism develops after WWI. It rises to attack working class independence and specifically the rising communist movement. By 1945, Hitler, Mussolini and the European industrial wing are politically defeated.

1945 - 1970

European capitalist countries face domestic revolution and make major political concessions to their working classes in order to begin industrial production anew. The Financiers (everywhere) become politically dominant in planning the post war world. The process of colonial revolutions and de-colonialization begins and mostly is completed by 1970. Neo-colonies replace direct colonies. They are defined as formally, politically separate but economically controlled by imperialism. Corporations become so large that they require a huge white-collar workforce to manage and supervise corporate activities across the newly independent countries. US and European monopolies expand across the world as globally distributed, nationally-based producers for local markets. GE of Brazil, for example, produces principally for the Brazilian market.

1970 - 1994

To function in the new neo-colonies, in the 1970s corporations become **multinational corporations**, that produce in a given country but which market products to the world, rather than simply locally.

Major capitalist countries shift manufacturing to Asia and South America (the Global south). New machinery is now thoroughly componentized. Containerization is an aspect of this. Thus manufacturing can be shifted to low-wage countries. During the 1980s, the rise of digital technology in this period transforms corporations from multinational to **transnational**, i.e. thoroughly globalized production coordinated by the new technology. International industrial supply chains begin to form.

In the US the rust belt is created, beginning the end of the material bribe of imperialism. Elements of fascism begin to consolidate in order to maintain the split and the ideological control of the working class in the US.

Corporate forms begin to change with the incipient digital technology. Auto production for example had already passed from the assembly line model to the team model championed by Toyota. Peter Senge defines the new "lean, mean corporation." Senge's corporation pushes power to the edge, to the distributed production teams which now have both authority and responsibility to develop a specific project. This new structure replaces the highly centralized top/down command and control structure of the industrial era. Senge advocates that learning faster than the competition is now an essential capacity that corporations must develop. He calls the new corporations "Learning Organizations".

Financial speculation increases exponentially and over-layers industrial production. The rise of China and the collapse of the Soviet Union increase capitalism's global workforce by 1/3. Capitalism begins to privatize everything public.

Why 1994? That's the year Amazon began.

1994 - Now

After 911, the Department of Homeland Security becomes the country's largest police force and begins the systematic privatization and militarization of domestic police departments and local government.

With the invasion of Iraq in 2003, Halliburton pioneers the privatization of the military. Halliburton builds military bases (built previously by governments) and provides all services to the military (previously handled by the military itself). The old military budget that fed money to industrial companies becomes superseded.

Since the 2008 financial collapse, global capitalism has received about 100 trillion dollars globally as direct infusions of money, printed only on computers, to save financial speculation and the Casino economy. Privatization becomes ever more rampant. The rise of **platform** monopolies consolidate transnational capitalism on a new basis. Platforms, finance and housing, Big Pharma and military production all become increasingly tied together. Transnational corporations begins to develop into **Supranational** corporations which are blended into and becoming intertwined with national states. Climate change plus the advent of COVID produced the greatest global economic collapse in history in 2020, accelerating all the tendencies of capitalism.

Fascism today rises once again to attack the independence of the new proletarian class and specially its communist movement.