



LIBERATION ROAD - 2020 ELECTORAL STATEMENT

SETTING THE SCENE

The 2020 election season will be the most crucial of our lifetimes, on all levels, from national to local, due to consequential races, referendums, and the all-important census.

We believe the entire left needs to both respond to this urgency and maintain a long view. How do we leverage any gains that progressive forces can make in this election cycle towards a longer project of organizational and political power building? We know that even if Trump or a few other New Confederate (NC)¹ governing officials are removed from office, right-wing authoritarianism, right-wing populism, and violence will not just stop. It is possible that the most reactionary racist elements of the New Confederacy and the right-wing populist movement that props it up may actually intensify if Trump is defeated. And he will not go away quietly.

Considering all these possibilities, this statement will humbly attempt to suggest priorities and focus for left and progressive forces in this 2020 electoral cycle. We will contextualize 2020 with all of its opportunities and challenges within a longer-term strategic orientation to defeat the New Confederacy—the white united front of the most reactionary sectors of capital and the white middle strata and white workers who have rallied around them, with the Republican Party as their political instrument.

We believe that left organizing and messaging this year need to advance three long-term goals: (1) deal blows to the New Confederacy by defeating its candidates and strengthening the united front against it; (2) build left, progressive and socialist alliances within this anti-NC united front; (3) unite with advanced forces in the people's movements to build and grow statewide independent political organizations².

We emphasize building independent organization because the larger and better-resourced backward forces in the broad united front against the New Confederacy--e.g. mainstream Democratic Party (DP) forces—will keep on opposing our movements in various ways. We need to be politically savvy enough to engage in tactical alliances with the DP establishment, compromise when conditions and balance of forces necessitate, and to exert varying degrees of initiative and independence when we can. We must recognize a fundamentally important fact as we continue to build organization while often uniting with these backwards elements:

¹ the white united front of the most reactionary sectors of capital and the white middle strata and white workers who have rallied around them, with the Republican Party as their political instrument. Their political program is one of austerity, white supremacy, and cisheteropatriarchy.

² Organizations that have ideological, legislative, and financial independence from political parties and have a core competency in electoral work and a public brand to accompany that work

- We will eventually grow our legitimacy, our resources, and our power relative to backward elements like the moderate Democrats, thereby shifting the balance of forces within the united front more to the side of the coalitions and alliances of left and progressive forces.

This will mean that progressives and leftists could increasingly contest for, and eventually win, the leadership of our ideas and people relative to other powerful elements of the united front— until the New Confederacy is defeated. Once we defeat the New Confederacy, and as we continue to build organization, we will put ourselves in the position to take on those interests of capital that are embodied and carried out by the hegemonic coalition within the Democratic Party.

WHAT'S AT STAKE IN THE 2020 ELECTIONS?

The past three years of a Trump presidency and the rise of the right-wing populist movement that he leads and that props him up, have shown many progressive individuals and formations that there is indeed an objective difference between the New Confederacy's political instrument, the Republican Party, and the hegemonic, moderate thrust of the Democratic Party.

The stakes that follow are meant to demonstrate the calamitous risks to various sections of people, organizations, and movements if we don't make certain electoral interventions and advances in terms of winning races and referendums.

- Ongoing racist and xenophobic attacks on oppressed nationality³ and people of color communities further diminishing their safety, security, and rights. As the demographics of this country change these attacks seek to ensure a "Permanent Minority Rule" through tactics such as voter ID laws and Gerrymandering.
 - The blatant and repressive political surveillance and attempts to disrupt oppressed nationality (especially Black) movements and their leaders, activists, and organizers⁴ will multiply. White power movements will continue to grow and consolidate through the racist violence, terror, and rhetoric that is largely ignored by the power structure and is free to on.
 - The all-out assault on Latinx migrants through militarization of the border and imprisonment in concentration camps proceeds unchecked, with the breakup of families, gender-based violence, malnutrition, and deaths.
 - The Muslim travel ban and the restriction of immigration quotas for countries with large Muslim populations entrench the racist idea of the "other/terrorist" that disproportionately impacts people of color from the Middle East and Africa
- Attacks and restrictions on women and LGBTQ+ people through new laws and policies that are supported through the installation of judges with intense "pro-life" and Christian right-wing fundamentalist ideology
- Further international destabilization and devastation of the Global South and the Middle East. For example, a second Trump administration would further undermine the Palestinian people's

³ Liberation Road defines these as nations (Chicano, African American, The First Peoples) within the nation of the United States because of their qualitative and qualitatively different oppression they experienced in the development of the US nation and thus the development of racialized capitalism.

⁴ <https://theintercept.com/2020/01/20/political-surveillance-police-activists-tennessee/>

right to self-determination through aid and diplomacy that allow Israel to drastically tighten its grip.

- A catastrophic acceleration of ecological devastation through climate denial, elimination of regulations, and crippling of institutions such as the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Greater economic instability and insecurity due to trade wars for which the working class, domestically and globally, is footing the bill via the higher prices for goods they need.
- Strengthening the repressive state apparatus, with more resources and less accountability for the military and law enforcement, impacting primarily communities of color across the globe.
- Facilitating the continued growth of a white supremacist right-wing authoritarianism⁵ and populism.
- Hollowing out democratic institutions, information flow and cultural norms, by undermining parts of the state apparatus that have practical uses for everyday people such as the National Weather Association and the National Science Foundation

The People and the Election

In order to respond rapidly to shifting conditions of the current political and economic conjuncture, we need an analysis of the various social bases that are coming into play through the elections. As we take part in and help to build the movement of advanced social forces around exciting political figures such as “The Squad” and Bernie Sanders, we also need to maintain a balanced assessment of what is possible to achieve with and among various social bases within the larger united front against The New Confederacy.

We will attempt to articulate the forces that make up Bernie’s social base within the context of the significance of his candidacy. Beyond that we can only confidently say that social bases are largely in flux when it comes to the various coalitions (even the hegemonic establishment coalition) that exist within the Democratic Party. This flux, and the reality that US political parties have been formed historically by broad social blocs that aren’t always ideologically consistent, help explain why polls show that approximately 25% of Bernie supporters have Joe Biden as a second choice and vice versa⁶.

Liberation Road is in full support and elevation of Bernie Sanders as the top presidential candidate to mobilize for in the 2020 Democratic Primaries and beyond. Some of the reasons include but are not limited to:

- Sanders and his campaign are working to build the broadest and deepest coalition of voters that includes those normally excluded and/or discounted from engaging in electoral politics. The composition of Bernie’s coalition of support⁷ has more representation from the most oppressed and dispossessed social forces when you take into account race, class, and gender, than any other candidate. This makes his candidacy, and by extension his coalition, the one that Liberation Road wants to be a part of and help build. We are encouraging other progressive and Left forces

⁵ [The systematic restrictions of civil liberties and rights in a society](#)

⁶ <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/voters-second-choice-candidates-show-a-race-that-is-still-fluid/>

⁷ <https://www.politico.com/2020-election/democratic-presidential-candidates/polls/>

<https://www.salon.com/2020/02/09/the-berniebro-myth-persists-because-pundits-dont-understand-how-the-internet-works/>

to do the same. His campaign's more expansive and genuine efforts and operations to sink deep roots within a diversity of demographics produces a coalition that is based on:

- Elements of the strategic alliance (oppressed nationality movements and multi-national working-class movements) that include the likes of teachers' unions, People's Action, and Dream Defenders;
- people younger than 45;
- people with incomes of \$50,000 or less;
- women of color (especially Latinx) and white women;
- people who are overall racially diverse that include Black, Latinx, and AAPI
- Bernie as a social democrat⁸ embraces and talks about socialism (in a very broad sense) in a way that has begun to destigmatize it and open up discourse about what socialism is, what it isn't, and how people can get involved to bring it about. This creates an opening for revolutionary socialist organizations to engage, orient, and consolidate the new layers of politically active people into socialist organization as a part of our effort to rebuild the Left in the United States.
- Sanders has the most progressive stance on education, immigration, the environment, and health care which he plans to pay for by, among other things, divesting from the military and reallocating those funds to public goods and services.
 - Labor – Bernie has a Workplace Democracy Plan⁹, commitment, and demonstrated practice around increasing the mechanisms for unions to grow their membership and have more tools to wield against corporate greed and interests and for the rights and interests of workers.
 - Education – he wants to make a large investment in public education from Pre-K programs to college in order to lessen the financial burdens for all people in America, especially in the poorest communities and communities of color.
 - Immigration – In his first 100 days, Sanders wants to repeal many of the Trump era xenophobic immigration policies and push to have comprehensive immigration reform with a path to citizenship for all undocumented people.
 - Environment – he would fight to invest billions into a Green New Deal that not only prioritizes frontline communities but addresses necessary “just transitions” for them and the workers who may lose their jobs due to essential changes in the economy; articulates and fights against the profit-protecting actions of corporations (e.g. waste removal practices) that pollute and restrict the access to life necessities such as water, land, and food of communities across the country; cuts fossil fuel subsidies; and provides climate aid to nations in the Global South.
 - Healthcare – he would fight for a Medicare for All that would end private insurance programs and provide more comprehensive health services with no premiums, deductibles, or co-pays.
- He is the model of authenticity and of consistency when it comes to his political stances, political initiatives, and his voting record in his 30+ years as an elected official and earlier history as an

⁸ Social democracy is a political movement that wants a welfare state that incorporates capitalist and socialist practices.

⁹ <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/8/21/20826661/bernie-sanders-union-plan-labor-worker-rights-2020>

activist of civil rights and other social justice causes. This is one of the reasons why the people of color he has attracted support him both financially and by putting boots on the ground.

- Sanders appears to be the only candidate strong on cutting the military budget, is a staunch non-interventionist, and has more of a self-determination based foreign policy than any other candidate. He would de-escalate the attacks (via pressure campaigns and policies) on Mexico and Central American countries where people are risking life and limb to flee the effects of climate disaster and devastation, violence, and the destruction of their local economies by US and other global corporations.
- Sanders has a greater emphasis on the need for mass movements, political action, and political activism as a means to propel society forward in a more inclusive and equitable way.

We acknowledge where Sanders has blind spots regarding race and gender. Our support for him is not because he is a “perfect” candidate with “perfect” policies. We submit there is no such thing as a perfect candidate or perfect policies under a racialized patriarchal capitalist society. What Sanders represents is greater opportunities and openings for our movements to achieve gains, bring increasingly greater numbers into the political process, and create more favorable conditions for left and progressive movements to make possible tomorrow what is impossible today.

If Bernie does not emerge as the Democratic nominee, Liberation Road feels it is imperative that the Left and progressive forces in coalition with moderate forces mobilize against Trump and the New Confederacy in the general election.

At all costs, our left progressive electoral movement should discourage attacks on organizations/formations based on which candidates they endorse or support in the primaries. Such attacks leave our budding movement divided and prioritize the vilification of our needed allies in this longer-term fight in a way that obscures where our focus, energy, and resources should be directed: against the New Confederacy.

FIGHTING THE ENEMY – Primary Elections

Electoral Objective #1: Support and build Bernie’s coalition and then organize and mobilize the expanding electorate to propel Bernie to a win in the primary

March 3rd – Super Tuesday increases in significance for 2020 because it will be the first time we hear from states that have electorates with a greater concentration of Black and Latinx people, the multi-national working class, and their allies. In California the Asian-American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) vote takes on added importance because they represent approximately 15% of the electorate and Sanders has been polling well among the diverse ethnicities of that community. This will be a first test for the Bernie bloc to show up and show out against the competing blocs of the other candidates. For the entire primary, we should be growing Bernie’s coalition and deploying it at the national, state, and local level simultaneously.

Left and progressive individuals, organizations, and formations can build his coalition by throughout this primary:

- Bringing as many new people as possible from oppressed nationality and multi-national working-class sectors (and their allies) into the political process via phone banking, text banking,

canvassing, and/or doing house meetings. Our intent is not only to grow enthusiasm and support for Bernie but also to link ourselves and the organizations we are a part of with some of the individuals that we want to attract and keep engaged in the political process—whether or not Bernie wins, and long after this 2020 election is over.

- Coordinating deployments with other left and progressive forces to electorally critical geographic areas such as North Carolina, Florida, Georgia. Left and progressive individuals and organizations have already seen and been among Bernie supporters traveling to New Hampshire and South Carolina. We can add a dimension to these deployments if we go with the intention of helping local forces build their capacity to engage more of the emerging progressive electorate.
- Being a part of mobilizing sections of the left progressive coalition that Bernie represents at the state and local levels for candidates that will share a commitment to broad, bold social democratic politics and emphasize organization and movement-building as Bernie does. We should also mobilize to support candidates who have left and progressive visions and platforms that may include: Green New Deal-type proposals; sanctuary for all people; increased public services, jobs, and goods; decreased reliance on law enforcement; opening up the political process to more residents through participatory budgeting, increased voting access, etc. Depending on local conditions and balance of forces this could look like taking out neo-liberal Democrats in primaries (some state's primaries happen after the federal primary) in order to have left progressive candidates be contending in the general election. When and where possible we should share tactics and summations across localities and states can build the influence and cohesion of progressive elements within the DP.

Regardless of the outcomes of the Democratic primaries, we must be prepared to keep growing the Bernie bloc (the movement he represents) and to continue fighting in the general election.

FIGHTING THE ENEMY – General Elections

Electoral Objective #2: Whether Bernie wins or concedes/loses the Democratic nomination for President, during the general election the left progressive electoral movement should mobilize Bernie's bloc against Trump and the New Confederacy

We propose three ways to achieve this tactical objective for the 2020 electoral cycle in order to weaken the New Confederacy in the immediate sense. The achievement of the following three things would need to be coupled with keeping our sights set on the longer-term vision and possibilities of organization and united front building and opportunities to weaken our immediate enemy.

- Mobilizing the Bernie coalition for whichever Democratic candidate emerges from the Primary in order to remove Trump from the Presidency.
- Mobilize for Democrats in the 10 contestable US Senate races¹⁰, most of which were strong Republican-held districts until recent demographic shifts to more multi-national working-class people and people of color, and the growth of progressive infrastructure in places like Texas, North Carolina, and Georgia.
- Mobilizing the left progressive coalition that Bernie represents at the state and local levels against Republican candidates. This could look like having tactical alliances with neo-liberal Democratic coalitions in order to combine to remove a New Confederacy candidate and replace

¹⁰ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/07/12/senate-seats-most-likely-flip/>

them with a corporate Democrat. Or it could be left progressive coalitions brokering a tactical alliance with neo-liberal Democratic forces to support a left progressive candidate for elected office.

We believe that getting Democratic Party wins in the 10 newly contestable US Senate races in places like North Carolina, Texas, and Georgia is crucial because it would give the Democrats a slight majority. If the Democrats are able to take back control of the Senate, it would not mean our troubles are over or result in left progressive initiatives and bills having no obstacles. Nor would it significantly change the political equation that has resulted in a virtual federal stalemate for the past 10+ years over many issues and bills. It would, however, have three immediate impacts:

- It would take Mitch McConnell out of power as the Majority Leader. Which practically would mean removing a politically savvy henchman of the New Confederacy and removing a constant roadblock to any political initiatives that are not the New Confederacy's.
- It would put a pause on federal judge¹¹ appointments (one of the few things the Senate can do given the divided and largely stagnant nature of the federal government) of right-wing fundamentalists, which would be a benefit to people of color both native to the United States and foreign-born. Federal judges often adjudicate on cases that involve the federal government as a litigant and/or violations to the constitution. For example, cases like Trump's xenophobic travel ban and the Republican gerrymandered maps of North Carolina all had to go through the federal courts.
- Assuming Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg doesn't die before the general election and there is Democratic President and a slight Democratic majority in the Senate, it would all but guarantee that another right-wing fundamentalist judge wouldn't get appointed. Thereby denying the rightists an overwhelming majority on the Supreme Court.

Mobilize against the New Confederacy!

BUILDING LEFT PROGRESSIVE COALITIONS AND ALLIANCES

We believe that the strategic alliance of the multi-national working-class movement and the movements of oppressed nationalities—an alliance which currently has its most developed embodiment in the bloc around Bernie Sanders—is crucial both to defeating the New Confederacy and to moving toward socialism. But left and progressive forces can't win in the long-term, or in this election cycle, by fighting all of our enemies at the same time!

So, we join and build coalitions and alliances with a broader set of movements and organizations that will have the power, size, capacity, resources, and enough of a shared interest to defeat the New Confederacy (Yes, sometimes that means corporate Democrats). All of our organizations and movements are not in the same position to do this at the same scale. We each have to figure out a right-sized approach based on our particular conditions and seize opportunities to grow our formations of alignment and connect them with advanced, intermediate, and backward organizations and formations when and where possible. In this way we contribute to the convergence of a united front against the New Confederacy ([Liberation Road's United Front Policy](#)) and use the political openings and

¹¹ <https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/court-role-and-structure/comparing-federal-state-courts>

momentum created by Sanders and others to build a left progressive pole within that united front that centers the needs, demands, and leadership of the strategic alliance.

It's important to remember that the united front is an objective phenomenon that arises as a response to objective conditions. For example, the teenagers who walked out of school and took to the streets against gun violence pushed a narrative and fueled an upswell that drew together parents from diverse races and classes in the cities and suburbs, clergy and faith-based activists, teachers and youth workers, and some (mostly DP) elected officials at all levels. Self-identified leftists and progressives joined this motion, incorporated the issue into our ongoing work, if it wasn't already included, and related it to other ways in which human life is devalued while profits and power over others are elevated in this society. Making these connections is an aspect of the role the left forces can play in helping a movement become aware of itself as a political force that has allies and enemies in common and is a part of something with a bigger focus and vision—thus becoming a movement for itself, not just a movement in itself.

2020 affords us an opportunity to build these alliances and coalitions that center the freedom fighters of oppressed nationality and multi-national working people's movements. Liberation Road proposes adopting a "For All" framework and political program that both centers the most marginalized among us and has room for a variety of constituencies to see their issues reflected in the framework and program. Bernie Sanders gives us a good template for this when he talks about Medicare for All. Within this narrative and policy exist some important elements:

- A clear articulation of who the antagonist/them is: greedy private insurance companies that care more about profit than ensuring people can access and afford care.
- A clear formulation of the protagonist/us/subject: this is for the benefit of everyone. Not just some. Not just most.
- It clearly states how people will benefit: when anyone gets sick, the only thing they will need to worry about is getting to the doctor and following through on whatever wellness plan follows. No fretting about whether or how much it will be covered by insurance, or whether it's a doctor in network, or the myriad of other concerns and thoughts people experience before, during, or after seeking medical help
- A viable programmatic alternative: It presents an audacious world view and philosophy as a practical, viable alternative to the inadequate, miserly, and corporation invested neo-liberal Democratic approach.

"Medicare for All" is broad in nature, which is one of its strengths. And on the other hand, "Medicare for All" addresses some race and class issues such as the "redlining" practices of private insurance companies¹² that won't provide health care coverage to working class and/or people of color communities because they need more care than private insurers are willing to pay for. These companies willfully exclude millions of people who are the sickest due to a host of environmental, social, and economic inequalities, historical and current.

¹² <https://www.tennessean.com/story/money/industries/health-care/2016/09/29/consumers-rattled-by-insurance-options-without-bcbst/91187772/>

While our movements should uplift, support, and continue to grow the left progressive coalition that Bernie represents and political narratives and policies like “Medicare for All,” we should also be taking the opportunity to push the envelope further because we know the most oppressed communities we build with and within are not a monolith and can’t be treated as such. An example of pushing the envelope could be to work with our allies and pressure antagonistic governing blocs within Democratic strongholds and contested states and localities to accept/pass Medicare for All, while stipulating that funding Medicare for All should include a divestment from law enforcement in order to address the lack of quality health care facilities in working-class and POC communities. Not having to worry about exorbitant health care costs or lack of coverage of preventive or life-saving procedures is one priority. Having community clinics, doctor’s offices, and hospitals that are equipped to handle more than minor bumps and bruises and colds and flus is another. Additionally, the left and progressive forces will want to center a climate lens in everything we do. Therefore, we’d want to demand eco-friendly health care facilities be built and that existing facilities be eco-retrofitted.

Through an ecological justice lens we should use this opportunity to build strategic and tactical alliances amongst key oppressed nationality and multi-national working people’s movement actors and their allies in our states. Where we can, take Bernie’s example and provide an umbrella under which oppressed peoples of all kinds can join and become agents of change within while seeing their particular communities reflected in the broader narratives, demands, and policies. This requires the left and progressive forces to center the needs, experiences, and demands of those movements through slogans and programs such as Homes for All and Sanctuary for All.

By building sections of the left/progressive bloc within the united front, we can take advantage of the political openings to win more today than we could have yesterday. Community organizations should forge and deepen connections with labor in order to form these critical alliances that will maximize the material gains and political power of working-class people and people of color. We must courageously face our fears and mistrust, and the historical barriers to working in community and labor coalitions. We can do this by acknowledging past harms and historical and present contradictions and sharing the lessons from our various efforts. Some teachers’ and other labor unions have already started signaling and taking steps to build coalitions and alliances in a more equitable way with community organizations. Many of those same unions have begun to practice “common good” bargaining around issues broader than the workplace that impact the lives of various workers in the schools, parents, and students. Perhaps more of the social justice-oriented unions will continue to enter into new kinds of coalitions that center the experiences and needs of communities.

BUILDING ORGANIZATION

When it comes to building ongoing organization, we believe that left and progressive players should prioritize organizing new layers of the politically active and unaffiliated activists and organizers into some combination of the following organizations:

- 1) For Liberation Road, our primary electoral objective for this political moment is to create and/or help to grow Independent Political Organizations (IPOs). Since many IPOs start out as local (city- or county-wide) in scope, they should look to join state-based IPOs or other state-based electoral entities when and where they can.

- a. Examples of statewide IPOs and state-based electoral entities: C4 tables¹³, New Virginia Majority, California Calls, Kentuckians for the Common Wealth, Florida New Majority, and the State Wide Alignment Group¹⁴
- 2) The greater openness to socialism and socialist ideas is coinciding with a diminished presence of the organized socialist left. We need to use this time to continue building socialist cadre organizations like Liberation Road and other socialist organizations¹⁵. Building these organizational homes will strengthen our capacity to spread and consolidate mass socialist radicalism.
- 3) Other forms of mass organizations like labor unions, building their political capacity and helping them to shift into a broader social justice framework

We must continue to capitalize on the energy and urgency of climate and ecological organizing, and the social democratic campaigns and platforms of candidates up and down the ballot like Bernie Sanders. Sustaining and repairing our environment cannot be separated from the need for the most affected communities to have more ownership and control over their conditions of life, or from a recognition of how class, race and gender oppression intersect with ecological devastation.

For those who have been intentionally left out of the political process, largely young people, people of color, LGBTQ people, and whole swaths of the multi-national working class, Bernie's momentum can be a springboard to ever greater transformational possibilities. Our aim is to draw them into independent political organization that is inclusive and generates concrete demands and real gains; a shared, bold political vision; broad and deep solidarity; and a sense of shared identity.

2020 presents the Left and progressive organizations, formations, and movements with opportunities to seize the overall excitement and sense of possibility and also act as beacons within a time of great uncertainty and insecurity. We can then translate that into a focused, left progressive electorate that will continue to build organization so that we may decisively win leadership of the united front against the New Confederacy in order to defeat the New Confederacy!!

¹³ State-wide formations of C4 non-profit organizations that exist to share resources of different kinds, data, and in most cases, strategy

¹⁴ A community-labor state-based IPO in Florida

¹⁵ Liberation Road relates to other socialist organizations in various capacities such as: Left Roots, New Afrikan People's Organization (NAPO), Communist Party USA (CPUSA), and Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism (CCDS)