



The Main Political Report of Liberation Road/El Camino Para La Liberación, June 2019

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SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION: THE CHALLENGE TO THE LEFT AND PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS BUILDING INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ORGANIZATION AND POWER

The waves of protest that spread across the county after the 2016 election showed the force of the people's rage and resistance. But this resistance has grown, for the most part without a strategy to contend for power. We need to move from protest to power. We need to build independent political organization.

Trump's electoral victory was the culmination of decades of organizing by the right-wing forces that we call the New Confederacy. Briefly, the New Confederacy rests on three pillars: austerity, white supremacy, and cisheteropatriarchy. With the power the New Confederacy has gained through the use of the Republican Party, holding trifectas¹ in 22 states, they destroy unions, deny climate change, push the most homophobic and transphobic propaganda and policy, overrule progressive local movements or laws by state legislative "preemption", and organize to repeal every last trace of the New Deal and the Civil Rights movement. They have captured power at the state level in order to pursue a national, state, and local political agenda. They enforce voter suppression and redistricting to cement permanent minority rule. The New Confederacy, whose power is rooted in the Old South, has seized the initiative against the neo-liberal Democrats, the so-called "elites", whose subservience to the banks has been exposed.

In response, some new efforts by progressive forces have emerged, state by state, to bring together the multi-racial working class with minority nationalities and others to fight back. These efforts, which differ in many ways, have several things in common. They have a broad vision of contending for power. They work in the street and in the election booth. They work inside and outside the Democratic Party. They fight austerity, white supremacy and/or cisheteropatriarchy. And they build on the strategic alliance of the working class - of all nationalities, races and languages - with mass movements based in communities of color.

¹ Trifectas are states in which both legislative branches and the Governor's office are controlled by one political party.

Bringing together the advanced around the necessity of political organization and strategy is the focus of our work today. As part of the movement for socialism, we work to strengthen the left's capacity to take the initiative and exercise its independence. In some cases, we initiate such efforts; in others, we pitch in and learn from others within the movement who are further down the path in the implementation of organizing strategies.

The following paper is the 2019 Main Political Report (MPR) of Liberation Road², a socialist organization, and offers our general assessment of current conditions. (For an explanation of our name change, [click here](#). We welcome your thoughts and remarks about this document at info@roadtoliberation.org. Visit our website (roadtoliberation.org) to engage with a rich array of materials concerning our ideological basis, the political period, and our organizing tools and methodologies.

SECTION 2 - KEY TERMS

Strategic alliance:

This is an alliance that has to be constructed and it is made up of the oppressed nationality (ON) and multi-national working-class movements (not the various ON and multi-national demographics as a whole). The forces that make up these movements exist on a spectrum of advanced, intermediate, and backwards layers of the united front against the new confederacy.

LGBTQ+: an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans/transgender, queer. The + represents other identities in the community such as questioning, intersex, asexual, and pansexual, and many more

misogyny: literally, hatred of women, miso- meaning hatred and gyny- referring to women. misogyny is the internalization of cisheteropatriarchy. the oppression of all oppressed gender people can be linked to misogyny through the hatred of femininity, and women, girls, and all people perceived as feminine, as well as people who transgress norms of femininity

² Liberation Road was formerly known as Freedom Road Socialist Organization/Organización de Socialista del Camino Para La Libertad

cisheteropatriarchy: our society's systemic hierarchy of gender and sexuality with white, cisgender, heterosexual men at the top. It is white supremacist and capitalist in nature, which is why many use the phrase *white supremacist capitalist cisheteropatriarchy*. The term denotes the intersection of patriarchy, heteronormativity, and cisnormativity and emphasizes the connections between the oppression of all oppressed gender people.

Social democracy: a political movement that wants a democratic welfare state that incorporates both capitalist and socialist practices.

SECTION 3 - PURPOSE AND FOCUS OF THIS REPORT

Three years ago, our 2015-16 Main Political Report (MPR) offered a national-level assessment of the friends and enemies of the people at that moment in U.S. society, and a set of tools for comrades to analyze the balance of forces in their state and local areas. It laid the groundwork for the united front strategy that we adopted in 2016. In the MPR's that Liberation Road prepares before each of our triennial congresses, we outline major societal contradictions and complexities of a given moment, while trying not to get too bogged down in the particular. This report was written in the winter of 2018/spring of 2019, and while we haven't had the capacity to update all the examples it cites or cover up-to-the-minute events, we believe that the MPR's major conclusions remain valid

The 2018-19 MPR uses the united front³ framework from 2016 to update our understanding of shifts in the balance of forces and in key trends and alignments, mainly in the U.S. but also internationally. The analysis of U.S. context will be followed by a shorter section analyzing "New Developments in Capital Accumulation and World Politics." It will look briefly at rivalries among capitalists and global powers, hotspots for current and likely future U.S. aggression, and progressive movements globally.

³ The United Front policy is a framework that allows us to methodically and in an organized way assess the political actions and relationships of various social sectors. For further explanation and understanding of the concept read *Our United Front Policy* which can be found at: ["How We Fight: Mass Line and United Front"](#)

The main focus of this document is on our common enemy, the New Confederacy, its agenda, and the emerging united front that is fighting the New Confederacy. Additionally, we will identify the characteristics of the three distinct sections (advanced, intermediate, and backward) of the united front, and sketch out the various forces that make up each section. We will examine how the New Confederacy has developed under the Trump campaign and presidency. We will look at how the people's forces have risen to meet this threat: which groups have come together in resistance to Trump and his policies, with what challenges and outcomes so far. Who are the advanced elements, and how are they organizing to push beyond resistance to building power?

There are four general tactics that Liberation Road uses to build the united front in order to defeat the New Confederacy, strengthen the initiative and independence of left forces within the united front, and advance towards socialism.

- ❖ Develop and consolidate the advanced forces
- ❖ Win over the intermediate forces
- ❖ Tactically ally with, isolate, or neutralize the backward forces, and
- ❖ Defeat enemy forces one by one

Our main goal for this document is to engage with other left and progressive forces in dialogue about our strategic orientation as organizations and movements in this volatile political moment, and move toward common analysis and practice.

SECTION 4 - BRIEF SUMMARY OF GLOBAL TRENDS

SECTION 4.1 The Global Right-wing Populist Trend and Progressive Movements

We begin with a brief summary of global trends that define this political moment. As neo-liberal globalization has spurred austerity, wage cuts and population movements across the globe, the primary mass response has not been a progressive or socialist one, but rather a right-wing populist one. It's more than Trump and his base; this is a worldwide phenomenon: Europe (e.g. France, England, Germany), Latin America (Brazil), Asia and the Pacific. Its parties dominate government in the U.S., in the former Soviet bloc states

of Poland, Hungary, arguably Russia, (as Vladimir Putin talks of preserving Christian culture), Brazil, and even in non-white, developing countries like India and the Philippines.

These parties and movements have in common:

- Nationalism-- harkening back to a glorious national past and cultural legacy that is being destroyed by:
 - A scapegoated other—immigrants, darker skinned people, those of another religion, “criminals,” “terrorists,” “invaders”.
- Restriction of women’s rights and relegation of women to a traditional role in the patriarchal family.
- Demonization of queer and trans people.
- Violent fringes or sectors that the mainstream of the movement doesn’t disavow.
- Elements of a neo-fascist wing within the broader right-wing populist movements and governments.
- The frequent use of theology and faith-based institutions to justify an agenda based on hate, exclusion, appropriation/theft, and blaming.

There is also a progressive-leaning, though weaker and less coherent, response to neoliberalism and now right-wing populism. Its roots can be found in the Occupy Movement, Arab Spring, and Black Lives Matter movements. Some of its developments over the past three years include the Yellow Vests in France, teachers’ strikes, and the resurgence of Democratic Socialists of America in the United States. Key characteristics of these forces are:

- There is a new, emerging common sense about fairness and greater inclusion when it comes to various economic and social issues that is more progressive than in previous periods. For example, in the U.S., suburban women (some white, some people of color) are speaking out against voter suppression tactics targeting communities of color in Georgia. Progressive referenda like Amendment 4, restoring felons’ right to vote in Florida, and a minimum wage raise in Arkansas, have passed in red states, despite big Republican wins in major elected offices.

- Sometimes the movements or mobilizations have a solidly progressive character and sometimes it is more mixed. For example, Yellow Vests have elements of the left and right that are opposed to drastic austerity measures.
- Social democratic demands i.e. universal healthcare or living wages, are common.
- These forces are largely working class, people of color (POC) and oppressed nationality, including some urban, college-educated people.
- White, younger people who were middle strata bound or squeezed out of the middle strata, and older people who have some history of political action, are in motion, largely around social issues but some economic issues.
- Civilians are continuing to document egregious acts of the state-- filming children being ripped from their parents at the border or various acts of police aggression and violence—which fuels and spreads protest.
- Mass demonstrations often feature rallying, marching, shutting down of highways or buildings, or disrupting business or meetings.
- New layers of people and organizations are participating in the electoral arena.
- Women, trans people, gender non-conforming, and other oppressed genders are leaping into the public arena, going public about naming their oppression and the perpetrators of gender-based violence, coercion and micro-aggressions, and claiming leadership.
- Leadership or representation is more demographically diverse.
- Public sector unions and people who depend on publicly funded services are coming together in demands and actions, such as teachers' strikes.
- Non-unionized workers are organizing and making gains

SECTION 5 - DEVELOPMENTS IN THE U.S. ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

Before moving into an analysis of the enemy forces and the people's forces, we want to highlight some economic and political factors that inform our assessment of the balance of forces. Additional data that supports many points of analysis can be found in the End-notes.

SECTION 5.1 Current Characterizations of the Political Moment

Formulating these characterizations is not easy because of the volatility of the political moment. Some of these characterizations may change in the next three years.

The current moment is characterized by the following:

- The dominance and policies of the New Confederacy are still intact but are increasingly being contested at the local, state, and national levels resulting in more divided governments after the 2018 midterm.
- The threefold crisis of economy, ecology, and empire has created conditions that are impacting broader strata of people and causing them to further question the legitimacy of the current state of affairs as their standard and means of living continue to deteriorate.
- Austerity for the many, increased wealth for the elite, leading to growing economic and racial/ethnic/caste inequality.
- Elements of a neo-fascist⁴ trend have emerged but lack coherent leadership. This trend crescendoed with the events of Charlottesville as a mass collective phenomenon and since then, has played out in a more individual fashion. It is characterized by:
 - An irrationalism (the suspension and disregard of facts, rational thinking, or tactics) that drives an aggressive implementation of the New Confederacy's program, e.g. blatant denial of scientific evidence that proves climate change; and Trump's communications staff talking about "alternative facts."
 - An erosion of democratic norms and institutions.
 - Undermining the rule of law, i.e. Trump consistently calling the duly constituted Mueller investigation a "hoax" or "witchhunt"
 - Not respecting the independence of the judicial branch when court rulings go against him (Trump);
 - Attacking media critical of the regime with sentiments such as "CNN sucks" or repeatedly accusing most of the news media of peddling fake news;

⁴ We use the term neofascism here, not to assert that what we are experiencing has unique qualities as opposed to Fascism of the 1930's and 1940's but rather to talk about the character that it is taking given the different material conditions between now and then

- Trump's approval of physical violence by right-wing vigilantes against "others" (Blacks, Jews, etc) and against his opponents. His compatriots in the Republican Party don't meaningfully oppose or speak disapprovingly of Trump's stances, such as his refusal to condemn the Neo-Nazi attack in Charlottesville.
- Contending Camps within the Democratic and Republican Parties
 - Polarization within society is intensifying and deepening at every level. This most publicly has resulted in a sharpened distinction between the two camps of the Republican and Democratic parties and their corresponding bases. Camp "New" of the Republican Party includes the right-wing populists and some neo-fascists led by Trump; Camp "Old" of Republicans are the moderates like Susan Collins, the late John McCain, or the Bush's. Camp "New" of the Democratic Party includes the social democrats and progressives, a relatively small but growing coalition that started with the Sanders campaign in 2016. Camp "Old" are the deeply entrenched neoliberal Democrats like Nancy Pelosi or Chuck Schumer, or the conservative/centrist Democrats like Joe Donnelly. The formation of the camps *within* each party is intertwined with the growing polarization *between* the two parties. Within the Old Camp of the Democratic Party, there may be a further polarization between the conservative/centrists and the progressive-adjacent, who feel "We don't want THIS much inequality." It would be shortsighted of us to lump them all in as backward within the united front without a deeper collective understanding of their characteristics and their strategic significance.
 - Most people in the cohered right-wing forces (evangelicals, etc) of the New Confederacy are not neo-fascists but may support certain elements of the neo-fascist program. Sectors such as the Alt-Right and Neo-Nazis have gravitated to and represent the base of the neo-fascist trend. Younger women of color, young people in general, and sectors of the progressive white middle strata have gravitated to the social democratic wing of the DP.

- The “Old” camps find themselves squarely within deep contradictions. The Republican moderates must, on the one hand, play to and mobilize the neo-fascist elements of the party’s base in order to maintain the dominance of the New Confederacy, while simultaneously not upholding the most reactionary parts of its white supremacist agenda. Trying to wrestle dominance away from the New Confederacy, the neoliberal/moderate Dems need to play to and mobilize both their own progressive base, and some of the moderate supporters of the New Confederacy. Frequently these neoliberal Dems are committed to, support, or fail to oppose austerity policies and privatization, charter schools, and casualization of work.
- Forces Confronting the New Confederacy
 - Progressive actors are becoming radicalized and gravitating to organizations, solidarity and allyship symbols (e.g. the safety pin moment where white people attempted to show, albeit in a misguided way, solidarity with people of color), and other forms of political action. There are a growing number of social democrats, self-identified socialists or revolutionaries, and generally progressive people in their ranks. They recognize the dominance of the New Confederacy and see that the neo-liberal wing of the Democratic party has no program to deal with it. This growing bloc is coalescing around the need to contest for power within or in relationship to the electoral arena. They are still largely lacking coherent leadership and adequate political vehicles to move people and their ideas forward. But some of them are embracing tactics and approaches such as universal messaging (e.g. combining economic justice and racial equity in their messaging in a meaningful way) to build broader bases and coalitions.
 - A women’s upswell has been growing in response to the New Confederacy’s increasingly aggressive and possessive attitude and policies towards women. Overall this motion addresses power differences but generally doesn’t have a focus on structural change. Its main expressions have been the #MeToo movement, critical and decisive turnout for key Democratic races, and women’s marches. It has spurred a record-breaking number of

women to run for and win governing positions at the local, state, and national level.

SECTION 5.2 The Crises of Economy, Ecology and Empire /Political Legitimacy Intensify

For many years, The Road has held that the turmoil and volatility in our economy, our ecology and the US empire/political system are converging into a longer-term crisis of capitalist rule. Over the past three years, these crises have intensified into an ever-deepening political polarization, which made possible the Trump victory and a right-wing reaction that includes neo-fascists and militant white nationalists. At the same time, these crises have spurred the emergence of a broad resistance to Trump and Trumpism, and the growth of left forces who see the need to confront and bring down capitalism, white supremacy and cisheteropatriarchy. We will highlight the broad trends in each of these three areas of crisis.

The Crisis of Economy – Three Key Underlying Trends

The ‘recovery’ leaves the working class even farther behind.

We are in a new gilded age, with the widest economic disparities between the owning class and the working class since the roaring 20’s. Since the 1970s, incomes for the middle class and the poor have hardly grown at all, while incomes for the richest 1% almost tripled.¹ The US has twice as many billionaires than we did in 2008. ² CEOs make as much in less than one day as average workers make in a year. High profits in the financial sector have fueled housing speculation, making home ownership and even rentals out of reach for workers, pushing them out of their neighborhoods, displaced by wealthy investors, developers, and (mostly white) high-earners.³ Unions have been broken and their bargaining power eroded, so that even with tighter labor markets, wages have not gone up for most U.S. workers.⁴ For many reasons, such as technological displacement and corporations taking jobs abroad in search of cheaper labor, US workers can no longer expect a rising standard of living.

With the loss of manufacturing jobs and an economy based in the financial sector, while unemployment numbers vary, underemployment is endemic, making work precarious

and good benefits a thing of the past. Ten years after the crash, un- and underemployment persists, especially among young adults and in Black communities, where unemployment continues to be four times the national average.⁵ Racial and gender discrimination and job segregation have not been erased, so that white family income still surpasses that of non-white populations.⁵ That said, white male workers have seen the erosion of their economic privilege as good jobs evaporate, making white men without a college degree the most at risk for suicide, or “deaths of despair.”⁶ People of color and all working class people regardless of race have common interest in challenging the neoliberal economic structure.

Race and Gender Disparities Intensify

Fifty years after the U.S. civil rights movement, people of color still lag far behind whites in economic status. In fact, the median African-American family still earns about 56 cents to the white family’s dollar, the same as before the historic Civil Rights Acts. And it’s worse than that, since the (non) earnings of the incarcerated, disproportionately African Americans, are not counted in the averages.

In a capitalist United States, wealth is a better indicator of economic security than income. Income allows you to get by, but wealth is what enables you to get ahead - have a savings account, go to college, put a down payment on a house. If you have no wealth, or financial assets, then should you lose your job or suffer a health crisis, there is nothing to fall back on. The most common way to acquire wealth is - to inherit it. And because of the policies and practices of this white supremacist na-

While ‘income gaps’ look at earnings, ‘wealth gaps’ look at all the assets and debts that individuals and families have accumulated. **The racial wealth gap** is the enormous gulf between what the average white U.S. family owns and what people of color—and especially Black Americans—own. It embodies the legacy of stolen Black labor, land, wages, ideas, opportunity and homes.

tion, people of color were denied the opportunities to build wealth afforded to whites over many generations, from homesteading, to free college education in state schools, to farm subsidies, to favoritism in employment, to low-interest mortgages, to defense from unscrupulous mortgage brokers in the 2008 recession, to help recovering from disasters.

Due to the piling up of all these disadvantages, a typical African-American family owns only a dime to the white family's dollar; \$17,000 to \$170,000; Latinx have only slightly greater assets, \$20,000 at the median. Other non-white families, including Asian Pacific Islander and Native Americans with the caveats mentioned above, have less than whites, but more than black or Latinx families.⁷ Single women of color, where gender is also a factor, have nothing to fall back on: Black women and Latinas had only \$100 and \$120 saved. That's the median, meaning that half have less than that; many have debt rather than wealth. Black and Brown oppressed gender people continue to have significantly less wealth despite contributing immensely to society by paid and unpaid labor.

Discrimination in hiring, housing and access to medical care have always contributed to lower incomes for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ+) people, and these LGBTQ+ income gaps are finally being counted. LGBTQ+ people report lower incomes and higher rates of poverty and unemployment, and greater vulnerability to homelessness and food insecurity, than the general population. LGBTQ+ youth, a growing part of the U.S. population, are especially vulnerable to financial crisis.⁶

Cuts to public services have created deeper levels of instability and insecurity—and the potential for broader alliances.

We continue to see state and federal cuts to the public services that have been a lifeline for communities struggling to struggling to survive, facing stagnant wages, unstable employment, eviction and foreclosure, the economic impact of mass incarceration and increasing debt of all kinds⁸. The number of Americans receiving food stamps is 40% higher than in 2008, despite the Republican Congress' cuts to this program.⁹ The Republican controlled Congress also cut Medicaid and Section 8 housing vouchers and approved deeper cuts over the next 10 years.¹⁰ The Trump tax cuts and military budget increases have laid the groundwork for deficit hawks to demand ever more radical cuts to social programs.¹¹

The Crisis of Ecology

Climate change and ecological devastation, two planet-wide processes emerging from global capitalist political economy and its imperialist support structures, pose existential threats to natural systems and therefore to humanity as a whole. The most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates that people on earth have a roughly 12-year window to make the energy production and carbon capture changes required to keep increases of average global temperatures below 1.5 degrees Celsius. Staying at or below 1.5°C requires slashing global greenhouse gas emissions 45 percent below 2010 levels by 2030, and reaching net zero by 2050. Meeting these conditions is fundamental for human survival.

Capital's reliance on the extraction and consumption of fossil fuels to minimize costs of production and facilitate transportation for its global logistical capacity are the primary drivers of climate change through the emissions of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The current political regime in the United States is accelerating these destructive processes through economic policy initiatives that deepen national reliance on extraction and production of fossil fuels, despite general average cost parity of non-extractive renewables. The aim is to subsidize profitable production using current infrastructure, so as to circumnavigate the tendency of the rate of profit to fall that is encountered with investment into new technologies. It is also an initiative to bolster support for the New Confederacy with its base of capitalists, middle strata and workers tied to extractive energy production.

Factors like resource extraction, fossil fuels, deforestation and agricultural practices contribute to the Metabolic Rift

In addition to fossil fuel production and resource extraction, capitalist agricultural production is complicit in widespread ecological devastation, measured in loss of biodiversity and reduction in total biomass reproduction at every time scale of contemporary history. The conversion of dense carbon sinks, such as forests, into agricultural land and the degradation of soil, biologically rich with microbial life, from general overuse and reliance on fertilizer, reduce the planet's natural ability to store carbon in biophysical systems. Agriculture is also a major secondary contributor to global climate change, with methane production via animal husbandry compounding the effect of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Fossil fuel extraction and consumption combined with industrialized food

systems contribute overwhelmingly to what is known the “metabolic rift” - a term describing the differential of flux between carbon (and other life-essential molecules) stored in biophysical systems via biological processes and those released into the atmosphere and aqueous environments via industrial processes. Under industrial capitalism, most things that humans create, build, consume (or not) and eventually discard-- become waste or pollution. They don't re-enter the earth's natural cycle, thus causing a rift in the metabolism of humans and nature.

Biophysical Limits of these efforts and New Confederate's Reaction

Capitalism is encountering a biophysical limit to its capacity for social reproduction. These antagonistic contradictions expose a strategic weak point for capitalism as whole and in particular for the New Confederacy. Millions of people, especially in the global South and the US South, experience climate and ecological catastrophes in the present, not as a distant future. This creates new political opportunities for revolutionaries to both articulate the necessity of overthrowing capitalism and to organize the forces that will form the basis of a socialist society.

The fossil fuel extraction industry is a key component of the New Confederate bloc, so defeating the New Confederacy is a necessary step toward dismantling extractive capitalism. Over the past two decades, this industry has expended significant resources into both policy-making and propaganda efforts. The policies are designed to solidify fossil fuels subsidization by the state, and to prevent any subsidization of the development and integration of non-extractive renewable energy into “the grid”. While forces operating at the federal level dismantle regulatory agencies and scale back programs supporting renewable energy, state-level New Confederacy forces work to create incentives and remove barriers for energy and extractive industries. Private and quasi-public utilities are primarily driven towards purchasing cheap energy, so this situation delays the adoption of renewables, which have reached price parity but not overtaken coal and gas. This artificially downward pressure on the costs of fossil fuels thereby facilitates their continued use, while also allowing the nuclear industry to continue its dominant position as an alternative source.

The propaganda attempts to develop the cultural and ideological fixation needed to build mass support for the continued existence of long-outmoded extractive energy production. A key cluster of the targeted masses is within the US South and Appalachia in particular, with its historical reliance on coal production. Additionally, there are new clusters of affected working-class people in the underdeveloped regions of the Midwest US, where the natural gas boom has been concentrated.

The New Confederacy seeks to strengthen its grip on these masses of people by attempting to align their interests with those of extractive capitalism.

Imperialism, the Impending Limits of Extractive Capitalism Creates Opportunities for the Left

Imperialism is crucial to propping up the hegemony of extractive capitalism. The US and other core nations subsidize oppressive political regimes across the global south in order to lower costs of energy commodities production and to ensure logistical capacity for globalized industries. In particular, the US client-state Saudi Arabia has been given *carte blanche* to engage in genocide, via its war in Yemen, to secure ports in the Gulf of Aden for the shipment of oil. Additionally, the tempo of offensive operations of the US empire in Latin America has increased with the rightward shifts in its regional political configuration. For instance, Colombia and Brazil are deepening their client status by aiding in regime change operations in Venezuela to help US corporations secure strategic oil reserves and production infrastructure there.

On the other hand, many openings are emerging for new mass organizing on the left, and for breaking masses of people away from liberal strategic dead-ends. A key opportunity lies within the potential to synthesize analysis and action that builds unity between forces from environmental movements with those from organized labor, oppressed nationalities, and marginalized people. A significant mass of ecologically-minded and action-oriented people in the US are present within the People's Climate Movement and the Climate Justice Alliance, which have led marches and direct actions to raise awareness and demand action on climate catastrophe. Combining the direct-action tactics with policy demands, the Sunrise Movement has emerged as a powerful force and has pioneered the call to implement a "Green New Deal," augmenting the power of left-leaning elected

officials and forcing these existential questions of climate into centrist or neoliberal spheres of influence.

On the left, eco-socialist trends are emerging within the DSA and other socialist organizations, in particular adding a leftward pole into the spectrum of possibilities contained within the demand for a Green New Deal. Additionally, newly activated political energies among scientists and technology workers, in response to state-institutionalized ignorance of scientific research and analysis, combined with downward class mobility and precarities caused by the disintegration of research institutions, can be seen in movements like March for Science and left formations like Science for the People. Building unity and aligning these forces with those that represent masses of exploited, oppressed, and marginalized peoples will be crucial to defeating the New Confederacy, capitalism, and imperialism.

The Crisis of Empire and Political Legitimacy

A crisis of empire deepens with China continuing to gain strength as an economic and political rival to the U.S. globally, and Russia contesting the US militarily, mainly through proxies (See Section VI). This has meant more leverage for China and Russia to take stands or policy measures in response to US foreign policy tactics that impact us domestically, such as the trade war with China that resulted in hurting the agriculture industry in Louisiana, Alabama and other key Republican states.

Overall, the Trump Presidency has heightened the crisis of political legitimacy. Growing numbers of people across the political spectrum have come to question whether political leaders represent their interests. Increasing reliance on voter suppression, defunding of public institutions, with police repression at home and military intervention abroad, feed the mistrust. There is wide speculation about: the inadequacy and ineptitude of the federal judicial system and the intelligence bureaucracy; fraud; and treason. ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council) and other rightist forces have called for a 2nd Constitutional Convention to revise the U.S. Constitution. Liberals and progressives—and a majority of young people—condemn the Electoral College, gerrymandering, voter suppression and other attacks on voting rights.

More people have become aware of the intersection of voter suppression and race, especially evident in the South, and its impact on elections. They have seen firsthand how strong Democratic candidates like Stacey Abrams in Georgia (who spoke out against voter suppression and garnered high support from women of all colors in their 30s and 40s) and Andrew Gillum in Florida were defeated through the suppression and disenfranchisement of voters of color, especially Black voters.

SECTION 6 - THE BALANCE OF FORCES: THE ENEMY

The New Confederacy is still the main enemy of the people

We believe that it remains correct to identify the New Confederacy as the main enemy of the people and the dominant force shaping the U.S. politically. In the past three years, the New Confederacy has gotten stronger, and the forces comprising it have shifted somewhat. Equally important, the forces contesting New Confederate rule have multiplied and are beginning to consolidate. Race privilege is the fundamental appeal of the Trump united front to white workers and the white middle strata, followed by misogyny and the not-inaccurate portrayal of Democrats like Clinton as reeking of class condescension.

The New Confederacy is the white united front that, building up over the past 40 years, has used white supremacy and austerity to rally white middle strata and white workers around the leadership of the most reactionary sectors of capital. The Republican Party is its political instrument.

Naming the New Confederacy as our main enemy was initially met with skepticism by some, who pointed to the leading role that corporate Democrats play in moving a neoliberal agenda in many cities and some states: outsourcing jobs, giving handouts to developers, shrinking school budgets and protecting racist police.¹² But our analysis has won wider support as the events of the past two years have made it very clear that the New Confederacy is growing and has captured the political initiative.

The Trump presidency has exposed the New Confederates' role in moving the overall political terrain to the right, framing the issues and setting the terms of debate within which

neoliberal Democrats maneuver. New Confederate representatives stake positions effectively, using the language of right-wing dog whistle and outright racist language/tropes to make “us” and “them” distinctions that capture the public’s imagination. They range from the characterization of those opposed to the appointment of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court as “an angry left-wing mob” to the explicit characterization of Latinx immigrants as “invaders” and inner-city neighborhoods of black and brown people as “rat infested.” Consequently, all Democrats, from neoliberals to insurgents—have had to define themselves in relation to that framing.

Trump has shone a spotlight on why we must have a strategy that centers on constructing a broad united front that practices building independent political power and creating independent political organizations, where and when possible. Independent organizations are the most effective and resilient expression of that power to take on the New Confederates and the local, state and national systems they superintend, with a much longer time horizon and an understanding that cycles of backlash will accompany every advance. This strategy also necessitates keeping the most backward elements of the neoliberal Democrats (e.g. Joe Donnelly, U.S. Senator from Indiana) in our sights and targeting them when we can, while remaining mindful that they are a part of the united front to defeat the enemy and that we must utilize them when necessary. Section V of this document will assess some of the progressive and left electoral strategies that Liberation Road, Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), Working Families Party and others are using to do just that.

The mid-term elections of 2018 resulted in gains in impeding the dominance of the New Confederacy at the local, state, and national governing levels with Democratic Party victories in key areas of government. The Democrats had a net gain of five triplexes⁷ (now holding 17) in previously divided governments. Republicans saw a net loss of four triplexes (now holding 18) in previously divided governments (in one state triplex flipped from

Triplexes are states in which three of the top positions in the executive branch (Governor, Attorney General and Secretary of and State) are controlled by one political party.

Trifectas are states in which both legislative branches and the Governor’s office are controlled by one political party.

⁷ https://ballotpedia.org/State_government_triplexes

Republican to Democrat). Triplexes are significant because the Attorney General is the chief law enforcement officer in the state and the chief legal advisor. They are empowered to issue legal advice to the legislature and state agencies, prosecute what they determine to be violations of the law controls (conversely, they can choose not to prosecute), and represents the states in legal disputes. The Secretary of State controls various aspects of the election process (voting procedures and voter eligibility). Democrats saw a net gain of six trifectas (now holding 14) and all were states that had previously had divided government. Republicans saw a net loss of four (now holding 22) and all four became states with divided government. The number of divided state governments saw a net loss of three (total of 13).

It is important to note that the New Confederacy's programs can be and is carried out even without a Republican trifecta, where Republican elected officials are replaced by neoliberal Democrats who ran on a similar platform. The New Confederacy uses its power at the state level to: erode and provide barriers to democratic participation; strengthen its power at the national level; increase repression through the criminal justice system and law enforcement; and enact social and economic programs that enable accelerated corporate dominance and wealth extraction from the earth and the increasingly dispossessed. Moderate/conservative Democrats that uphold a neoliberal agenda contest for power and use power towards the same objectives but to a slightly lesser degree. At their core, the New Confederacy, moderate/conservative Democrats, and the sectors of capital that support them, are driven by the neoliberal ideology: the free market is good and beneficial to all sectors; "too many" regulations on free markets (which would result in protections for the working-class) are harmful to the free market and thereby the prosperity of the ruling class; government should play a lesser role or no role in providing an economic safety net.

At the federal level, with a Republican-controlled Senate and a Democrat-controlled House we can expect to keep seeing stalemates on most legislative decisions, and occasionally, significantly different stances among the Democrats along the continuum of moderate/conservative to progressive.

SECTION 6.1 Trump has become the Face of the New Confederacy

Trump's campaign and presidency have helped unite a white nationalist Christian right-wing populist bloc around the demonization of and attacks on immigrants, peoples of color, women, environmentalists, Jews, Muslims, queer and trans people.

These attacks range from the abuse of power by police and other law enforcement agencies, the gutting of public services, and the staging of right-wing events with the intent to cause physical harm as happened in Charlottesville, to individual shooter attacks on non-white or non-Christian places of worship and pipe bomb mailings to elected officials and public figures who openly oppose Trump. We can assume that this violence will continue to be a key feature of the New Confederacy in order to intimidate and destabilize our communities and movements. While there was significant white working-class support for Trump, it is important to reject portrayals of the Trump base as primarily white working-class men. More Trump supporters were white middle-class men and overall Trump voters had higher income than Clinton voters.

While the Trump Presidency has given the New Confederacy and its political instrument, the Republican Party, greater power to carry out its austerity, cisheteropatriarchal, and white supremacy agenda at the federal level, it does not seem that the New Confederacy yet has the full backing of all sectors of big capital. Trump, and the neo-fascist trend of the New Confederacy, are not even fully embraced by the moderate sectors of the Republican Party. These sectors tend to support him in so far as they need his base to mobilize for them, and his ability to help them carry out their agenda. However, there is still some willingness to among Republican party members to speak out against his cavalier tactics to achieve their overall programmatic goals and the constant undermining of individuals, federal agencies, and policies of the party. This rarely results in taking action (legislatively or otherwise) against Trump because the party, largely speaking, and its bases are very consolidated around him. The political will to break party lines is practically non-existent even when it means individual Republican members voting for things that they don't agree with.

SECTION 6.2 Cisheteropatriarchy has come to the fore as a Third Pillar of the New Confederacy and a Focus of the Resistance

One element that we underestimated in our 2015-2016 analysis is the extent to which cisheteropatriarchy would become a third pillar of the New Confederacy. The New Confederates have used anti-women and anti-queer rhetoric and policy fights to win over the Christian right and fuel the resentment and rage of their majority-heterosexual-white-male base. While this is not a new feature of their program, it is an exacerbated one. Policy and governance examples include education policies that deny trans peoples' rights such as the revived ban on trans people in the military; protections for male students accused of rape; judiciary selection to narrow or eliminate reproductive rights; imposition of work requirements on recipients of Medicaid and food stamps; and the egregious anti-abortion bills. This strategy has cost Trump some support among women, especially white women in his base that turned out for him in the highest numbers (47% voted for him) in 2016.¹³ But most women in Trump's base, even if they might disagree with some aspects of his agenda, have shown little indication of breaking with the New Confederacy at the ballot box.

We also did not anticipate the large role that cisheteropatriarchy would play in growing the anti-Trump resistance, given that 41% of all women voters and a majority of white women voted for Trump (while only a quarter of Latinas and hardly any Black women did).¹⁴ On January 21, 2017-- the day after his Inauguration--more than 3 million women marched against Trump in Washington DC and in cities across the U.S.

Women and queer and trans people have continued to play a leading role in organizing against the Trump administration on a wide range of issues, including immigration, health care, and voting rights. Leadership from Black, Latina, Native American, Muslim, queer and transgender organizers has helped to lift up critical race, gender and class demands within even mainstream anti-Trump groups and marches.

On the electoral front, women are not only raising money and knocking on doors, but a record-breaking number of women ran for, and were elected to, office in 2018, including

for Congress. This includes women running in response to Trump and New Confederacy's racist and cisheteropatriarchal rhetoric and program—progressive/left women like Summer Lee and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez—as well as less progressive women brought in by Democratic Party leaders to 'diversify' the Party.¹⁵

SECTION 7 - BALANCE OF FORCES: THE PEOPLE'S FORCES

Before moving into more detailed assessments of the anti-Trump united front, the Black and workers' movements and the left/progressive electoral movements, we will share some observations on trends in the people's movements, including the left and socialist elements.

7.1 Advances and Challenges among People's Movements

- 1. As Republicans have shifted right, the people's forces have grown and overall shifted left.** In the face of increased attacks by the Trump administration and an increasingly emboldened right, the organized people's forces have been growing--and growing more militant. More groups are going on the offensive against attacks, organizing direct actions and openly defying laws. Immigrant rights groups harbor undocumented people facing deportation in sanctuary cities, states, churches and schools. Black activists take down Confederate flags and remove monuments and challenge the criminal justice system in new and exciting ways. Women, transgender and disabled people occupy committee rooms and troll elected officials to protest issues like the gender-restrictive bathroom bills, the attacks on reproductive rights, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Teachers and other public-school staff march and strike for public education funding in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Arizona, North Carolina, Colorado, Los Angeles, and Kentucky. Young people walk out of their schools across the country to protest the right wing's refusal to address gun violence.¹⁶ They are also creating a *nascent* global movement of youth to hold their elders accountable for climate disaster.
- 2. Mass Protests Are a Recurring Feature.** The Trump administration's years have also been a time of frequent and continuing mass protests that draw out—and are

often led by-- middle forces like civil rights advocates, mainstream women's groups, youth, and liberal congregations. These protests cover a wide range of issues: women's reproductive rights, family separation and caging of children at the border, gun violence, Muslim bans, anti-Semitism, environmental justice, police violence, just to name a few.

- 3. Movements led by women of color, queer and transgender people, immigrant youth and low-wage workers have raised expectations for other working-class movements.** Analyses and strategies that start from the intersections of class, race and gender—as lived by the frontline communities that lead those movements--have been defining features of the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), the Climate Justice Alliance, the Domestic Workers' Alliance and the DREAMer groups, Mijente, Dream Activists and United We Dream.¹⁷

In the past three years, these groups have become more visible and have raised expectations that even mass protests like the Women's March and the #MeToo wave of actions will include people of all backgrounds and will raise race, gender, class, queer and other intersectional demands. The Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) 2016 policy platform, "A Vision for Black Lives: Policy Demands for Black Power, Freedom and Justice" raised the bar for advanced movements, modeling a deeply intersectional analysis and strategy. In Spring 2017, MB4L created the Majority, "to expand and strengthen multi-racial, multi-sector and local long-term organizing capacity to strengthen the fight for justice, freedom and the right to live fully, with dignity and respect for all people."¹⁸ A revived Poor People's Campaign (PPC) also puts forward an intersectional vision: uniting "tens of thousands of people across the country to challenge the evils of systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, ecological devastation and the nation's distorted morality"—although the PPC is larger and led by more centrist forces than the Majority.¹⁹

- 4. The Climate Justice Alliance, the Domestic Workers Alliance and DREAMer groups have each become more visible and more of a leading force** as the more mainstream movements they worked alongside-- climate, labor and

immigrant rights movements—have found their standard tactics less effective and their appeal narrowed. The fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline brought to public attention how deeply intertwined indigenous sovereignty is with climate justice and how climate crisis is as rooted in white supremacy as it is in capitalism and imperialism. By winning and enforcing legislation that requires overtime pay for shifts longer than nine hours, immigrant women members of Domestic Workers Alliance (DWA) are reforming an industry that has long resisted any regulation.

- 5. More organizations and networks are trying to integrate power building through electoral work with base building** in a way that goes well beyond the traditional non-governmental organizations (NGO) and organized labor’s ‘Get Out the Vote’ operations. M4BL has created an Electoral Justice Program to build grassroots Black political strategy and capacity.²⁰ Affiliates of the Right to the City Alliance and People’s Action have also built 501(c)4 sister organizations to allow them to engage in more electoral work. And for us, one of the most promising developments is the 2017 launch of the State Power Caucus, a network of statewide Independent Political Organizations (IPOs) that aim to:

support, assist, and accelerate the development of increasingly powerful progressive, anti-right state-based united fronts in at least 15 states. These will look different in different states, but at their core these formations seek to build an organized, multiracial, mass political base with the power to first tip the balance of power in the state; defeat the right and become a major force in its own right; then establish a progressive electoral majority; eventually build the larger base needed to wield governing power.²¹

Founders include the New Virginia Majority, California Calls, Minnesotans for a Fair Economy and the Florida Statewide Alignment Group. The Statewide IPO initiative strongly aligns with Liberation Road’s strategy and reflects our understanding that to build power, the left needs to expand from issue-based battles to struggles that cohere social blocs around an alternative vision for governing, beginning at the local level but oriented to building state-level power.

6. **One of the most important features of the Trump era is the emergence of a left electoral movement** that runs progressives and sometimes socialists against Republicans and corporate Democrats all over the country, and which is winning important victories and establishing independent electoral machines. This movement will be discussed in more detail in Section 4 C.
7. **The swell of online organizing** on everything from issues to elections to impeachment has created a tension for our movements. MoveOn and other networks are engaging many people through individual efforts outside of movements--petitions, emails and phone calls—which risk de-emphasizing the importance of building groups and movements. This raises a question about our ability to use digital and other strategies to re-center the need to build movements and organizations.
8. **There is little visible anti-war movement, but calls to cut military spending and to terminate “endless wars” are increasing.** Despite a high level of continuing military aggression in Iraq, Afghanistan and beyond, and a few small successes, no mass anti-war movement has emerged in the past three years and none is on the horizon.

There has been growing movement activity targeting the military budget as a source of public funds that should be shifted to meet people’s needs for housing, health care, food and education. ²²

9. **The international solidarity movement that has grown and become more visible** in the past three years is the Palestinian solidarity movement, which is anchored by Muslim youth and other youth of color with radical Jewish ally groups like If Not Now and Jewish Voices for Peace. Many cities, universities and congregations have passed Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) policies. It is a measure of this movement’s success that it has provoked pro-Israeli New Confederate groups to introduce legislation prohibiting BDS resolutions and has led to some campuses restricting pro-Palestinian organizing.

SECTION 7.2 The Left is Growing, and Socialism is Coming out of the Shadows— but We Are Still Vastly Outnumbered and Not Organized as a Political Bloc

Increasing numbers of people are identifying with socialism. Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign made socialism and social democracy part of open public discussion and found receptive audiences at both ends of the generational spectrum—the former 60s and 70s activists, as well as younger people born toward the end of the Cold War and in the wake of the 1991 dissolution of the USSR. Sanders began to give shape to a political and economic terrain that had shifted left in its ideology due to rising right-wing populism and the constant crisis of neoliberalism. Additionally, the inadequate and subpar response of neoliberal Democrats to the political moment and material needs of their base, created a vacuum that Sanders stepped into and others have jumped in as well.

The social democratic ideals have become a signifier of an alternative to the neoliberal wing of the party. The result is a developing left populist current interested in greater inclusion and participation for everyday people, centered on equity, fairness, and redistribution of wealth. This is one reason why the favorability of unions in US polls is at a 15-year high, even though union density is the lowest ever in the US. For the vast majority of people, the ideals of social democracy have not translated to an identity at an individual or group level.

A significant wing of the neoliberal Democrats are identified as backward because of their commitment to neoliberalism and austerity despite their emphatic rejection of the unapologetic race-centered, reactionary social program of the New Confederacy. The progressive sectors of the population had begun to and call out the contradictory practices of that leading coalition of the party. Furthermore, these sectors have started coalescing around a social democratic program (e.g. Medicare for All, minimum wage of \$15/hour, etc.). Although the social democratic elected officials are few their influence exceeds their numbers; they are likely to grow in the next three years as more young people and people over 60 gravitate to the relative fairness of their program and vision. The social democratic forces are also positioning themselves to contest for leadership and hegemony of the party, not just winning over the hearts and minds of certain sections of the base of the party. “The Squad” (Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, Ilhan Omar of Minnesota,

Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts, and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan) has become the face of this force that is challenging the moderate Democrats over immigration, climate change, and healthcare policy. Along with Bernie Sanders, and the social and workers movements that have inspired them, AOC et al are creating an alternative political vision and agenda that is further agitating the identity crisis of the Democratic Party.

Some socialist organizations and publications are growing. Since Trump's election, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) has grown from a few thousand to over 56,000 members, and some of its members are running for election openly as socialists. *Jacobin*, part of a revival of interest in Marxism among young intellectuals, has a circulation of 40,000 and over 310,000 Facebook followers. ^[21] Even though socialist organizations—and particularly DSA--have grown and become much more visible through work in elections, in a country of 325 million, we are still a tiny force.

While we are far from being out of the long period when foundation-funded NGOs have been the primary organizational form for social movements, growing numbers of professional organizers and base constituents in the social justice non-profit sector are embracing socialist ideals and beginning to identify as socialists. Many of the fighters and organizations live and organize at the intersections of race, class, and gender and are deeply impacted by the calamitous agenda of the New Confederacy, neoliberal Democrats, and the often-backward race and gender line and practices of some other progressive and socialist sectors.

Additionally, these young socialists are beginning to look beyond union and NGO staff positions as the place to do their political work, looking to rank and file union and community organizations as places they can organize. Socialists are more engaged in electoral work, and Section 6 ("The Growing Progressive/Left Electoral Movement") will discuss how various socialist groups are approaching elections and what trends appear to be emerging. However, the socialist left is still disparate, relatively weak, and has yet to coalesce firmly around a vision and programmatic agenda (Health Care is a Human Right, Housing is a Human Right) that uses non-reformist reforms (for example, Medicare for All) to advance a socialist agenda.

SECTION 7.3 The Anti-Trump United Front is the Current Form of the United Front Against the New Confederacy

The anti-Trump united front is the particular form that the united front against the New Confederacy takes at the moment. The united front against the New Confederacy represents a step towards the kind of united front that we will need for many years to come—one that will have as its core the strategic alliance of the multinational working class and national liberation movements.

The united front is a method and strategic principle that allows communists to build the broadest possible forces (made up of oppressed nationalities, the working class, and their allies) against the narrowest target at any given time.

The three pillars of the New Confederate program (white supremacy, austerity and misogyny), necessitates developing criteria for identifying advanced, intermediate and backward elements among the people's forces to guide our efforts to build the anti-Trump united front. These assessments reflect who people and groups are--their class, race and gender composition and leadership—as well as what they do, what they organize for, not just their understanding of the world.

These criteria are helpful not only for assessing the people's forces in a national united front against the New Confederacy, but also for assessing forces in local or state fights.

- **Advanced forces** are with us in opposing both austerity and white supremacy and usually have a strong and centered anti-cisheteropatriarchal, pro-women, and pro-LGBTQ+ line, identity, organizing, and practice. They form part of the *long-term revolutionary strategic alliance* between the multinational working class and the oppressed nationality liberation movements that Liberation Road is committed to building. We work with them as strategic allies.
- **Intermediate forces** are with us in opposing either austerity or white supremacy, but not both. They can have a centered anti-cisheteropatriarchal, pro-women, and pro LGBTQ line but more consistently fall short in that translating to practice, organizing, and identity. Because these forces are so diverse, there are some that we will work with as strategic allies but there are more of them that will be tactical allies.

- **Backward forces** are with us in opposing either austerity or white supremacy but are actively organizing against us on the other axis. They tend to be conditionally supportive of women and are on the spectrum from being conditionally supportive of the LGBTQ+ community to being openly homo- and trans-phobic. The backward are a sector that we work with as tactical allies, particularly in flash points that bring us together in common opposition to an enemy tactic.

Drawing these distinctions is very complex, easy to over-simplify, and subject to constant revision, and the boundaries between the sectors are often blurry. Organizations and movements and the situations that shape them are not static, and even different local chapters of one national group can have a very different political character. With those cautions, we'll try to sketch out below how we see the three sectors of the people's forces.

Advanced forces in the Anti-Trump United Front

In addition to the Black liberation movement where Liberation Road (formerly, Freedom Road Socialist Organization) has concentrated much of its work, other advanced elements that are actively opposing both racism and austerity include:

- immigrant movements organizing against Trump's ramped up deportations, for sanctuary and a pathway to citizenship;
- anti-displacement/renters' movements, which have been organizing around rent control and other non-market solutions, and which are deeply rooted in communities of color and largely led by women of color;
- climate and environmental justice groups that have an intersectional analysis that informs their world view about ecology and climate
- organizations of women of color and working-class women that fight against sexual violence or harassment, and for women and trans reproductive rights, and for a broad range of political and economic rights
- youth organizing to end the school-to-prison pipeline, the movements and organizations opposing the prison-industrial complex, and campaigns for bail reduction or elimination;

- the movement to defend and support Muslims, and for Palestinian self-determination;
- Asian-American Pacific Islander and Latinx groups organizing for racial and economic equity and in support of the Black liberation movement
- campaigns that address and draw links among a range of issues such as racism, austerity, militarism etc.
- LGBTQ+ groups that are focused on organizing against violence, lifting up trans issues and other issues important to queer people of color and other working-class LGBTQ+ people;
- While most unions are intermediate forces, a growing number of teachers' unions in majority African American and Latinx cities are advanced forces.
- It is important to note that there are also many unorganized forces among the advanced. Bringing these oppressed nationalities and other working-class people into the organizations we are building is a key part of The Road's strategy for building political power.

Intermediate Forces in the Anti-Trump United Front

Organized intermediate forces are groups are with us in fighting either austerity or white supremacy, but not both. Many middle forces have joined the anti-Trump organizing and mobilizations, swelling the women's marches and the airport protests of the Muslim ban. They have organized sanctuary cities and supported candidates of color and Democratic women of all races. The visible intermediate forces are mostly organized by middle-class policy groups, which have no working-class base or even aspirations to get a working-class base, and therefore are not at the core of the strategic alliance of the united front. These forces and groups include:

- mainstream, middle-class women's groups fighting against sexual violence and harassment and restriction of reproductive rights, and for women's electoral representation. As stated earlier, women organizing against the Trump agenda have become more visible and often more militant. More often than in the past, it has responded

positively to calls from Black, Latina, Middle Eastern and other working-class women and trans people to be included in shaping events and agendas

- groups and individuals who promote a class-reductionist form of socialism that negates the racialized and gendered nature of U.S. capitalism and the critical role of national liberation movements in building the forces for socialism;
- sections of labor movement, especially the unions that are aggressively fighting anti-immigrant attacks, and the service sector workers who serve working class communities (often communities of color) and are actively fighting against austerity and for access to public education and health care.
- many liberal and progressive Christian, Jewish and Muslim congregations have played strong roles in organizing against deportations. Many Unitarians, Quakers and other progressive Protestants, as well as Reform Jews, are active in efforts such as the Poor People's Campaign.

Backward Forces among the People's Forces

The backward forces we most often have to deal with—in and out of the united front--align with us on fighting either racism or austerity but are organizing against us on the other element. They include:

- conservative trade unions, including most of the construction trades that work hard to exclude people of color and women, support gentrification projects as a source of jobs, or defend extractive industries as a source of jobs with little or no attention to environmental and sovereignty consequences;
- some middle- and upper-class people of color who actively support centrist or conservative Democratic Party structures and neoliberal policies.

A final word about the anti-Trump resistance: while resistance has increased, there is not nearly enough popular understanding of how capitalism and white supremacy work (in deed, US capitalism has been built on the foundation of white supremacy), and what kind

and scale of systemic change is needed. There has been some, but again not nearly enough, movement beyond resistance to building independent political power to take down the New Confederacy.

SECTION 8 - DEEPER ANALYSIS OF THREE MOVEMENTS OUR STRATEGY HAS PRIORITIZED

SECTION 8.1 Trends and Developments in the Black Liberation Movement: an analysis from Liberation Road's Black Organizing Commission

The Black liberation movement in the United States is in the midst of protracted struggle. For the first time in decades, the struggle for Black freedom, power and dignity has captured national attention. The New Confederacy, governing at its political apex, has made the defeat and destruction of organized Black struggle central to the maintenance of its rule. There are also repressive state agencies (FBI, CIA) and local white supremacist & ethno-nationalist counter-revolutionaries that have attacked, maligned and assaulted our movements.

What follows is a brief outline of the historical origins of the current renewed Black liberation movement and an analysis that centers this new movement for Black life as fundamental to the destruction of the rule of the New Confederacy.

Political Moment

The Black freedom movement has shifted and changed since the imposition of Donald Trump. Larger numbers of Black organizations are experimenting with organizing projects that are contesting in elections, and with the Democratic Party. An increasing number of young Black people and Black organizations are becoming clear about the need for some sort of engagement with political power. This has contributed to a change in how younger activists are relating to and thinking about Black liberation work that happens in the context of these mass organizations. A growing number of organizations, like DREAM Defenders and BYP100, are explicitly identifying as anti-capitalist.

Further, there has been a qualitative shift in the intergenerational organizing of this period. There is a trend toward different generations working together. Folks in their 60s to folks

in their 20s are collaborating and sharing knowledge, and are all around more respectful of each other's contributions. This differs markedly from even five years ago.

The new organizations formed in this period--BYP100, #BlackLivesMatter, DREAM Defenders, Million Hoodies--helped to deepen the revitalized mass struggle for Black freedom, making it more visible, direct and unapologetic. Some of the most advanced activists and groups coalesced in the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), which has created a platform for how to build racial and economic justice.

Within Black movement, political differences on the relevance and utility of organization, leadership and unified program lead different sections of movement to different conclusions about the question of political power. Some Black activists have tended to dismiss electoral work because it easily becomes mired in reformism, not recognizing that the fight for governing power--and the exercise of it-- is an important aspect of the long-term struggle for social transformation (The insurgent campaigns of Gillum and Abrams have helped to change some movement leaders' minds.)

Central to the successes of this resurgent Black freedom struggle is the leadership and vision of Black women, Black queer and Black trans organizers. The struggle against racial capitalist dictatorship will not succeed without the nurtured and rigorous development of the leadership of oppressed genders, in defiance of the vicious counter-revolution conducted by the New Confederacy under the leadership of Donald Trump.

New Confederate Reaction

In this context, the New Confederate forces have made the defeat and destruction of our renewed Black mass movements central to the maintenance of their rule. Counter-intelligence agents have targeted and infiltrated organizations, labeled organizers "Black Identity Extremists" and have found support among key sections of Trump's social base, sections which have in turn fanned the flames of reaction against the initiatives and demands of the new Black mass movements.

Given the moment, it is important for Black revolutionary socialists to grow, develop, and coordinate their activities in order to offer a clear political program and vision to and with Black social forces. It is incumbent on organized Black social forces to organize and politically develop larger numbers of Black people to engage in struggles that extend beyond single issues and utilize a range of strategies not confined to direct militant action, in the service of building robust and expansive political power.

Renewed Black Insurgency

In the opening decades of the 21st Century, the Black freedom movement in the United States is grounded primarily in three arenas of struggle: fights against the prison-industrial complex; contestation of symbolism and representation (e.g. down with Confederate statues), and the battle for governing power. Three of the most prominent tactics they use are militant direct action; issue-based organizing; and electoral campaigns. We will briefly discuss how these tactics are used within the three named arenas.

Large numbers of Black organizations, networks, collectives and formations developed a new generation of activists and organizers using militant direct-action tactics to draw political lines in the sand. From the removal of Confederate flags and monuments, to the blockades of interstate highways, to the militant occupations of sites of struggle, to urban rebellions, Black militant direct action has served as a primary entry point into political struggle for a large number of advanced Black forces. We support and uphold bold and unapologetic leadership of Black organized forces and offer that these tactics must serve a purpose larger than disruption.

Issue-based organizing work of organizations such as Organization for Black Struggle, Southerners On New Ground (SONG), BYP100, #BlackLivesMatter, and PowerU—along with many other organizations--have led and won important campaigns to end money bail, remove racist government officials from power, and decriminalize marijuana among other fights. We support these radical struggles and offer that these struggles unite with multi-national and working-class struggles for building electoral power.

The highly visible battle to win seats of government, has resulted in the high-profile campaigns of Stacey Abrams, Ben Jealous and Andrew Gillum, which held the possibility of dealing a devastating blow to the Southern regional hegemony of the New Confederacy and were narrowly defeated because of the intense voter repression program that has been and continues to be employed throughout the South. Local office wins in Durham and Memphis by Black elected officials offer a blueprint to large sections of progressive and social movements. The focus on district attorney and sheriff races to help curb the impacts of the criminal justice system felt by communities of color has also been noteworthy. We praise these efforts to occupy seats of government and would offer that these forces either develop or link with independent political organizations that do the necessary work of building power beyond elections.

SECTION 8.2 Trends & Developments in the Workers' Movement: an analysis from the Liberation Road's Workers' Commission

The past three years has seen an extension of this period of epic defeat for workers and workers' organizations in the United States, which began more than 40 years ago. Steady reduction of jobs with traditional (defined benefit) pensions, combined with increasing health care costs, the crisis of affordable housing, stagnant wages, student debt, and reduced union density (29th of the 36 mostly wealthy countries in the OECD) continues to reduce the standard of living for working people in the U.S. Density fell again in 2018 to 10.5%, from 10.7% in 2017. This parallels the reversal of the Second Reconstruction – voter suppression, officially sanctioned white supremacy, elimination of anti-discrimination laws, pre-emption by reactionary state governments, and escalating attacks on immigrants, especially those of color. In addition, unions face damaging structural changes in the economy, particularly automation and sectoral changes; growth in non-union sectors, and fewer jobs where unions have traditionally had some strength. The federal government under Trump has continued and intensified attacks, from the Janus decision undermining dues collection for public sector unions to eliminating health and safety rules on the job to the restriction of overtime pay rules that had been expanded under Obama.

On the other hand, in 2017-2018 there were indicators of significant resistance and popular support for unions. 485,000 workers were involved in major work stoppages last year (mostly strikes but including a few lock-outs), the highest number since 1986. (The average over the last decade was 65,000 workers striking annually!) Over 90% of these workers were in education, or health care and the social assistance occupations – especially education. And early info from 2019 indicates that this trend continues.

Since at least 2010, when reformers won leadership of the Chicago Teachers Union, teachers in particular have turned their unions to focusing laser-like on the defense of public education, and the effect of poverty and privatization on their students and their families. They have often raised these broader issues in negotiations and strikes, practicing “common good bargaining”. The teachers’ strikes in red right-to-work states won significant victories and highlighted the fightback from mainly women workers who are at the fulcrum of the destruction of the public sector. In many states where teacher strikes have taken place, they are illegal. In Oklahoma, teachers demonstrated the power of job action when combined with legislative action when they voted out 12 of 19 Republican representatives who had defeated their efforts to increase state funding for their students. This places the fight to defend teachers’ unions and public education as an effort of the strategic alliance between the multi-national working class and oppressed peoples against corporate power. This revival of pro-equality social justice unionism has inspired the entire labor and other peoples’ movements.

Public approval for unions is at 55% (to 33% negative), a 15-year high. 252,000 workers joined unions in 2017 – 75% are 35 years-old or younger – although density remained at a historic low (10.7%, weighted to the public sector). Right-to-work was defeated at the polls in Missouri by a resounding 67.5%. Even mainstream economists like Henry Farber and Ilyana Keziembo at Princeton discovered that unions are the answer to inequality (not the cause!). New forms of worker organizations addressing workplace issues, like workers’ centers, the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, and OUR Walmart, continue to grow and experiment.

The AFL-CIO is only now speaking more clearly and loudly against Trump. While the federation did not repudiate its progressive stands on immigration and ties with Black Lives Matter, it mainly offered radio silence and, for example, did not endorse the new Poor People's Campaign.

The lack of an independent political project at the national level, combined with the power of the individual international unions, meant that organized labor was sometimes involved in the anti-Trump front, and at other times missed the left opposition within the Democratic Party entirely. This often occurred when the opposition was spearheaded by women and people of color, as in the Ocasio-Cortez victory in New York, insurgent state representative campaigns in Massachusetts, and district attorney races in numerous states.

It is important to note that the centrifugal forces pulling unions apart from each other in a time of stress (i.e. public sector versus private, immigrant-based versus U.S.-born, or other political differences) are growing stronger and can be expected to continue to do so.

There are significant organizing initiatives in the South, including efforts to organize public sector workers by the Communications Workers of America (CWA) in Georgia and Alabama, and persistent and successful Unite-HERE efforts in Texas, Florida and Georgia, and this has produced small increases in union density in several Southern states. In some cases, there has been investment by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) or other funders in non-traditional campaigns by domestic workers, aimed primarily at building legislative power. The Teamsters have been active in several states. Other unions like the United Auto Workers (UAW) and Machinists (IAM) have failed at sporadic traditional campaigns. In general, we lack an overarching, strategic approach to union organizing in the South. In our movement, organizing is almost always done by individual national unions. There is nothing comparable to the CIO "Operation Dixie" (an effort to unionize industry in the South) of the post-WWII period.

The political trends that Bill Fletcher Jr. and Fernando Gapasin identified in *Solidarity Divided* in 2008 (“leftists, pragmatists and traditionalists”, p. 36) are still useful categories for understanding US labor unions. The trends are defined by who we see as our constituencies (our members or the working class), who we see as our allies, and whether we see organized labor in an international context. At a national level, CWA and National Nurses United, for example, could conceivably be identified as leftists, SEIU could be identified as the best example of the pragmatists, and unions like most of the building trades, machinists, and railroad unions as traditionalists.

At the local level and in specific struggles, where the rubber hits the road, identifying the trends becomes much more nuanced and cannot be done accurately through generalities. For example, the immigrant organizers who left the AFL-CIO after the Trump election went as a group to IUPAT (Painters and Allied Trades) and are leading a group of building trades unions, including the Bricklayers and Ironworkers, in a progressive fight for immigration reform. Some United Food and Commercial Workers locals are very active and progressive, and some are completely moribund or even corrupt.

In the 2018 elections in Massachusetts, the AFL-CIO and building trades stayed out of the primaries completely rather than support incumbents who had crossed labor, while SEIU actively campaigned to defend the State House of Representatives leadership (and were beaten). In the nationally reported upset of incumbent Congressman Capuano by insurgent Black Boston City Council member Ayanna Pressley, only two unions supported Pressley: Unite-HERE, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers 103 (electricians local). Therefore, building left poles in the labor movement, or local community-labor coalitions, or independent political organizations, requires a careful assessment of a union’s politics, base, history and leadership.

SECTION 8.3 The Dramatic Growth of the Progressive / Left Electoral Movement

The Trump disaster has motivated many leftists, social movement activists and organizers, progressives and radicals to prioritize and engage in electoral organizing and mobilization at many levels of government. Moreover, it has deepened the engagement and work of many people who only episodically undertook electoral activism, including turning attention and focus to a broad number of offices—and races—that usually were neglected by the electorate.

This dynamic has been accelerated by actual limits of possibility that many social movement activists have encountered in their work to win concrete changes in the life conditions of their constituencies. Surely, for every hundred activists now animated by Trump, there are dozens animated by the many little Trumps who function as judges, clerks, and other elected functionaries of the repressive state—replaceable but unreplaced in a context in which their elections have been largely ignored.

The electoral turn also represents another fact: the failure of the *existing* Democratic Party coalition and program to offer *real strategic solutions* to the problems of our time. Of course, the electoral system is largely ~~reactionary~~ and deformed, in which the winner of the popular vote does not win; in which people who satisfy even the undemocratic and repressive criteria to be counted as voters still face suppression and repression; and so on. Many forces are now interested in course correction within the electoral context.

Who are the forces most engaged in this work? What are their strategic and tactical characteristics? What do they want? How are they organizing, and with who?

There is a multiplicity of progressive tendencies emphasizing electoral work

Here, the formulation of “inside/outside” politics is useful. This framework appreciates the concrete fact that *all these tendencies are in some ways defined by their position in relation to the Democratic Party*, the real hegemonic force of electoral progressivism:

Inside forces

There are groups, like Justice Democrats, Swing Left, and Brand New, that have committed to working inside the Democratic Party to promote a liberal-progressive agenda and candidates; they are skeptical of corporate money, want to engage directly with voters,

especially young voters, and want to end the neo-liberal stranglehold on the party. While seeking to change the character of the party, they do not align with any particular wing of the liberal-progressive quarters of the Democratic Party.

Outside forces

Outside forces are those that reject any direct or formal collaboration with the Democratic Party as such (though in practice ironically sometimes must use the Democratic Party ballot line). Some even have a history of no electoral engagement at all—abstentionism; the current political situation has changed that position. These forces share a commitment to a revolutionary identity and brand, including a principle of opposing “class collaborationism”; view the Democratic Party as basically monolithic and unreformable; articulate a clear anti-imperialist line; are ambivalence about *winning* elections, preferring a tactical use of elections as a platform. They run in mostly municipal races. They include most notably those aligned with LeftElect, Socialist Alternative (SAIt), but also the Socialist Party-USA and the Progressive Labor Party.

Banner projects—that are exciting and have achieved success--wholly or largely associated with this effort include the SAIt campaign of Kshama Sawant in Washington state, and the Richmond Progressive Alliance (RPA, closely connected to Solidarity, another socialist organization) in California. In Chicago, a number of smaller, local races have used this basic framework, achieving some renown and success (i.e., Carlos Rosa). Some of these forces have been grappling with a recognition by many in their mass base that it is often important to deal with the DP, though with a critical distance. Because if they don't, it means being marginalized within other forces in the electoral movement.

The nuances of the Inside/Outside forces

Inside/outside forces have a theoretical and/or practical commitment to a political, organizing, and constituency program independent from the Democrats, On the other hand, they engage with—inside and alongside—the party due to its command of the allegiance of voters whom the inside/outside forces seek to organize, as well the party's control over

resources critical to winning elections, and its control of electoral access (i.e., its hegemony among those sections of the people we want to organize).

These inside/outside forces, while characterized by some political and organizational commonalities, are nonetheless arrayed with different emphases. Here, we will distinguish between outside/inside—i.e., forces that *in practice* are mainly focused on independent work but who collaborate with and utilize the Democratic Party (e.g. DSA, Working Families Party); and, on the other hand, inside/outside—i.e., forces that in practice are mainly Left-progressive functionaries of the Democratic Party but with a *theoretical* commitment to an independent base (e.g. OurRevolution, CPUSA).

The full spectrum (i.e. both outside/inside and inside/outside) of this political tendency is also descriptive of a number of local and/or state political organizations and projects: The New Majority formations, projects associated with the State Power Caucus of IPO's, Liberation Road's own electoral work, and other unaligned, left-progressive efforts that build bases independently of the Democratic Party identity yet run for office using the access the Democratic Party identity allows.

These organizations largely commit to real contact with voters, including voters typically un- or disengaged by traditional electoral operations; are interested in races at varying levels of government, from federal to local; have some interest in reforming the Democratic Party but equally are interested in creating organization adjacent to and/or independent of it; and have programmatic commitments to anti-racism, feminism, environmental justice, and labor (if not a practical reflection of that in their organizational composition and work).

Differences in this camp include, importantly, their commitment to *socialism* (of any variety if at all). Some (OurRevolution, WFP) largely avoid this discourse while others (DSA) insist on its primacy. For the national forces, there are huge geographic variations in this camp, and while all are attempting to break out of bicoastal concentration, their meaningful work is still largely confined to the Northeast and California. A notable and exciting exception is DSA's work in the 2017 special elections in Virginia. Other key areas where this work has had a significant impact are Democratic primaries—especially and notably the gubernatorial primaries in Georgia, Florida, and Maryland.

Movement-based electoral engagement

A final category worth noting is social movement organizations' direct engagement in electoral or electoral-adjacent (i.e. voter registration, voter suppression, disenfranchisement) work. Driven by both concrete conditions and non-profit funding limitations, this trend, operating at national, local and state levels, seeks to combine social justice and electoral organizing of the base: M4BL (national), SURJ (national), Black Voters Matter (Georgia project using the Ella Baker model) to name a few. This approach is - happening across the political organizing terrain - in the labor, political environmentalist, Black liberation, and immigrants' movements.

Key examples include the work in district attorney and judicial races across the country, like those in Ferguson/St. Louis and Philadelphia. And, importantly, movement forces have played critical roles in the gubernatorial primaries mentioned above, especially in Florida, where the work of the DREAM Defenders and New Florida Majority and their connection to candidate Andrew Gillum both propelled him through the primary and became an issue of explicit political debate in the general election.

The Majority - The Unengaged

People totally unengaged in electoral struggle constitute the majority of all people in the United States by choice, by exclusion, by confusion, or by whatever other factor.

Contradictions and Struggles in and Against the Democratic Party

The electoral question necessitates a clear assessment of the Democratic Party, its constituent parts, its institutions, and, most of all, its dynamics. Whichever tendency left and progressive forces express, until we have hegemony to construct and left-progressive alternative, the Democratic Party is the terrain where we engage, where we seek to take advantage of existing contradictions.

Hegemony: control of public narrative, policy/program, access, money, infrastructure and perhaps most importantly voter *self-identity*.

Whichever tendency left and progressive forces express, until we have hegemony to construct a left-progressive alternative, the Democratic Party is the terrain where we engage, where we seek to take advantage of existing contradictions.

A caveat: a more thoroughgoing assessment and understanding of “the Democratic Party” is needed but is not afforded here. The very question of its nature underlies many of the differences in strategic and tactical approaches to the electoral (and abstentionist) forces named above.

The Sanders Fault Line Was the First Serious Challenge to Centrist

The Sanders campaign of 2016 was the first serious and really epochal challenge to the Clinton centrist program and convictions of the Democratic Party. It was the result of sustained mass organizing and agitation and the integration of the demands of various social and worker’s movements into a political vision and program. This has been a process of forced transformation and reform. This progressive populist thrust fuels the growing embrace of Medicare for All/single payer in the DP-- endorsed even by former President Barack Obama, promoted by growing segments of activists, and legitimized by *the current health care crisis*, which is at once structural (capitalism kills) and political (Obamacare doesn’t go nearly far enough). Currently, Elizabeth Warren is Sanders’ main competitor for the progressive populist mantle, while several others like Booker, Harris and Buttigieg hold some appeal among sections of the party’s progressive base that want a scaled back “structural reform” approach relative to Sanders and Warren.

Other contested but increasingly normalized programmatic pillars include a \$15/hour federal minimum wage, free college tuition, criminal justice reform and just immigration reform (though these latter are problematized by their racial dynamics). The intractable contradiction of white supremacy determines which reforms are “acceptable” and which are less so. All of these issues are *matters of force* and reflect growing levels of real, constituent organization that are aligned with these demands.

Progressive Gubernatorial and Congressional Insurgencies Are on the Rise

The 2018 mid-terms saw excitement around progressive gubernatorial and congressional insurgent candidates. While Democratic Party neoliberal leadership largely opposed

these candidates in the primaries, they embraced them in the general election due to the high levels of grassroots excitement and engagement (For example, Gillum, Abrams, Jealous in governor's races; Ocasio-Cortez and Pressely in Congressional races. It is especially important that these candidates are almost universally people of color (with a few exceptions like Beto O'Rourke in TX), and had been almost universally opposed by the dominating moderate thrust of the Democratic Party who supported *white* candidates in primary elections,

Although not necessarily aligned with Sanders, all these candidates share some of the tactical commitments of the inside and inside/outside forces—namely a focus on direct voter engagement, the importance of low to moderate propensity voters, youth voters, connection with social movements, and a progressive-populist program.

SECTION 9 - NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN CAPITAL ACCUMULATION AND WORLD POLITICS

The purpose of this section is to help us:

- **Know the enemy**—At the global level, what are their latest methods for making money (capital accumulation) and preventing oppressed people from rising up (renewing hegemony and using force when necessary)
- **Understand the rivalries and tensions among capitalists and global powers to find their vulnerabilities.** What are the openings for working and oppressed people to fight and win better conditions of life, and for oppressed nations to exercise more self-determination?
- **Track the hotspots where US aggression is most concentrated** (like North Korea), or likely to intensify (like Iran), so we can **help build forces against U.S. intervention.** Also track where emerging people's movements and left-oriented governments might become targets of US destabilization and where our small resources and positioning can bring some effective solidarity—like Mexico.
- **Learn from and become inspired by progressive movements** of working and oppressed people around the world, to enrich our own work and discover paths towards socialism.

SECTION 9.1 The world is more unequal than ever.

Around the world, the social wage is shrinking due to neo-liberal deregulation and privatization, and climate change is intensifying. Oxfam reported that as of 2016, just 1% of humanity controls more than 50% of the planet's wealth; 20% control 95% of the wealth; and 80% of humanity gets the 5% that's left!

The worst impacts are on poorer and darker-skinned humanity, mostly in Asia and Africa, leading to droughts, fishery depletion, famines, desertification, competition for food and land, displacement, disease epidemics, migration, and warfare. Many of us in the countries that created the conditions for this suffering—through imperialist distortion of production and by arbitrarily setting the borders of nation states in the Global South -- live in relative stability.

Yet, there are growing pockets of the “Global South in the Global North” as those of us in Black, Brown and indigenous (and sometimes poor Asian and white) communities face poisoned water and ground; exclusion from a decent living, whether through criminalization, limited employment opportunities, or lack of access to small business capital; food deserts; and occupation-like police forces.

SECTION 9.2 In this era, any given capitalist firm, conglomerate or investor group tends to be owned by capitalists from multiple countries; and capitals are less tied to their countries of origin. But capitalists still dominate working and oppressed people through separate nation-states with their police, armies, prisons and ideological apparatuses.

The global scale of the interpenetration of capital is a qualitatively new phenomenon. Some Marxist theorists like William Robinson refer to this as transnationalization of capital. This thesis is controversial but cites serious evidence from economic and historical data, and the statements of the big capitalists themselves. 2007 was a watershed year because, for the first time ever, the S&P 500 companies (the 500 biggest publicly listed

on the New York Stock Exchange) earned more than 50% of their revenues abroad, rather than from the “home” market.

Superclass author David Rothkopf quotes *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman recounting a conversation with Intel CEO Craig Barrett:

(Barrett) said, “Intel can thrive today and never hire another American. It is not our desire, it is not our intention, but we can do that.” So, what it means is that global companies are now hovering over countries. They get disconnected from their moorings. Intel hovers over Southern California, over the U.S., over wherever it operates in the world. It’s not really headquartered. (p. 120)

Very importantly, Intel is not just a low-end, labor-intensive manufacturing firm--they’ve been going overseas for decades--but the researcher/designer/manufacture of cutting-edge tech components.

It seems that, in many ways, the interests of capitalist firms are less tied to their countries of origin. For example, The Tata Group, a conglomerate originating in India, now operates in 100 countries, and owns legacy British firms like Jaguar, Tetley Tea (originally based on looting India, of course) and British Steel. Tata is actually the largest employer of workers inside its former colonizer, the United Kingdom! While this example shows us that that capital is sometimes exported/invested from a Third World into a First World country, it’s also remains true that the overall global capitalist system still depends upon an imperialist **transfer of surplus value** from the Third World to the First World. Samir Amin delineates the five imperialist monopolies that insure this massive and devastating transfer of wealth and profits: finance, access to material resources, technology, communications, and weapons of mass destruction.

It’s also clear that, even if there’s a transnational capitalist class (TCC) that’s not tied to any national territory, it sure doesn’t have a transnational state. There are institutions like the International Monetary Fund, which forces austerity on national governments through its loan terms, and the World Bank. There are venues like their annual meetings, the World Economic Forum, the Clinton Global Initiative-- where the transnationalists meet.

They confer about their common goals such as a smooth running of world trade and managing/mitigating climate change. But it's still mainly national governments that make laws, repress rebellions, win the allegiance of working and oppressed people to the capitalist system—and maintain armed forces and wage armed conflict.

As we and other socialists try to figure this all out, in this section we'll draw from various analyses depending on which is most explanatory in the specific context.

Some implications for oppressed and working people, politics and struggle:

- i. It is less likely now that countries in the Global South, which have or recently had left-leaning though still capitalist governments, will act as consistent counter-forces to Euro-American-Japanese imperialism (what Samir Amin called the Triad). There's less and less of what Lenin called a "national bourgeoisie" for Third World socialists to ally with in a national, self-directed development project.

The investments of the Southern bourgeoisies are now tied in with Triad-dominated transnational capital, and its fortunes are their fortunes. This is part of the reason for the decline/defeat of the leftist governments that formed the "pink tide" in Latin America, for example in Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina. To succeed, any progressive front in the Third World will need a more powerful movement from below.

SECTION 9.3 Production Itself Is More Internationalized And "Disarticulated": Few Products Are Fully Produced in One Country or Region of the World Anymore.

Thanks to innovations in information/data processing, communications and transportation—satellites, container ships, real-time data bases—firms don't necessarily need to build giant factories, or even locate all production near consumers. They may break up a production process that was carried out in one factory, put factories that do the same thing in several countries, based on up-to-the-minute data and projections about where inputs including labor are cheapest and are likely to remain cheap, etc.

This is why US-origin tech companies like Intel, who manufacture most of their semi-conductors in the U.S. but assemble chips in China, are not happy with Trump's anti-China tariffs--and why it is actually not simple to define which products count as "made in China."

Implications for us:

1. It's harder for workers in any one country to stop production and win gains, because capital can shift production to a different country temporarily or permanently. There have been some instances of cross-border solidarity with striking workers but that is easier said than done. One upside is that, with just-in-time production, local distribution centers don't keep a lot of stock on hand. So longshore workers, long-haul drivers and other logistics workers do have some capacity to choke off supplies at key points.
2. Capital has less need to support labor aristocracies or stable, well-paid, skilled and semi-skilled jobs in its "home country." This trend is most advanced in the U.S., less so in Western Europe and Japan. Not only are there unlikely to be new Detroit's for the Black working class, but even the most cutting-edge production, design, research and development (remember Intel) now are sited across the globe. There is a strata of well-paid knowledge workers (and a working middle strata) and a growing corps of free-lancers. But except at the highest levels, even they may not be getting benefits, and they have no expectation of being able to stick with one employer and get a pension. Overall, there is greater inequality and income/wealth polarization within the Global North as well as the South—which calls for greater repression.
3. In this era, a leftist government in a Third World country has less ability to win concessions from the transnational capitalist class and take control of its own economy by nationalizing or threatening nationalization of the means of production. Capital quickly shifts production to another country, withdraws resources, punishes the country by getting other capitalists to boycott it, refuses trade in needed products, etc. On the upside, there is sometimes room for a progressive

Third World government to play great powers (e.g. U.S. vs. Russia) or competing transnational conglomerates, against each other

4. With greater commodification and privatization of basic means of life like water, land and housing, struggles in the sphere of reproduction are becoming broader and may have more leverage. Often these are community or neighborhood-based struggles around housing, environmental toxins, daycare and education rights, safety from gun violence —frequently led by women of color.
5. One plus for the people's movements-- the internet and communications technologies make it easier for demands and campaigns like #MeToo to spread around the globe. People's capacity to share the videos of murders by U.S. police, in real time, helped spread the outrage that made Movement for Black Lives into a national force, and drew many allies in other races and classes.

SECTION 9.4 The bulk of the transnational bloodsucker class now appropriates their gains through financial speculation, digital and other rents, data monopolization, branding, producing new means of repression (surveillance bracelets, drones, border barriers) and carrying out repression (contractor services for warfare, occupation and running prisons and detention centers).

Firms whose names are on physical products, like Nike, outsource the actual physical production to sub-contractors around the world. These sub-contractors take on risk and super-exploit scattered labor in ways that are harder to monitor. Nike's money comes from designing items and licensing the swoosh logo. Airbnb neither builds nor owns housing. Uber has no physical plant whatsoever.

Uber's model is age old: come in with a big enough investment to initially pay drivers well while charging low fares, and thereby drive out competition. With a monopoly position in the market, they then monopolize data and invent algorithms that set fares just high enough to keep drivers driving but low enough to cover not much more than gas and repairs. This leaves the drivers with abysmal net wages, though the new ideology is that they're so lucky to "be their own bosses"! Actually, as guilt-ridden Uber programmers have confessed in *Vanity Fair*, and even the *Financial Times* has recognized, when you

work for Uber, "...your boss is an algorithm." And it seems likely now that the intentional super-pauperization of Uber drivers is based on a calculation that they'll be replaceable soon by self-driving vehicles or worst case with new drivers. Super-exploitative business models like Uber, originally a privately held company, often fuel speculative bubbles. In May 2019, this company, which holds almost no physical assets, went public with a valuation of \$82.4 billion--which was actually well below the \$120 billion that some bankers had predicted. Uber raised only \$8.1 billion in the IPO (Initial Public Offering), and since then its share price has fallen from \$45 to around \$30 as of Dec. 2019. The driving force behind the Uber model, algorithms, is the new model for capitalism: reducing even high-skill workers, like programmers, to input workers dictated by algorithms. Amazon, is another massive company using this model.

In the repression sector, government budgets (which capital likes to keep low) have been cut by introducing surveillance bracelets and other tech to control and stigmatize people, enabling the closing of some prisons and enriching tech manufacturers, and pauperizing those wearing these monitors who must pay for their own surveillance. Functions that used to be funded by taxes, have become direct sources of profit for corporations. Private corporations now run 75% of immigrant detention centers and some prisons, placed in remote locations so it's hard for advocates to monitor them. They also run post-disaster security, foreign occupations, advanced weapons repair and interrogations; and they "advise" or train Third World armies and police, replacing CIA or special forces. These are functions that the mercenary mogul Erik Prince is angling to take over as the U.S. withdraws forces from Afghanistan. The corporations pay less taxes than ever and they make profits through the privatization of repressive functions!

Implications for us:

1. Subsistence farmers and production workers across the globe, people who produce the actual basic means of life and create real value barely makes ends meet. Hundreds of millions of people are living precariously or being uprooted because the TCC, through many market mechanisms, grab the surplus value they produce.

2. By monetizing knowledge (making knowledge a source of money making) and patenting products that embody it (platforms, programs, entertainment products), intellectual property has become a key focus of international agreements. That's why the U.S. and European governments pushed China around to recognize intellectual property rights.
3. By subcontracting out the means of repression to profit-making entities, citizens and taxpayers can no longer exert the same level of control/oversight the military-industrial-repression complex. This makes movements against police violence, incarceration, detention and gun violence, crucial.
4. Labor unions should pressure to withdraw workers' billions of pension dollars from hedge funds and managers that invest in private prisons. NYC Deputy Mayor Phil Thompson quotes business professors saying, "Labor capital is dumb capital—they only look at the rate of return, not where the money's going." In one positive example, the American Federation of Teachers has asked it locals to withdraw from funds investing in companies that run detention centers for immigrant children.

SECTION 9.5 Robotization and artificial intelligence pose new challenges for workers' conditions of life and for democracy.

Marxist theorists are just beginning to grapple with these developments, and there is also some disagreement among mainstream economists about impact: to what extent will they just eliminate jobs or also create new kinds of jobs or even be fused with human workers? In the 90s, we talked about the importance of the "immobile sector," saying "You need a worker in Manhattan to make a bed in a Manhattan hotel—that's one job you can't ship overseas." But perhaps you can eliminate that job with a robot—along with the jobs of receptionists, cooks, bartenders and many assembly line and retail workers. (There is still a question of whether robots can do the jobs completely.) This is especially significant because the hospitality and restaurant industries in the big cities are bulwarks of organized labor.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has more complex ramifications than we can go into here (might it outperform humans? And when?), but it's noteworthy that China is well-positioned to take the lead here. It has the technological know-how, and its billions of people and lack of privacy laws can supply the huge amounts of data that are needed to develop effective AI.

Implications for us:

- i. Don't sleep on this—workers' movements need to follow developments and figure out where there will be threats and opportunities for organizing, probably around the way the technology is implemented. (The McKinsey Global Institute estimates that up to a third of the US work force will have to switch to new occupations by 2030.) For example, the Culinary Workers Union in Las Vegas has threatened a strike of 50,000 people over introduction of robots.

SECTION 9.6 Globalization, Capital and Right-wing Movements

We have already mentioned the features shared by right-wing populist movements that have arisen in response to neo-liberal austerity, heightened competition for jobs, conflict and population movements. These features include: nationalism; a scapegoated other such as immigrants or those of another religion or race; restriction of women to traditional roles; demonization of queer and trans people; and violent fringe sectors that are not disavowed. Beyond that, there are many differences within these political formations. Indeed, they are all over the map; often holding contradictory ideas or no cohesive policies at all. Some oppose any social provision/assistance by the state; while others want a welfare state for native-born or white people ("Hands off my Medicare but no welfare for lazy Black people" etc.). They may be isolationist or aggressive/expansionist on foreign policy. They may support the de-regulation of environmental and labor protections and the privatization that are core elements of neoliberalism, but oppose international free trade, another neoliberal tenet.

Though they receive money from some international capitalist players (the Koch's and Mercer's and Adelson in the U.S.), they are not just creations of reactionary capital. They

are actual movements that have relative autonomy. They receive some support from small- and medium-sized capitalists based in domestic retail and construction. And as comrades in Tennessee have noted from their work, on the individual state level many small business and franchise owners (like car dealers) are strong supporters and funders of the New Confederacy.

Our sense is that most of big capital does not see the need for actual fascism in the countries of the global North. Many prefer rule of law, and object when press freedoms and other rights are violated. But even they don't control everything. Stronger popular movements against immigrants, a deeper crisis in the legitimacy of bourgeois rule--could convince some big capitalists that, to hang on to their power and wealth, a demagogic, racist head of state, armed Aryan gangs and the elimination of democratic rights are the way to go.

Short of fascism, the transnational capitalists are definitely preparing to control the social disorder, rebellion, and conflict over water, land and other means of survival, that are increasing due to climate change, a growing reason for migration northward from Central America and from Africa to Europe. That's what they discuss in their international forums and research papers. That's also why the Pentagon has spent millions on studies and contingency plans for managing the consequences of the climate change that Trump and the EPA have tried to deny.

While not necessarily fascist, neoliberal globalization and financialization have always been authoritarian and corrosive of democracy. For example, the Morgan-Stanley banking house bought the parking meter system of Chicago and made \$1.56 billion dollars from it last year. Now, the public has no say about parking fees, the city has lost that revenue, and more of the city's real estate is given over to private profit. Instead of paying a rational tax bill which could fund public education and health with democratic input, the philanthro-capitalists like Gates and Zuckerberg start their own foundations. So, they unilaterally set priorities and policies for schooling, health care, what diseases should be

targeted, not only the US but in multiple countries-- by how they distribute their billions in grants.

SECTION 9.7 Trump, Great Power Rivalry and Foreign Policy

The U.S. is still the greatest military power. In 2017, it spent \$610 billion on its military, more than the next seven biggest spenders combined, according to the Peterson Foundation. (Number two spender is China, estimated at around \$140 billion.) The transnational capitalist class (TCC) theorists see the U.S. military as the armed force of last resort for the whole TCC. The U.S. also had the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at \$19.4 trillion; second was China at \$12.5 trillion. See a pattern here?

While the U.S. remains the biggest single power, China's rise is one manifestation of how the world is becoming multi-polar-- without enough institutions to set rules and mediate trade and production disputes for the benefit of the big, transnationally active capitalists. Though the dollar remains the international reserve currency, China and some European states have promoted moves toward an alternative. The biggest military and current rival to the U.S. is Russia (expressed in tensions and proxy wars in West Asia aka the Middle East), while the biggest long-term and economic rival is China. A couple of years ago, we would have said that the world's fourth major power, though not necessarily in rivalry with the U.S., is the European Union. But today the EU is less unified and more divided by sovereignist tendencies, wanting to center power at the national rather than the EU level—both on the Right (Brexit) and among some on the left (Melenchon in France).

It's hard to figure out Trump's foreign policy in this complicated context. Is it that:

- i. He has no strategy but just needs to be buddies with strongman regimes (to please the critical father), and/or make idiosyncratic alliances to get peace awards?
- ii. He'll be nice to whoever sucks up to him?
- iii. He's promoting/protecting his own investments and unsavory ties in Russia and Central Asia and his dealings with Deutsche Bank, known for laundering Russian

drug money? (And as his heir Eric says, “Russians make the best buyers” of Trump real estate.)

- iv. He’s grandstanding for his domestic base?
- v. He has explicitly stated that he wants to undo President Obama’s foreign policies

What’s clear is that Trump wants to undo whatever Obama did (for example, the Trans-Pacific Partnership or TPP), and he prefers bilateral to multilateral agreements. He has increased the military budget to unprecedented levels. He calls for greater U.S. leadership over transnational capital, calls for other countries to invest in the U.S., but then imposes tariffs that are anathema to much of the TCC.

Tariffs are import duties that make it more expensive for people or companies to buy goods produced outside their countries and thus they are obstacles to international free trade.

Splits on foreign and trade policy are sharp within the U.S. elite, among their actors in various parts of the state apparatus and within the major parties. It seems that criticism from the media and both parties will continue to put brakes on the complete withdrawal from NATO and other treaties that Trump threatens. However, from our point of view, disintegration of NATO would probably be a good thing for world peace, one of the many points where we differ with the Democrats. On the other hand, Trump’s abrogation of the Intermediate Nuclear Force agreement with Russia is a bad thing and shows signs of spurring a new arms race. Trump’s impulsiveness and inconsistency could lead to further dangerous escalations in any number of areas, as with North Korea.

SECTION 9.8 Sources of Armed Conflicts

In this period, armed conflicts seem to occur:

- Where there are vestiges of Cold War conflicts between the U.S. vs. Russia and/or China (e.g. Korea).
- Where the dissolution of the Soviet Union has left what we have called an arc of chaos across Central West Asia (e.g. Afghanistan, Kazakhstan), with unstable governments and disruptive non-state actors (like the Taliban and ISIS/Daesh).

- Where the major powers have interests that conflict with other nation-states, like the U.S. vs. Russia and Saudi Arabia vs. Iran (West Asia's two main regional powers), in Syria.
- Where there are proxy conflicts—for example in the viciously attacked Yemen, with the Saudis as proxies for the US and Israel, opposing their regional rival Iran (backed by Russia).
- Where Third World countries have tried to develop in a more rounded and “auto-centric” way, with the government having more say over how capital originating within the nation-state interacts with the TCC. For example, Iraq has been destroyed as a modern industrial society, Libya set back, and Iran is probably next on the list for U.S. aggression. Venezuela's regime is under attack by international capital.

The situation in the zones of great power conflict cited above is extremely volatile. There are many ways that tensions can flare dangerously and almost instantaneously, a nation-state's position may be weakened, alliances can begin to fray or shift. It's a complicated and depressing world picture, but as socialists in the world's most powerful capitalist country, we can't throw up our hands. We have to analyze and figure out how to rein in our government from its most destructive acts towards other peoples.

So, what does this mean for our work:

1. Oppose U.S. interventions—including the so-called humanitarian interventions promoted by Obama's advisors and the more liberal elements of the TCC-- because they don't actually help the suffering people on the ground. At the same time, we must recognize that a regime (like Syria's) isn't necessarily progressive because the US state is fighting it.
2. While we can't explore it in this paper, we shouldn't forget that there have been and may be again situations such as ongoing genocide where some action by some set of international forces/bodies is called for. Fletcher and Gosse give deep consideration to this question as socialist internationalists (“A New Internationalism,” Huff Post).

3. We need to closely watch U.S. aggression against Iran, educate and dialogue about it now in our workplace and communities, and **be prepared to mobilize**.
4. The center Democrats with whom we unite in some fronts against the New Confederacy can be extremely scummy on foreign policy. **They often try to score** electorally by acting more hawkish and war-like than the Republicans—as in their opposition to Trump’s talks with North Korea.
5. Israel continues its apartheid quest to chop up the Palestinian nation through settlements and walls, and even further to make conditions of life so unbearable as to drive Palestinians out of its territories. The Palestinian leadership is still divided. Yet the boycott/divestment/sanctions campaign has had some impact of isolating and delegitimizing Israel including among U.S. Jews, and should be broadly supported.
6. In our day to day work, we should always be looking to bridge struggles here in the U.S. with those abroad, to spread awareness among the masses of our unity of interest with oppressed and working people across the globe--by targeting the same corporation harming people in two countries, or the companies building prisons here and abroad, etc. One example is the striking Verizon workers in the U.S. who carried out joint actions with call center workers in the Philippines.
7. We need to promote a comprehensive vision of peace like Dr. King’s, now embodied in the Poor People’s Campaign, that can win mass support. Peace is not merely the absence of all-out war, but the elimination of structural violence and subjugation. It includes lowering U.S. military spending and raising up domestic human needs, dismantling the 800 U.S. bases around the world, stopping violations of other countries' rights, opposing U.S. arm sales and military aid and supporting the rights of the unprecedented millions of people displaced by warfare and food insecurity.
8. There are new-ish creative efforts in this area—an area that mainstream and electoral politics has largely ignored except through the suck-up-to-Israel litmus tests for elected officials. We need to tune into and synergize with these new efforts. Bernie Sanders is calling for a progressive foreign policy approach in the electoral arena, Phyllis Bennis, Medea Benjamin and others make specific foreign policy

recommendations for progressive elected officials, and Meredith Tax has written about a socialist foreign policy. (Of course, we'll have some disagreements on specifics—and some discomfort with the word progressive when applied to the politics of U.S. imperialism—but these are important initial steps.) Code Pink, WomenCrossTheDMZ and other women-led groups, Veterans for Peace, About Face—formerly Iraq Veterans against the War, and DSA's Anti-War Committees are groups to work with, when possible.

SECTION 9.9 Stopping U.S. Disruption of Mexico's New Government

Our website has followed the campaign and election of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO), leader of MORENA (National Regeneration Movement), as president of Mexico. For only the second time since 1929, a left formation has dislodged the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) and the PAN (National Action Party), which have alternated in government and are bound up with U.S., Japanese, Chinese and Canadian capital. MORENA's program calls for rescinding privatization plans for the energy industry and the educational system, doubling pensions, and enforcing indigenous people's rights through a new ministry. Socialists are only a small sector of MORENA's one million members and they struggle to push the party to the left on women's, LGBTQ+ and labor rights, and to deepen connections with independent indigenous and youth leaders.

The new government's challenges include the cartel violence, extortion, and drug sales in league with police corruption that make Mexico the most lethal country on the planet for journalists, and also lethal for student radicals and rural activists. And of course, one of the biggest challenges is the U.S. government and corporations, which is where we come in.

It's not clear yet how aggressive Trump and the imperialists are likely to be and what form that aggression will take, as AMLO promises to use consuls and embassies to protect Mexicans in the U.S. from abuse, and probably institute economic policies the imperialists won't like.

SECTION 10 APPENDIX -- Optional Info on Other Progressive Forces around the World

Socialist-oriented movements on a global scale

Socialist and communist parties around the world are weak. For example, the South African Communist Party, from whose creative practice we learned so much in the 90s and early 2000s, has discredited itself by following the neoliberal drift and corruption of the African National Congress; no alternative workers or socialist party has yet cohered, despite several attempts. But there are still revolutionary parties like the Communist Party of the Philippines, and hopeful developments in socialist-oriented movements in the Third World.

These movements do not put forth a clear path to full state power, but provide heroic examples of revolutionary organizing among the most oppressed and disenfranchised layers of the masses. In some cases, they have created dual power conditions in remote areas. They include the MST (Movement of the Landless) in Brazil, the Indian Maoists working among indigenous ethnic minorities, and the woman-empowering sectors of the Kurdish Movement with a base area in Rojava.

Turning to the developed capitalist countries, over the past 20 years, some parties that identified as socialist have been elected to lead governments in still-capitalist states: the Socialist Party in France, Syriza in Greece, Social Democrats in Scandinavia. For the most part, they have lost recent elections, are out of government or are minor players in coalition governments, and face growing right-wing populist parties. They don't share our exact politics, as many of those parties are not explicitly committed to ending capitalism; we would call them social democratic.

Yet some of the dilemmas they had to deal with would face any leftist politicians or parties holding governing power in a capitalist state, whether in Jackson, Mississippi or Athens, Greece. How do you implement policies benefitting working and oppressed people

without capital striking, disinvesting or organizing sanctions against you? What compromises can the government make—with other parties as well as sectors of capital-- without demoralizing or losing the support of the left and the oppressed masses? How to uphold legitimate interests of the nation-state vis a vis other states, yet not pander to the national chauvinism that may be present among the party's base? How to use governing power to strengthen the self-organizing of the masses into a new collective subject—rather than just pulling all the mass organizers into government positions and letting the movements and base organizations wither away?

Using Governing Power to Support Self-Organization of the Masses

The pathbreaking attempt to use governing power to support organs of popular power and initiative at the base was spearheaded by the late President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela with the Bolivarian circles of co-workers and neighbors. This attempt has foundered for many reasons. One of the biggest is over-reliance on oil exports to fund social provision. It's not clear whether Chavez recognized that a one-sided extractivist economy was an inadequate base for a human need-oriented society, or just thought they'd have a longer time to re-gear the economy before the price of oil plummeted. It is clear that there have been constant attempts at de-stabilization by the U.S. and the TCC.

It's also clear that even Chavez made some errors in economic policy, for example around currency exchange policy, which helped fuel the current inflation, that his death was a devastating loss, and that Nicolas Maduro, his designated successor, is not as skilled politically. The radical project has lacked a strong collective core (and many former leaders have withdrawn), has always faced a historical legacy of corruption, and seems not to have prioritized challenging cisheteropatriarchal culture (Caracas is noted for its many beauty contests and its cosmetic surgery business) as part of the transformation project.

Now, food supplies and economic conditions are bad in Venezuela—though perhaps not as bad as U.S. media depicts—and hundreds of thousands have left the country. The Maduro government has lost some support among the masses as well as elements of the national elite, is much weaker, like many of the left parties in Latin America, and under

direct threat of an illegal regime change supported by international capital. While we can't explore this further here, it's crucial to research and study the achievements and shortfalls of the Bolivarian project and the new ground it broke for socialist organization—and to prevent further U.S. interference in Latin America.

Emerging Opposition to Right-Wing Populism and Austerity in Europe

Again, only brief notes on a very complex landscape that some comrades may wish to investigate further. Most of the traditional parties in Europe--the Communists and Socialist or Social Democrats on the center-left, and the Christian Democrats on the center-right--have lost support (Merkel's CD in Germany, France's CP), dissolved or transformed (Italy's CP is now the shrinking Party of the Democratic Left). Most left parties have lost some members to the new right-wing populist parties, as austerity is imposed, society polarizes, and some workers, along with various middle strata, are drawn to scapegoating immigrants and people of color.

Some of the more radical parties that are closer to our own perspective, like Communist Refoundation in Italy, are also significantly weaker, while the Red Party (Rot) in Norway, the Belgian Workers Party, and Die Linke in Germany, remain small. They are doing electoral work and, like us, are grappling with what it means to have people in office, locally and provincially, and where you go with it. It's also worth looking into the governing left parties in Portugal and Iceland that have refused to implement some of the austerity policies demanded by the banks, and seem to be doing pretty well!

Over the past couple of years, progressive trans-European organizations have begun to form in opposition to both right-wing populism and the bank-imposed neoliberal austerity. They also oppose disintegration of the EU (putting them at odds with leftist sovereignists), and believe that workers and oppressed people in all Europe need to unite around economic and democratic demands. The most prominent grouping is DiEM25 (Democracy in Europe Movement), co-founded by Yanis Varoufakis, the former finance minister of Greece's Syriza government, and prominent leftists in 9 countries. DiEM25, which has

46,000 members who communicate and make decisions via internet. In the 2019 European Parliament elections, (a body with little direct power but a bully pulpit and policy influence), they put forward a “New Deal for Europe” program. While it garnered 1.4 million votes it did not translate into electoral victories for their candidates. These emergent groups were heartened by the European Parliament’s recent condemnation of the right-wing Orban government in Hungary (known for violently turning away immigrants at its borders), the first such action by the Euro Parliament. It’s worth following whether and how these movements can deepen their mass base (they seem mostly white but anti-racist and pro-immigrants’ rights), and who they unite with to develop a united front against both rightwing populism and transnational finance capital.

SOURCES/RESOURCES/FOR INTERNATIONAL SECTION

On disarticulated production see Vijay Prashad, “In the Ruins of the Present,” MR on-line

On the TNC and transnational capitalism, see William I. Robinson:

Global Capitalism and the Crisis of Humanity, (New York Cambridge University Press, 2014) and various articles on line such as

“Global Capitalism: Reflections on a Brave New World”

“The next economic crisis: digital capitalism and global police state”

Also, David Rothkopf, *Superclass* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008)

For another perspective, see Samir Amin, “Transnational Capitalism or Collective Imperialism,” ZNET

On detention centers, see Migration Policy Institute, *Profiting from Enforcement* on line

On the Russia/US relationship, great power rivalry, and Trump’s foreign policy, see the 2 articles by comrades and friends on the website understandtheworldtochangeit.com

On progressive foreign policy recommendations, see on line

Phyllis Bennis, “A Bold Foreign Policy Platform for the New Wave of Left Lawmakers”

Nicholas J. S. Davies and Medea Benjamin, “Beyond Bolton: The Path to a Progressive Foreign Policy”

Bernie Sanders foreign policy speech Sept. 21

Meredith Tax, “Socialist Foreign Policy Must Center Climate Change”

A NOTE ON UNDERSTANDING DATA

It’s necessary to say a word about data. Data is critically important in understanding economic realities, but we must be aware of what is counted and what is not (as in the above example). We must beware of aggregated data since it hides important realities. For example, if the average wealth of people in the US includes our numerous billionaires, then the average will look like we’re all doing great! Further, we must know who is interpreting that data--for example, right wing pundits say the lower earnings of African Americans proves that they’re lazy.

The most common data misconceptions concern Asian Americans and promote the myth of the “model minority.” This myth aims to show that non-whites can do just fine if they just work hard, and to drive a wedge among peoples of color. But aggregated Asian-American data does not take into account the huge disparities among different Asian Pacific Islander ethnicities, the widest of any racial category: Chinese and South Asians who recently have come to the US with money and educational assets are doing well; Southeast Asians who came as refugees with nothing are among the poorest of all population groups. The mainstream data reporting doesn’t account for the fact that Asians are concentrated in a few cities where both cost of living and wages are high: San Francisco, New York, Honolulu. We must dig deeper to find the different realities hidden in the mainstream data.

Endnotes on the Domestic Sections

¹ Source: <https://equitablegrowth.org/how-rising-u-s-income-inequality-exacerbates-racial-economic-disparities/> by Robert Manduca, 8/23/18.

² Farhad Manjoo, *C.E.O.s Should Fear a Recession*, NYT 8/22/19

³ Gentrification is not a new phenomenon, but it is spreading. The fastest gentrifying cities including Nashville TN, Austin TX and Denver CO, as well as better-known examples in what Richard Florida calls “knowledge hubs and superstar cities” like the San Francisco, New York Metro areas. Sources: “This is What Happens after a Neighborhood Gets Gentrified?” by Richard Florida, *The Atlantic*, 9/2015; <https://www.realtor.com/news/trends/10-surprising-cities-that-are-gentrifying-the-fastest/>; <http://www.governing.com/gov-data/census/gentrification-in-cities-governing-report.html>; This is accompanied by a big geographic shift in where poor people live. While overall poverty rates are slightly lower in suburbs than in urban or rural areas, suburban poverty has increased by more than 50% since 2000—about twice as fast as it has increased elsewhere. Source: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/08/07/for-most-us-workers-real-wages-have-barely-budged-for-decades/>

⁴ “Why Real Wages Aren’t Rising” by Jared Bernstein, *The New York Times*, July 18, 2018. . “*In earlier periods, tight labor markets were able to deal a blow to inequality. . . but even with the economy now near full employment, profits are squeezing paychecks. More than ever, the dynamics of this old-fashioned power struggle between labor and capital strongly favor corporations, employers and those whose income derives from stock portfolios rather than paychecks.*”

⁵ “The Truth about Black Unemployment in America,” *The Guardian*, July 7, 2018, profiles the racial disparity in Kansas City Black and white neighborhoods: “Kansas City may boast an unemployment rate of 3.6%. But take the city’s Blue Hills neighborhood. Blue Hills is 91% African American and the unemployment rate is 17%. Neighboring Ivanhoe is 86% African American and the unemployment rate is even higher, at 26%.”

⁶ *The Economist*, *Democracy in America*, June 15, 2018.

⁷ Data is from the Federal Reserve, Feds notes, Sept. 27, 2017

⁸ Americans’ overall debt hit a new high of \$13 trillion, surpassing the previous record set in 2008. Source: <https://www.npr.org/2017/09/12/550250789/americans-borrowing-hits-another-record-time-to-worry> Student loan debt has doubled since 2004, so that 44 million people—graduates and non-graduates—now each carry an average of \$37,000 in student loan debt. Source: <https://www.mar-ketwatch.com/story/student-debt-just-hit-15-trillion-2018-05-08>

⁹ Farhad Manjoo. *C.E.O.s Should Fear a Recession*, NYT 8/22/19

¹⁰ Trump’s 2019 budget proposed a 23% cut to Medicaid, 27% cut to food stamps and a 20% cut to Section 8, all by 2028. He also proposed cuts to Medicare, and the Republican House budget has tried to transform that program completely by replacing guaranteed coverage with a voucher that would cover much less of the cost. Source: <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/373413-trump-releases-2019-budget>

¹¹ Just before the mid-term elections, the Senate Majority Leader called for Congress also to target Social Security and Medicare “to address the growing federal debt,” despite the fact that more and more people rely on those programs, which also continue to be popular with much of the Republican base. “The Deficit is Rising, so Republicans Want to Cut Social Security and Medicare” by Dylan Scott, *Vox*, 10/17/2018. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reports that “Social Security provides the majority of income to most elderly Americans. For about half of seniors, it provides at least 50 percent of their income, and for about 1 in 5 seniors, it provides at least 90 percent of income,” and that “Social Security is a particularly important source of income for groups with low earnings and less opportunity to save and earn pensions, including African Americans and Latinos, who face higher poverty rates both during their working lives and in old age.” In addition, “Social Security is especially important for women because they tend to earn less than men, take more time out of the paid workforce, live longer, accumulate less savings, and receive smaller pensions. Women represent more than half of Social Security beneficiaries

in their 60s and 7 in 10 beneficiaries in their 90s.” “Policy Basics: 10 Top Facts about Social Security.” *The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities*, 8/14/2018.

¹² These are the Democrats who embraced a corporate agenda and started moving that party to the right during the (Bill) Clinton era. Journalist David Sirota characterizes them as “Democratic politicians who constantly echo courageous populist themes in speeches, news releases and election ads, and then often uses the party’s governmental power to protect the status quo and serve corporate donors in their interminable class war.” Sirota also offers many examples of how neoliberal Democrats have been defending corporate interests and fought against working people at the state level:

- In Southern states, we have seen an increase in the number of neoliberal Democrats running for statewide office and Congress who embrace the Republican platform (‘Democrats in Name Only, DINO.’).
- California’s Democratic Governor Jerry Brown repeatedly vetoed universal healthcare and domestic worker protections after the state legislature voted them through;
- Democratic state majorities in NY, CT and NJ refused to enact legislation to close the “carried interest” tax loophole that makes billions for hedge-fund managers.

Source: “Yes let’s take out Donald Trump. But let’s take the neoliberal Democrats with him too” by David Sirota, *The Guardian*, 9/10/18.

¹³ Trump’s overall support among women has dropped: in early October, 63 percent of all women disapproved of the job the president is doing, while just 30 percent approved. Although 68% of Republican women still approved of Trump, that was down 19 points. <https://www.newsweek.com/donald-trump-approval-rating-women-1146562>

¹⁴ Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2018/03/10/trump-celebrates-winning-52-percent-of-women-in-2016-which-is-only-how-he-did-among-whites/?utm_term=.cd5d5e5868dd

¹⁵ Democratic Party women candidates make up about 75% of overall women candidates. Putting this in context there has been a bump in men candidates as well so overall the number of women candidates and elected officials are still being dwarfed by the number of men candidates and elected.

¹⁶ “The 2018 Wave of Teachers’ Strikes” by Stanley Karp and Adam Sanchez, *ReThinking Schools*, Summer 2018.

¹⁷ Queer undocumented youth have been at the forefront of fighting for immigrant rights for more than a decade and have built many of that movements most militant groups. “How Queer Undocumented Youth Built the Immigrant Rights Movement” by Prerna Lal, *Huffington Post*, 2/20/16.

¹⁸ The Majority’s platform and members can be found at <https://beyondthemoment.org/background/> It’s most recent proposal is at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1agqitV9zUcQ5w-Q_Lh_tPMZAleCXahEc/view

¹⁹

²⁰The Black Electoral Justice Initiative can be found at <https://ejp.m4bl.org/>

²¹ Notes from the State IPO Network initial convening in Miami, January 2018.

²² These groups include the Poor People’s Movement, education justice and student debt relief organizations and housing rights groups like those in the Right to the City. See the demands in their report: <https://homesforall.org/reports/communitiesovercommodities/>