

A CRITICAL HISTORY OF THE POLICE



STUDY GROUP AT THE BASE



When, where and why did policing begin?



What are the different kinds of police that exist today?



What is it that police actually do?

BEGINS SEPT 10

THE BASE // 113 STOCKHOLM ST

Inquire within or contact randy_s@riseup.net

INTRODUCTION

In this group we will investigate the origins, development, and contemporary manifestations of the idea of "policing." While our inquiries will take us around the world, we will focus when possible on the role police play in our own city, which has the largest police force in the US and which a recent mayor has referred to as "my own army ... the seventh-biggest army in the world." Among the questions we will seek to answer are:

- * When, where and why did policing in its modern sense begin?
- * What do police do? How do they spend their time?
- * Who are the police? Who becomes a police officer and why?
- * What are the different types of police that exist today?
- * What is the role of the police in times of social crisis?
- * In what ways are the activities of police connected to broader developments in our politics, economy, and society?
- * What are some potential futures for policing and how can we evaluate them?

This course is a critical history of policing in the sense that we seek to understand not just what has happened, but why it has happened. "Critical" in our usage does not mean "negative;" it means that we seek to understand "what lies beneath" the sheer fact of events, to see if there are patterns that can help us more fully understand the world.

The primary goal will be to obtain a working understanding of what it is police actually do, as opposed to what it is often or generally said or thought they do. How they spend their time, with whom they interact, in what ways, and why. We will attempt to be as specific as possible in answering these questions.

ABOUT THE BASE

The Base is a newly-opened space for political organizing located in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn. For more information, e-mail thebasebk@gmail.com or visit <http://thebasebk.org>.