FASCISM
Fascism is an aggressive political ideology and system, and a form of far-right populism. Fascism is a reactionary political rooted in authoritarian nationalism, heteronormative, hyper-militarism, dominance, exclusion, elitism, and supremacy. Fascism is most commonly associated with World War-era dictatorship, but includes a much broader historic reach and impact in global politics. Fascism is regionally based on different historical and geographical contexts. They have included European dictatorships (such as Franco in Spain, Mussolini in Italy, and Hitler and the Nazi Party in Germany), and those in the Global South, where rising fascist leaders worked on behalf of colonial interests or imperialist control (such as Pinochet in Chile, Dutert in the Philippines, and Modi in India). Fascism consistently glorifies national, racial, and cultural unity and collective rebirth, while seeking to eliminate imagined enemies. It attacks both revolutionary movements and liberal pluralism in favor of militarized, totalitarian, exclusionary, and elitist mass policies. Fascism opposes liberalism, Marxism, socialism, communism, Third World and Indigenous self-determination, anarchism, anti-authoritarian politics, feminism, and queerness. Fascism is most accurately placed on the far-right of the traditional left-right political spectrum.

NEOLIBERALISM
Marking the era since the 1970s, neoliberalism refers to a stage of “free-market” capitalism, which is a collection of liberal economic policies based on the eighteenth-century ideologies of Adam Smith. Five pillars of neoliberalism include: “Free-market” rule of the economy, gutting of public expenditure for social services such as the social welfare net; privatization of the public sector; deregulation of government oversight concerning corporate interests; and the elimination of democracy or community, by upholding ultra-individualistic notions of responsibility and championing the pursuit of individual self-interest at the expense of the collective. Moreover, neoliberalism redistributes resources into the hands of corporations and wealthy elites and maintains a positive view of state spending on militarism and social control priorities, like the prison industrial complex (PIC). Referring to what Critical Resistance co-founder Ruthie Gilmore has termed “organized abandonment”, neoliberalism uses the PIC’s tools—including surveillance, criminalization, and imprisonment—as substitutes for the structural change required to repair the long history of racial, gender, and economic oppression in the US.

NEOLIBERALISM AND THE PIC
Neoliberalism evolved during second half of the twentieth century in response to domestic and global challenges to colonialism, racial capitalism, and structural discrimination mounted by the working class, anti-colonial, civil rights, and Black power movements in the early 1960s. Following the gradual successes of increased access to public resources for Black people, communities of color, and workers from the racial and economic justice movements in the US and globally, the state, in turn, divested from public schools, hospitals, housing, social benefits, and entitlements. This collection of economic and social policies gained traction in the US under the Reagan Administration and became popularly known as “Reaganomics.” Similar changes took place globally over the past five decades through “structural adjustment programs” imposed on nations of the Global South by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, as well as more regionally-specific economic mandates in the 1990s, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In the wake of structural economic oppression, exclusion, and growing neoliberalization, the state justified these devestations through demonizing, scapegoating, and projecting moral failure and individual irresponsibility onto communities struggling to survive. Ultimately, neoliberalism helps maintain the status quo of racial capitalism, by entrenching poverty and marginalization of communities of color within the US and imposing economic dependence upon wealthy imperial countries—like the US—in the Global South.

More on neoliberalism and the PIC

FEATURES | ACTION | RESOURCES
Fascist Emergency Playbook
By Ejersi Dixon

Editors’ Note: Throughout 2020, movement strategists have been speaking at virtual events sharpening organizers’ collective analysis to better make sense of our current political moment. One brilliant strategist, Ejersi Dixon, Executive Director of the organization Vision Change Win, has been leading conversations on how to resist fascism, helping the left recognize the strategies used in what she calls “the Fascism Emergency Playbook.” As an organizing resource and tool, we are publishing some of her analysis from an op-ed she wrote in April 2020 in Truthout called “Fascists are Using COVID-19 to Advance Their Agenda. It’s Up to Us to Stop Them,” along with notes from a talk she gave at a Center for Political Education class in August 2020 “Road to Rebellion.”

Over the past few years, we’ve watched the rise of a global fascist movement in the US, Russia, India, Brazil, and many other countries. And while scholars and writers currently debate whether to call Trump an authoritarian, autocrat or a fascist, it’s clear that he consolidates power, reduces institutional checks and balances, and centralizes institutions and that he works from a fascist playbook. Fascist and authoritarian governments often exploit, accelerate, or create emergencies to increase their power and further their agendas.

Here’s the fascist emergency playbook:
• Use the emergency to restrict civil liberties – particularly rights regarding move
ment, protest, freedom of the press, a right to a trial, and freedom to gather;
• Use the emergency to suspend government checks and balances, and reduce access to elections and other forms of participatory governance;
• Promote a sense of fear and individual helplessness, particularly in relation to the state, to reduce outcry and to create a culture where people consent to the power of the fascist state;
• Replace democratic institutions with autocratic institutions using the emergency as justification;
• Create scapegoats for the emergency, such as immigrants, people of color, or black peo
ple, or ethnic and religious minorities to distrac
t public attention from the failures of the state and the loss of civil liberties.

A Pathway Towards Liberation
Despite these grim circumstances, fate has handed us a society-changing opportunity wrapped within a tremendous challenge. We must think in terms of Antonio Gramsci’s concept of “interruption,” a time period in which, “the old [world] is dying and the new cannot be born.” In this liminal space, we have the opportunity to define that new society and call it forth. Time is limited and the opportunity is precious. So where does the left go from here in terms of both addressing increased repression and moving towards a more liberated future?