



2022-2025 LIBERATION ROAD STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

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2022-2025 LIBERATION ROAD STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

SECTION 1 - OVERVIEW OF THE 2022-2025 STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

This document presents Liberation Road's three-year (2022-2025) strategic orientation, as well as the analysis and strategic thinking upon which the plan is based. Its purpose is to translate our 2022 Main Political Report's general analysis of conditions into a specific plan of action. Our strategy document seeks to do two things: (1) claim the most pressing political task(s) of the moment for the socialist Left and those in our periphery, and (2) develop a general plan for the organization to develop those tasks to the best of our ability.

This document will essentially maintain the basic political outlook of Liberation Road expressed since our 2016 strategic resolutions. There are two factors that continue to define the political moment and determine the duration for the strategic orientation established in 2016 and being built upon in this document. The first factor is external and is defined by the main enemy given the stage of the U.S. class struggle: the New Confederacy. The second factor is internal and is defined by the need to build state-based independent political organization and power as central to defeating The New Confederacy.

The MPR argued that the Multi-Racial Pro-Democracy United Front (The United Front) we need to build has experienced a significant Leftward shift; that there has been consolidation of the United Front as a whole against the New Confederacy's anti-democratic thrust; and that, although The United Front is still largely objective, there are growing self-conscious blocs made up of advanced and some intermediate segments. On this terrain, we argue that there are three interrelated efforts for advanced forces in the coming period.

The first effort remains that of building sections of the strategic alliance through independent political organizations (IPOs). We continue to believe that the best means to construct a multi-racial majoritarian self-conscious bloc (i.e., collective political subject) under contemporary conditions is through the creation of durable, mass organizations that possess a core electoral competency, that unite oppressed nationality movements and diverse working-class movements, that are organizationally and financially independent of the Democratic Party apparatus, and that are capable of maintaining independence and initiative while also engaging in unity of action with any Democratic Party coalition willing to fight to defeat the New Confederacy.

In the past, we have argued that effective IPOs must be focused on the state level, mainly because of the peculiarities of the US federalist system, and we continue to believe this is the case. In

addition, our forces are not yet large enough, strong enough, aligned enough and coordinated enough to build a single cohesive national IPO formation anchored in numerous state chapters. However, the increasing number, strength and sophistication of state-based IPOs as well as the scale and urgency of the threats confronting us now necessitate more effective coordination among these formations, especially across states and regions such as the Sunbelt in order to develop and implement common strategy aimed at flipping the South.

The second effort is thus to increase the alignment among IPO formations and related projects of the inside/outside trend, committing to an effort to further cohere and consolidate the trend. A realignment occurring within the trend is characterized by a shift of the center of gravity to electoral and social movement formations like the Working Families Party and Movement for Black Lives. Due to their institutional connections and political standing with a myriad of social forces, they represent the possibility of cohering parts of the national liberation movements, sections of environmental justice and gender liberation movements, and a portion of the most progressive sections of the labor movement. Some of the ways in which our section of the Left can help achieve this will be explored in section V, “Advanced Forces and the Third Reconstruction: How the Left Contributes, and How Liberation Road Contributes.”

The measure of a more coherent national inside/outside trend will be its ability to carry out shared program on the basis of shared strategy. Because of the factors explored in section three (“Expanding Democracy”), we believe the key programmatic task of a more consolidated trend must be the defense, expansion and transformation of democracy. We propose that the framework of a Third Reconstruction provides the outlines of such a program. Accordingly, ***the third effort is to engage in a coordinated program to defend, expand and transform democracy towards a Third Reconstruction.***

Liberation Road’s Central Task

Above, we outline the three efforts we see as central for *all* advanced forces in the coming period as we work to strengthen the Multi-Racial Pro-Democracy United Front and to defeat the New Confederacy. Within those broader efforts, the question facing Liberation Road is what is *our* central task organizationally, given our self-assessment of our size, scale and scope of influence.

Liberation Road’s 2022-2025 central task is to help consolidate a nationwide socialist core within the inside/outside trend strategically, programmatically, and organizationally.

The Multi-Racial Pro-Democracy Front will be unable to mount a successful offensive against the New Confederacy so long as the backwards elements are leading it. Furthermore, in order to fight for and win leadership of the united front, a left pole (the advanced and some intermediate forces) must be more aligned at the level of strategy, program, and organization. And It is the job of conscious, organized socialists within that pole to promote and nurture that alignment.

Presently, the socialist Left has relatively little organized, unified and nationwide impact within the inside/outside trend. Liberation Road’s analysis has informed the creation and strategy of a few state-based IPOs, and individual cadre play crucial roles in these and other social movement organizations. Organizationally, however, our influence is limited—a challenge shared by most

other socialist organizations save sections of the DSA, which faces other challenges. The question for the socialist Left is whether we can get organized and consolidated around an inside/outside popular bloc-building strategy, with a clearly articulated function and deep connections to the broader realignment effort and the most consequential formations at the center of it.

We believe the organized socialist Left can and must play a significant role in relation to the broader tasks facing the advanced forces of the United Front. As Marxists rooted in the multinational and multi-gendered working class and social movements, with a deep analysis of U.S. history and a creative approach to revolutionary theory, key sections of our organized socialist Left as well as unaffiliated revolutionary socialists active in labor and the social movements have the responsibility to help lead in the formulation of strategy, the conjunctural analysis required to develop mass line and program, the summation of practice and development of theory, the development and training of mass-based leaders and strategists, the promotion of a national and international perspective on our tasks and struggles, the ability to shift tactics as the objective situation changes, and the commitment to represent the interests of the future in the movements of the present. While organized Marxists are not alone in offering many of these capacities, these contributions are among the fundamental reasons we exist, and without those capacities embodied in a nationwide socialist core, the advanced forces of our strategic united front will struggle to cohere, rise to meet our challenges, and adapt to changing conditions. Section V will explore practical initiatives aimed at furthering the development of this nationwide socialist core.

Markers of Success

Three outcomes will serve as markers of success for Liberation Road in carrying out this central task over the coming years:

- a. Liberation Road's approach in three areas will become more accessible, relevant, and popular among the organized, social movement and labor Left:
 - .The evolving united front against the New Confederacy;
 - i.The Third Reconstruction as a strategic objective; and
 - ii.The development of a left pole within labor that practices social justice unionism in alignment with the inside/outside trend.
 - a. Liberation Road will make tangible contributions to the inside/outside trend realignment processes. This would include strengthening and expanding the Inside/Outside Project; contributing to the expansion and growing influence of Organizing Upgrade; and developing initiatives which bring parts of the labor Left into greater alignment with social movement formations that have taken center stage in the inside/outside trend.
- b. There will be progress over three years in organizational unification of sections of the socialist Left which share this general united front/inside-outside/third reconstruction analysis.

SECTION 2 - RECAP OF ANALYSIS AND TENETS OF STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

In early 2016 we adopted, and in 2019 affirmed, a Main Political Report and a Strategy that largely focused on the electoral sphere, in part because of the clear and present electoral danger which those documents anticipated from the New Confederacy. The 2016 strategy defined the New Confederacy as the white united front, that includes the most reactionary capitalists; has a pro-austerity, white supremacist, and cisheteropatriarchal agenda; and uses the Republican Party as its political instrument.

We believe the New Confederacy remains our principal enemy in this political moment due to the **dominance** of this bloc and the elevated threat they pose to democracy, the planet, and oppressed peoples. And we maintain that the electoral arena remains the key site of struggle in this political period. The lead up to the 2020 elections, the elections themselves, and their aftermath have reconfirmed the crossroads that the United States is at: multi-racial democracy or white authoritarian rule. At the same time, there have been significant shifts in the balance of power which our updated strategy must address.

At the federal level the New Confederacy appears to be entering a strategic stalemate after a long period of being on the offensive. On the immediate level, Trump has been defeated, and Democrats have gained or held narrow majorities in the Senate and the House of Representatives. More broadly, the neoliberal consensus for which the Republican and Democratic Parties have been standard-bearers for the past 40+ years (with Republicans often playing a leading role) now appears to be entering into a period of crisis. This is due to a complex interplay of factors including structural contradictions of capital accumulation, the long-term impacts of decades of failed neoliberal policies compounded by the urgent needs of the COVID pandemic, the political and class struggles of peoples' movements, and the increasing extremism of the New Confederacy which has alienated key sectors of the capitalist class.

This crisis of the neoliberal order is marked by an active vying for a new capitalist consensus to emerge. For the moment, however, no such consensus has been able to assume hegemonic form, in part because the multiracial pro-democracy United Front is still too weak to mount an offensive, both internally and externally. Externally, razor-thin legislative majorities prevent The United Front from advancing its agenda. Internally, Left forces occupy a strengthened but still subservient position relative to other forces in the coalition. This is why we assert that, at the federal level, we are entering a period of strategic stalemate—that is, a period of active contestation between the New Confederacy and the United Front over who will be able to go on the offensive.

At the state level, however, the New Confederacy has maintained and indeed expanded its power, gaining three new trifectas in the 2020 elections to secure governing power over 24 state governments while the Democrats held steady at 15. This is particularly concerning because 2020 was a redistricting year, and generally the party that controls state government controls the maps—particularly now that the courts have been stacked with right-wing ideologues who are unlikely to prevent even the most blatant racist and partisan gerrymandering. As a result, the New Confederacy will be able to create districts that give right wing candidates a significant structural advantage on the local, state and federal level for the next ten years.

One major difference since we wrote the 2016 and 2019 strategy documents is the amount of progressive electoral infrastructure that has been built up in a number of states. For instance, the State Power Caucus now has a total of 20 states with state-based IPOs, and the Working Families Party has managed to cohere a variety of Left forces through The Frontline coalition, while expanding their own efforts to 11 states. While the United Front against the New Confederacy remains largely spontaneous, there are now some significant advanced elements fighting to make it a more self-conscious force and contesting for the leadership of it.

As these advanced forces have been coalescing, the broader United Front has also shifted to the Left, propelled both by the dynamism of progressive candidates and forces and by the deepening crisis of neoliberalism (that is, by both subjective and objective factors). At the same time, that slight leftward shift has intensified fault lines between advanced and backwards forces in the Front, as they contest for leadership over policy and political strategy.

SECTION 3 - EXPANDING DEMOCRACY

The New Confederacy’s strategy to secure governing power is predicated on a “tyranny of the minority”—that is, on the attempt to create, maintain and perpetuate systems where less than half the population can secure governing power over majorities who do not agree with them. Radicalized, conspiratorial, and increasingly explicitly white supremacist, the New Confederacy does not aspire to secure the consent of a majority of the population. Instead, their strategy relies on selective exclusion through a combination of factors that are structural (such as the innate biases of the Senate and Electoral College), demographic (partisan sorting and rural depopulation) and explicitly anti-democratic (disenfranchisement and voter suppression, partisan gerrymandering, etc).

The compounding impacts of these structural, demographic and anti-democratic forces mean that the struggle for democracy will be critical in the coming years. Absent major efforts to defend voting rights, defeat partisan gerrymandering, and transform the fundamentally anti-democratic structures of the US political system, the ability of the multiracial pro-democracy United Front to win legislative majorities and governing power will be severely compromised through at least 2030. For this reason, we argue that the key political battle of the coming years must center around the defense, expansion, and transformation of democracy.

Further, we argue that the fight to defend, expand and transform democracy must occur across three discrete but interrelated fronts: procedural democracy, political democracy and popular democracy.

By procedural democracy, we refer to such mechanisms as regular elections, pluralistic political participation and universal suffrage. Such mechanisms, which collectively subordinate state power to elected executive and legislative bodies, are crucial fault lines in the struggle against the New Confederacy today—as they were against the old Confederacy of yore. Indeed, the question of whether the “representative” institutions of the US political system will represent the multiracial

body politic or merely the racial minoritarianism of the White Republic has been a defining feature of struggles over governing and state power in the United States since its founding. Today, our forces are on the defensive in the fight for procedural democracy as the New Confederacy launches its most powerful and coordinated attack on voting rights since the end of the Civil Rights era.

Any attempt to defend, expand and transform procedural democracy, however, must grapple with the fact that the institutions of procedural democracy in the United States are themselves structurally anti-democratic. As Bob Wing among others has detailed, key elements of the United States political system—including but not limited to the presidential and electoral college system, the winner-takes-all, single member district system, the federalist system, and the system of unequal representation enshrined in the structure of the US Senate—themselves systematically perpetuate white minoritarian rule. Thus we cannot simply fight to ensure regular elections and universal suffrage inside the existing system, but must also fight to fundamentally transform this system into a more authentically democratic one.

By political democracy, we thus mean the struggle for a reconstructed political system that fundamentally alters the structures of US government and governance in ways that render it more authentically reflective of the people's will. This could include but is not limited to: restructuring or abolishing fundamentally anti-democratic institutions like the Electoral College, expanding or abolishing the United States Senate, abolishing the filibuster, expanding the US Supreme Court, implementing electoral reforms such as rank-choice voting and proportional representation systems, and expanding mechanisms of direct democracy such as ballot initiatives, recalls, and referenda. Some of these reforms are (relatively) feasible in the short- to medium-term; others are a site of long-term struggle and contestation. Historically, the principal example we can draw on as a model for such struggles over political democracy is the era of the First Reconstruction—not only or primarily in terms of the Reconstruction Amendments to the US Constitution, but also in terms of the rewritten Constitutions of the reconstructed states.

By popular democracy, we mean extending the fight beyond procedural and political democracy to include substantive social and economic equality through the democratization of land, labor, wealth and social life. The democratization of land involves increasing the amount of land and housing that is community owned and controlled through land trusts, conservancies and cooperatives. The democratization of labor involves strengthening the institutional power of unions, clearing a path for more unionization to take place across broader and deeper sectors of the working class, overturning right to work legislation, and expanding workplace democracy through worker-owned cooperatives, works councils and elected employee representation on companies' board of directors (codetermination). The democratization of wealth involves economic redistribution through progressive taxation as well as a reduction in the scope, size and scale of large-scale corporate wealth concentration through anti-trust mechanisms and, where possible, nationalization. The democratization of social life includes participatory budgeting, neighborhood councils, popular assemblies, empowered boards and commissions and other mechanisms to bring democracy to neighborhoods and communities. It also includes taking the fight to that key contested ideological apparatus of the capitalist state, the public schools, where

the Left is well situated in unions and communities to strengthen our multi-racial pro-democracy front even as the right campaigns to defund the schools, intensifies its attacks on critical race theory and LGBTQ rights, and seeks to restore in our schools a whitewash of U.S. history.

As socialists we know that, absent such social and economic democratization, procedural democracy remains limited—the abstract equality which, as Anatole France famously put it, “forbids rich and poor alike to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal their bread.” The contradiction between formal (procedural) equality and systemic (social and economic) inequality can only be resolved by transforming one of the terms—that is, either by moving towards ever fuller social and economic democratization, or through increasing political disenfranchisement and exclusion. It is for this reason that advanced forces can and must intervene by deepening the struggle to entail procedural, political and popular democracy.

Because the New Confederacy’s anti-democratic strategy poses an existential threat to the Pro-Democracy United Front as a whole, the battle for “Democracy for All” has the potential to unite all portions of the United Front—including most neoliberal and corporate Democrats. The backwards forces within our United Front, however, will seek to restrict the terms of this fight to merely formal and limited procedural democracy, without extending the fight to include political and popular democracy—that is, without extending it to include the fundamental transformation of the United States’ only partially democratic political structures as well as the broader democratization of social and economic life.

Absent such extension, however, the battle to defend procedural democracy in a narrow, limited sense is unlikely to succeed. Make no mistake: the defense of procedural democracy is vital if we are to win the political power necessary to advance a more ambitious agenda of political transformation and societal democratization. Without that broader vision, however, procedural democracy is hollow—an abstract equality devoid of content. For this reason, fights over formal democracy risk becoming abstracted from the immediate fights and needs of the people, failing to galvanize the necessary support they will need to succeed.

Further, even if we are able to galvanize the masses of our Pro-Democracy United Front, procedural democracy is unlikely to deliver us the electoral majorities we will need to secure consistent governing power absent major structural transformations to the US political system. To take but one example, the innately anti-democratic biases of the US Senate—which grants equal representation to the smallest state as the largest, thus giving Wyoming voters 70 times the clout of those in California—is increasingly compounded by the dynamics of intra-state migration, rural depopulation and geographic polarization. As has been widely noted, the 50 Republican Senators currently represent *40 million less* voters than their 50 Democratic counterparts. This trend, which has been developing over the past decades (at no point have GOP Senators represented a majority of voters since 1996, even as they have held the Senate for roughly 2/3 of those years) is only increasing, granting the Senate an increasingly anti-democratic tilt. Without boldly advancing structural reforms to these and other political systems, we will thus be fighting the battle on increasingly unfavorable terrain.

Our task, then, must be to develop a strategy that articulates a dialectical relationship between procedural, political and popular democracy, taking account of the concrete conditions of the political terrain. This is not about developing a wish-list of hoped-for policy objectives but rather of correctly grasping the relation between procedural democracy, political transformation and broader social and economic democratization. Viewed in a pessimistic light, this dynamic inter-relationship can pose itself in the form of a vicious circle: the inability to enact structural political reforms preventing us from enacting sweeping policies to advance social and economic equality, in turn demoralizing people about electoral politics, thus depressing turnout and allowing the right wing to win or strengthen majorities and enact anti-democratic policies to further disenfranchise masses of voters, thus rendering structural reforms more difficult, etc. etc. Viewed from a different angle, however, this vicious cycle can be replaced by a virtuous one, in which defensive battles to protect procedural democracy engender electoral victories that lead to structural political reforms and social and economic democratization, which in turn expand and invigorate the electorate, which then increase and embolden governing majorities, etc.

Careful attention must be paid to the particular conditions that determine which sequence of struggles can allow for cumulative wins at various levels (local, state and federal) as well as the interrelation between these levels. While to a certain extent, the struggle for procedural democracy must be viewed as primary, there is a complex and dynamic interplay between procedural, political and popular democracy that will be impacted by the concrete conditions of the political terrain. In red (and, to a lesser extent, purple) states, we believe the struggle over procedural democracy will be the primary struggle, and a largely defensive one. In blue states, however, political and/or popular democracy may take precedence, depending on the balance of forces internal to the Pro-Democracy United Front. At the federal level, the interaction of these three aspects of the fight for democracy is highly dynamic due to the complex interactions between state and federal government as well as the contested and inconclusive balance of power within federal government, which we have characterized as one of strategic stalemate. (Thus, at the time of writing, the inability to pass comprehensive voting rights legislation through the Senate because of the filibuster, to take but one example, shows the dynamic interrelation of procedural and political democracy and the need to be able to engage simultaneously at multiple levels of that fight.) Possibilities at a local level will be conditioned by state and federal conditions, in addition to local context.

SECTION 4 - TOWARDS A THIRD RECONSTRUCTION

This Strategic Orientation is predicated on the necessity of defeating the New Confederacy by a broad united front led by the advanced with the strategic alliance of the multiracial working class and multi-class oppressed nationality movements at its core. The defeat of this reactionary and dangerous bloc must be as broad and deep as the united front which opposes it—ideologically, politically, and economically. To marshal the necessary forces over the next 10-20 years, the advanced should pursue the strategic objective of a Third Reconstruction. Progress towards that Reconstruction would be transformative and represent huge setbacks for the agenda of the New

Confederacy, and a Third Reconstruction's eventual achievement would seal the New Confederacy's defeat. This section on the Third Reconstruction is an initial offering which we hope will be a source of ongoing debate and strategic alignment among the advanced sections of our united front.

We envision a Third Reconstruction as a political period during which a very broad front of popular forces has gained sufficient strength to institute a wide range of transformative political and economic reforms and broken the back of New Confederate power at the state and federal levels. That front, which in order to fully succeed must ultimately be led by the strategic alliance described above, will include a wide array of class forces ranging from large sections of the multiracial working class and a variety of urban and rural middle strata to anti-Confederate sections of the capitalist bourgeoisie. Many of these forces will support the Third Reconstruction program, but some—including powerful ones—will not. The one thing they will all have in common is an objective interest in defeating the New Confederacy, and those who despite that interest resist major aspects of the Third Reconstruction program must be pulled along or neutralized. Above all, it is difficult to imagine a thorough going defeat of this powerful right-wing bloc without an equally powerful progressive multiracial bloc mobilized around something like a Third Reconstruction program.

It is important to distinguish this set of institutional and transformational **reforms** from socialism, that lengthy transitional period between capitalism and communism which requires working-class hegemony in politics and ideology, and working-class democratic dominance over the apparatuses of state power. The Third Reconstruction instead should be seen as a shift in the balance of the U.S. class struggle towards popular movements, a shift which would create fertile ground for the next stage of revolutionary struggle towards socialism. In other words, the Third Reconstruction—whose necessity is placed before us by the dominance of the New Confederacy along with the popular forces increasingly arrayed against it—is not a final destination, but a critical stepping stone.

Four Pillars of the Third Reconstruction

We envision the Third Reconstruction's program to have four interrelated pillars: political equality, economic justice, planet first orientation, and democratic foreign policy.

4.1 Political Equality

The first pillar, as in the First and Second Reconstructions, is the expansion of democracy (covered in the previous section 3). It will include fighting the New Confederacy's disenfranchisement efforts through their Renewed Jim Crow agenda. Our ability to get the kinds of structural legislation and programs needed to achieve this Third Reconstruction will no doubt face a unique challenge relative to the first two: a federal court system packed with right-wing ideologues for judges. Thus, our ability to at minimum neutralize the effects of the right-leaning courts goes back to the necessity of having multi-year strategies for state-based independent political organization

and power building projects that take over the states for the United Front, thereby thwarting The New Confederacy's efforts to push things through the courts to bolster their attempts at minority rule.

4.2 Economic Justice

A second pillar of the Third Reconstruction's program will be economic justice. It is critical that this part of the program address the needs of the multi-racial working class as well as significant sections of the middle strata, especially people of color. An economic program addressing the needs of both the working-class and middle strata opens a path to construct the strong and diverse multiclass alliances necessary to the Multi-Racial Pro-Democracy United Front. These alliances are critical, because ruling class strategy always includes cooptation of segments of the middle strata, and middle strata will ultimately be led either by representatives of the working class or those of the ruling class—there is no other alternative. This will require the Left to develop greater precision and objectivity in our understanding and organizing of people of various class positions in order to develop an inclusive agenda which at the same time does not obscure important class differences. In the U.S., the complex issue of the middle strata is further complicated by the national question (racial oppression) and the historic and continuing system of white supremacy. Therefore, an economic program developed, pursued and implemented through a racial justice lens is of the utmost importance, and this creates yet another way to present a stark alternative to the New Confederacy's minority, white authoritarian rule.

To build state-wide IPOs our strategies must include rural organizing. Family farmers and other key rural middle strata are a critical constituency for state-wide political success. We must seek allies in rural areas to build a firewall against the white authoritarian forces and to bring folks into the Left-progressive alliance using Race-Class Narrative frames as exemplified in WeMakeTheFuture.us. Through this type of work, farmers and workers along the food chain from farm to table can be united with a focus on food justice, which centers the needs of farmers, ranchers, and consumers of color and provides access to healthy, culturally appropriate, and affordable food for all.

A Third Reconstruction economic program “for all” might include:

- Lifting up the care economy through greatly increased wages and benefits;
- A drastic increase in the minimum wage;
- Fully-funded preK-16 public education and the elimination of public funding for charter schools;
- Publicly funded childcare, with increased wages, benefits and training for providers;
- Universal low-cost high-quality health care (including free abortion), coupled with expanded access to healthcare through increased facilities, especially in rural areas;
- Labor law reform coupled with widespread unionization;
- Rural land reform with special attention to Native, African-American, Chicano, and Asian-American populations;
- Food justice, replacing the industrial agribusiness system with a food system based on food sovereignty and sustainability, agroecology, living wages for all who do the work in the food chain, and parity prices that provide a “living wage” to farmers.

- Fully-paid parental and sick leave;
- Affordable high-quality elder care;
- Expanded OSHA enforcement/penalties;
- Vast expansion of green jobs with public funding and training;
- Extensive environmental retrofitting of facilities across the U.S. (schools, hospitals, large apartment complexes, etc.);
- Student and mortgage debt relief;
- Rent control coupled with aid to small landlords;
- Access to loans for small businesses;
- Public investment in broadband to provide affordable and accessible internet throughout the U.S.;
- An end to the “independent contractor” gig economy;
- Progressive tax reform to pay for all of this.
- Reducing the scope and scale of huge private corporations and/or nationalizing them; target industries might include fossil fuels, private banks, big tech, and agribusiness.

While these are all reforms conceivable within the framework of capitalist social relations, it is easy to imagine how transformational many of them would be in the U.S. context. At the same time, it will be critical for the advanced section of our united front to prioritize these types of fights in order to focus our strength, divide our enemies and maximize our gains. Some sections of the Left have grown used to issuing laundry lists, and such lists are the death of strategy and tactics.

4.3 Planet First Orientation

The second pillar will be a planet first orientation to multiple aspects of our lives. A model for this planet first orientation is embodied in the Green New Deal framework (and its subsequent iterations from social movements) that uses an ecological justice lens to tie together the interrelated and interconnected nature of water and energy democracy, land and housing, infrastructure, and the organization of people’s labor. The Green New Deal provides a basis from which to gain ground in the war of maneuver and have deep impact legislation that can be crafted and fought for. It also creates room to link together various sections of the national liberation movements, the labor movement, the ecological justice movement, and the popular democratic movement.

4.4 Democratic Foreign Policy

The fourth pillar of the Third Reconstruction is a democratic foreign policy. This has nothing to do with U.S. State Department slogans such as “spreading democracy and human rights,” which act as cover for the promotion of U.S. imperialist interests. The decline of the US as a global hegemon; the subsequent rise of the European Union, Russia, and (especially) China; the global nature and impact of the COVID19 pandemic; the rise of mass migration and immigration as burning issues for oppressed peoples and fuel for neo-fascism; and the growing contradictions between the transnational capitalist class and nation states—all require that the Left rebuild its internationalist muscle not only in theory but also in practice and program. The Left should resist

U.S. government intervention in the affairs of other nation states. Instead, we need to promote and fight for a *progressive* global interdependence and global repair of people and planet (e.g., vaccine redistributions through international bodies to the global South from the global North).

With China in particular we should be stressing cooperation, not meddling or antagonizing, because U.S. foreign policy towards China impacts everything from addressing global climate change, to the pandemic and its recovery, to the US labor movement, to US social movements (particularly with the extra-state violence aimed at the AAPI community). China and the United States are the world's two biggest economies and two of the biggest political and military players, and it is the U.S. Left's responsibility to help ensure that, as U.S. global dominance wanes, the inevitable competition between the U.S. and China remains peaceful. Ultimately, a U.S. democratic foreign policy is about increasing other nation states' ability—especially in the Global South—to practice independence and self-determination.

A note on police and prison abolition

Over the summer of 2020—in response to the police murder of George Floyd, and building on foundations laid since the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2013—wide-scale protests spurred a nationwide and indeed international debate on policing, prisons and other aspects of the repressive state apparatuses. As socialists and revolutionaries we are deeply inspired by this mass movement and committed to the long-term goal of police and prison abolition. We also understand that police and prisons are enmeshed in and structurally necessary to the perpetuation of cis-heteropatriarchal, white supremacist capitalism; that their abolition is a long-term process which will have to occur as part of the transition to a post-capitalist society; and that in such a process of transition questions about the repressive state apparatuses will play a key part.

Under a Third Reconstruction, important steps can and must be taken to stop the criminalization of oppressed nationality and poor and working-class communities, reduce the harms of over-policing, and reverse the massive explosion of the carceral state apparatus which has occurred over the past 40+ years. Important work is beginning to move forward here under a divest/invest framework, and there are exciting possibilities for concrete reform, particularly since many decisions about policing are controlled at a local level, where our movement forces are (in some cases) capable of exerting greater power than they currently wield at a state and federal level.

However, it is important to distinguish such institutional and transformational reforms from police abolition. While the former can lay long-term foundations for and build towards the latter, the abolition of the repressive state apparatuses is not possible under capitalism. We stress this point because it is important for revolutionaries to have a clear-eyed assessment of what is and is not possible within a Third Reconstruction period which, while (hopefully!) advancing the balance of class forces, is distinct from socialism (itself a transitional period between capitalism and communism). Further, our analysis of successful socialist and decolonial revolutions suggests that even or especially in the period of socialist transition, control over the repressive state apparatuses will be crucial to defeating the counter-revolutionary efforts of the capitalist class. Accordingly,

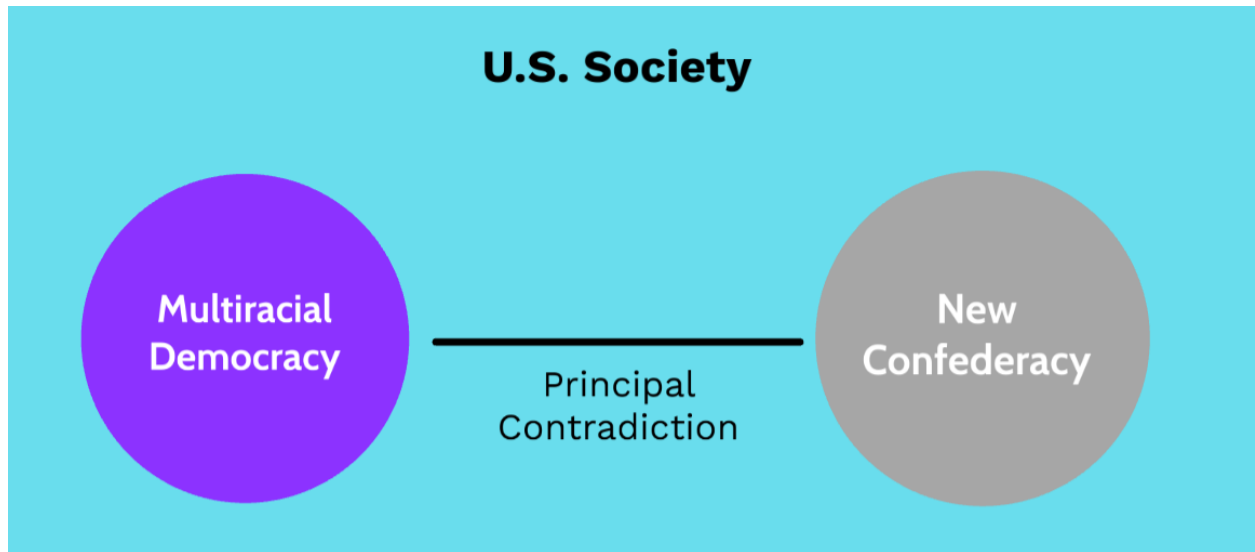
abolition of the repressive state apparatuses should best be viewed as a long-term project associated with the transition from socialism to communism.

In addition to divesting from, reforming and transforming the repressive state apparatuses, we must also consider ways in which sections of these apparatuses could be used in the defense or protection of Black, Brown and multi-racial working-class communities from political actors that wish them and their interests harm (e.g., white nationalist militias or violent insurrections). This latter point has historical precedent in the First and Second Reconstructions when federal troops were used to protect Black people exercising an increase in political freedom—for example when Ulysses S. Grant deployed federal troops to stop acts of racial terrorism by the Ku Klux Klan, or the later use of federal troops to escort Black children into newly integrating schools. Like all aspects of the state, the repressive state apparatuses are a dynamic terrain of struggle. Because this is the aspect of the state which concentrates ruling-class violence most intensively, it can be difficult to imagine it as a target of organizing and contestation. As scientific socialists, however, it is incumbent on us to consider the repressive state apparatuses themselves as a field of struggle, carefully evaluating how and where we should engage in that struggle to advance the power of our movements.

Finally, we must grapple with the complex and contradictory experience that many Black, Brown and multi-racial working-class communities face as both targets of police violence and seekers of police intervention in response to day-to-day struggles with issues like gun violence and crime. In part because of those contradictions, we have yet to win over large enough sections of these communities to a vision or a program that involves little to no police. As revolutionaries we have a duty to do the hard work of organizing our communities towards that vision, including developing and implementing concrete alternatives that can truly address the need for community safety, and using mass line to develop a framework that resonates with the experiences of the masses and leads them closer to our position.

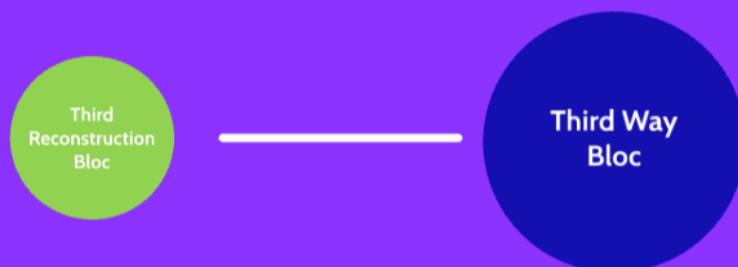
SECTION 5 – THE PRIMARY CONTRADICTION AND THE NEED FOR A SOCIALIST CORE

As we state in our Main Political Report, the principal contradiction in U.S. society is the struggle between a broad Multiracial Pro-Democracy Front and the forces of the New Confederacy. This can be visualized as follows:



Among the forces that comprise the broad united front for a multiracial democracy there are many competing visions for what society ought to look like and what types of strategies are required to defeat the New Confederacy. What we would refer to as “the advanced” are those conscious forces working to cohere a mass social bloc around a political program of transformative political and economic reforms that we are calling the Third Reconstruction. In opposition to this Third Reconstruction Bloc are posed an array of social forces aligned with the “Third Way,” a brand of politics that emerged among center-Left parties around the world in the 1990s to triangulate between traditional center-Left social policies and the rightward pull of neoliberalism. . The Third Way Bloc has been the dominant force within the Democratic party since the Bill Clinton era and, despite an inability to offer a clear pathway out of the myriad crises facing us today, they continue to operate as the political leadership of the united front for multiracial democracy. In response to the crisis of neoliberalism, this bloc is distancing itself from some aspects of center-right economic policy, but it nevertheless remains in opposition to core elements of our program of political equality, economic justice, a planet first orientation, and a democratic foreign policy. They may support limited elements of this program, , but only within the constraints of continued corporate control and profitability. What unites the forces of the Third Reconstruction with the Third Way Bloc is a shared interest in safeguarding basic democratic rights and institutions. In other words, both our vision and their vision are predicated on defeating the New Confederacy’s program of white supremacist and patriarchal minority rule, but we differ around the correct strategy for defeating the New Confederacy as well as on our long-term vision of societal transformation. This contradiction within the Multiracial Democratic Front can be visualized as follows:

Contradiction within the Multiracial Democratic Front



Being allied with Third Way forces inside of a broader United Front does not mean we cease to struggle with them. On the contrary, we will struggle with them constantly – over how to win elections, the right to unionize, how to fight for reproductive freedom, how to address crime, the importance of public schools, how to relate to rural communities, foreign policy, and much more. We will fight like hell to strengthen the labor movement and take on corporate giants like Amazon, Google, and Starbucks. We will work to build independent political infrastructure so that we can advance progressive candidates over corporate Democrats.

The critical thing to remember is that – as Mao taught – we do not approach contradictions with our allies in the same manner as contradictions with our main enemy. There will be critical times when we need to unite with the forces of the Third Way Bloc, the most obvious case being to take on Republicans in general elections. Our goal is to build a United Front strong enough to defeat the New Confederacy while also working to strengthen our position within that United Front. In other words, we want the Third Reconstruction Bloc to move from “junior partner” to “senior partner within the United Front.” But how can our bloc become more dominant?

If we drill down further within the Third Reconstruction Bloc, we can see that there are competing answers to this question. Some Left forces believe that elections are counter-productive, while others accept the need to engage in electoral struggle, but only to support explicitly socialist candidates like Bernie Sanders or the Squad. Underlying both tendencies is a rejection of the notion that the Left requires the Third Way Bloc as a tactical ally in our shared fight against the New Confederacy, instead advocating for complete independence from centrist forces. For this reason, we will call this tendency the “Sectarian Left.” In contrast, our tendency correctly grasps that we must *both* struggle with the Third Way Bloc *and* unite with them towards the defeat of our common enemy, the New Confederacy.

Contradiction within the Third Reconstruction Bloc



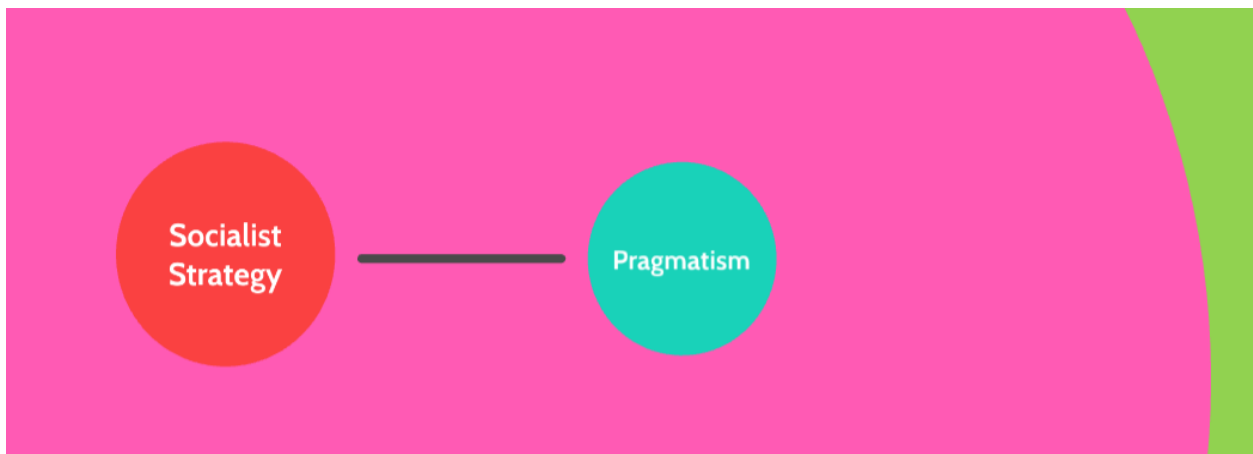
The Inside/Outside trend is arguably the stronger tendency within this contradiction, although recent developments in DSA and elsewhere show that there are still sharp disagreements about this question within the Third Reconstruction Bloc. However, the Inside/Outside trend currently lacks the level of cohesion and strategic clarity necessary to drive a program that can make the Third Reconstruction Bloc the driving force within the broader Multiracial Democratic Front. So we may ask ourselves, what will it take to adequately cohere the Inside/Outside trend in the way that we need? This is where the concept of a socialist core comes in.

There are many organizations and individuals operating with a (conscious or unconscious) inside/outside orientation who do not have a coherent long-term vision or strategy that extends beyond tactical issue fights or the next electoral cycle. While many would likely agree with the core pillars of our political vision, they lack an underlying analysis and methodology that can serve as the basis for developing a sound strategy to systematically sequence struggles towards the long-term transformation of our social, political and economic systems. We might think here of the Alinskyite tradition of community organizing, or of a pragmatist approach to labor organizing. The key tendency here is to tailor tactics and slogans towards the “common sense” of what seems immediately feasible, winnable, or possible, rejecting both a broader view of social transformation and, relatedly, of ideological struggle. If the sectarian Left commits the vanguardist error of pushing for a “pure” Left position that is too far ahead of the current stage of political struggle, these organizations and individuals commit the opposite, tailist error of simply following whatever people know or believe at a given moment, without trying to advance the struggle forward. For this reason, we have named this tendency the “pragmatic trend.”

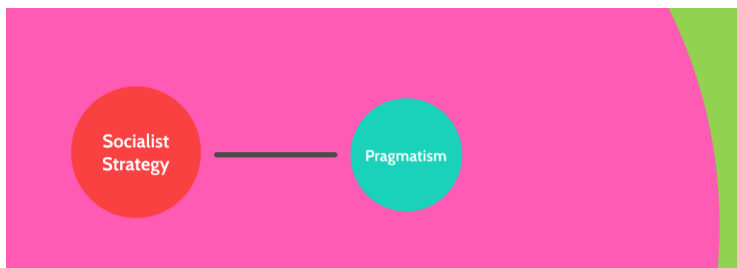
In contrast, as socialists, we understand that a crucial component of our struggle is to change common sense and transform what is politically possible in ways that advance the struggle to challenge and ultimately overthrow cis-hetero-patriarchal racial capitalism. We should certainly wage winnable fights, but we should engage them in ways that shift power and public opinion to

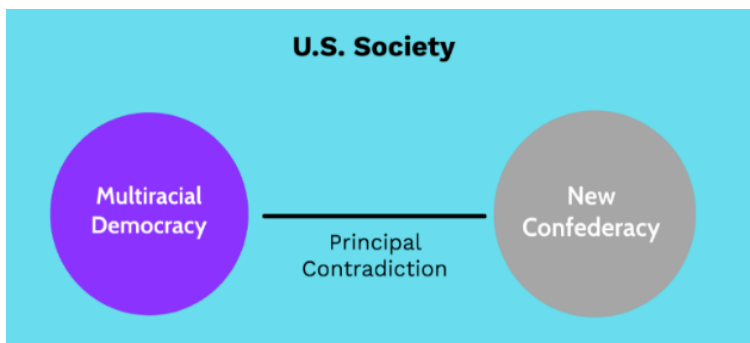
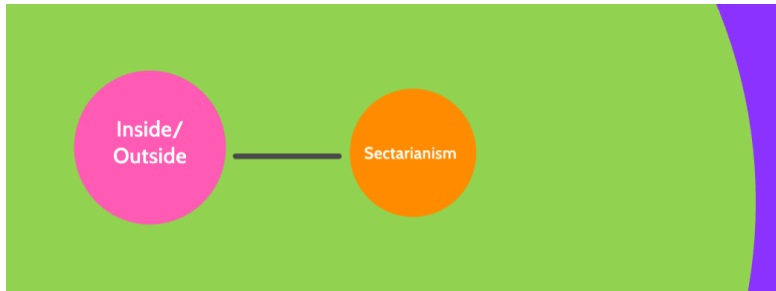
set us up for subsequent, broader wins. This is what the tools of Marxism, in particular the methodological approach of dialectical historical materialism, provides us as socialists. And this is why consolidating a socialist core is critical.

Socialists – both organizations and individuals – have a vital leadership role to play within the broader inside/outside trend. Not as a vanguard per se, but as a political force working to unite this trend around effective strategy and program that can win mass popular support for the Third Reconstruction using the principles of mass line. But socialists cannot provide this critical political leadership if we continue to function as we are currently (mis)aligned, inchoate and fragmented. Hence, our call for a nationwide socialist core that is consolidated strategically, programmatically, and organizationally. The socialist core we would help consolidate can be visualized in relation to non-socialist forces in the following way:



The preceding has attempted to explain the need for a socialist core by starting with the Principal Contradiction and then drilling down through a series of nested contradictions. If we follow that logic back up the sequence, we can sum up our strategic orientation as follows:





Not everyone who calls themselves a socialist will comprise the core that we need to consolidate, and some forces who we *do* need to bring into our socialist core may not currently use the word “socialist” to describe their politics. The important point is not the specific names that are used, but rather the underlying positions represented. Specifically, the forces who comprise the socialist core should represent the advanced position inside each level of this nested contradiction. Thus, in evaluating whether to align with forces as part of building the socialist core, we should ensure that they:

- Are clear on the centrality of the struggle against the New Confederacy
- Unite with core elements of a Third Reconstruction program
- Understand the political conjuncture as one stage in a longer-term struggle towards social, political and economic transformation
- Understand the need to unite with the Third Way Bloc towards the defeat of the New Confederacy

- Understand the need to struggle with the Third Way bloc for political leadership of the Multiracial Democratic Front so that, when and where the New Confederacy is defeated, we may pursue structural transformations toward our ultimate vision of a socialist society

SECTION 6 - ADVANCED FORCES AND THE THIRD RECONSTRUCTION: HOW THE SOCIALIST LEFT CONTRIBUTES

The advanced must be consolidated around and ultimately lead the fight for a Third Reconstruction centered on racial, gender, climate, and economic justice. Our state-based work aimed at winning governing power is critical to achieving this objective. Though the socialist Left is currently a junior partner within the inside/outside trend, a socialist core could play a vital role in anchoring sections of the advanced in this work, analyzing changing conditions and updating strategy and tactics, helping coordinate nationwide efforts, and maintaining a consistent long-term vision and steady commitment to this task's centrality at this stage of struggle.

Currently we identify four Left projects which hold significant potential for bringing to life this Third Reconstruction effort and advancing the creation of a nationwide socialist core:

- The Working Families Party - a mass Left-progressive electoral formation
- Convergence Magazine - a communications hub central to the sharpening of analysis and strategic outlook for the inside/outside trend
- Sections of Democratic Socialists of America committed to and active in the inside/outside trend
- The Inside/Outside Project – an effort to consolidate the organized socialist Left within the inside/outside trend.

To varying degrees, these interrelated projects are at the center of or adjacent to the realignment happening among advanced and some intermediate forces within the inside/outside trend and strengthening them is a key part of consolidating that trend.

6.1 Working Families Party (WFP)

The Working Families Party has the potential to become a national Left progressive electoral formation that can jockey for space in the war of position, affect the balance of forces at the state and federal levels, and help lead an electoral-level fight for a Third Reconstruction centered on racial, economic, gender, and ecological justice. Whether WFP can actualize its potential will be dependent upon many factors, one of which is having the inside/outside trend's socialist Left contribute to this power-building project.

The Working Families Party has become a viable independent political formation to which the socialist Left should commit itself:

- They share our strategic orientation of building political power through state-based independent electoral vehicles and through engagement inside and outside the electoral arena and the Democratic Party. They are grounded in the realities of the U.S. two-party political system and don't have fantasies about creating a viable mass third party any time

soon, while at the same time experimenting with building mass-based independent Left electoral politics within that constricted framework.

- They unite in theory and praxis the need to cohere an alliance of segments of the oppressed nationality movements across class with the multi-gendered, multi-racial working people's movements, and they understand the importance of the labor movement in any power-building project.
- They have state and national infrastructure and strengths in running solid political campaigns for progressives, and they have demonstrated an ability to win. Plus, because they are a center of gravity for the inside/outside trend, they can bring together advanced players. These include various national and state-based formations exploring or already engaging in various levels of collaboration with WFP. In addition, WFP's well-connected, strategically sharp, and charismatic national leadership is able to bring together a diverse cross-section of the advanced including ecological justice, national liberation, gender liberation, Left progressive electoral, and labor activists and organizations. Some of these organizations include but are not limited to Movement for Black Lives, Grassroots Policy Project, Center for Popular Democracy, Sierra Club, Grassroots Global Justice, etc.

The organized socialist Left could make two immediate contributions to WFP. The first is bringing a base of social justice-oriented unions and union locals to the party. Given that sections of the organized socialist Left have significant work in the labor movement, while WFP has seen a decrease in labor support over the past 5-7 years, helping WFP develop a solid labor base would prove mutually beneficial for both the Left wing of labor and the WFP. WFP could make use of labor's institutional capacity (its base of thousands along with longstanding political connections and influence), as well as its political capacity when engaged in common good organizing across race and class and resourced electoral programs that look beyond union-specific issues and candidates. Engagement with WFP could help cohere and strengthen a labor Left which could play an integral role in a larger race and class solidarity and power-building project resulting in stronger alliances with community and independent electoral organizations.

Furthermore, Left-led Central Labor Councils (CLCs) can play a role in building state-wide fronts as well as state-wide support for the Working Families Party. Through CLCs various sections of the working-class and middle strata can ally around both electoral and non-electoral mass work, thus creating fertile ground for social justice unionism and helping lay a foundation for the Third Reconstruction.

A second immediate contribution of the organized socialist Left would be to marshal a combination of practical experience, historical perspective, and strategic skill essential to developing and implementing multi-year strategies aimed at wresting control from the New Confederacy at the state level. While the WFP has twelve state chapters and some presence in a couple of dozen states (*see map included in glossary*), they do not always enter states with a long-term political and power-building plan. Their state-based efforts range from Political Action Committees (PACs) working with existing on-the-ground organizations to their own WFP infrastructure. There is an opportunity to combine their resources with the socialist Left's state-based vision and program forged through labor, community and independent political organizing.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the work of creating and sustaining state-based IPOs must continue. Building WFP is a way to advance that work and connect IPOs to something bigger with nationwide political potential. We should begin to view the work of strengthening IPOs as a way to strengthen WFP and view a strengthened WFP as a way to continue strengthening IPOs. The period of establishing and developing IPOs should set up our trend to collaborate and integrate with the Working Families Party in a way that helps ground them in the long-term work of building political and governing power while lifting the profile and impact of the local IPO work through WFP's future success as a Left-progressive national electoral party project.

Many questions remain about what it will take to build Working Families Party towards a Third Reconstruction, including:

- What does collaboration and/or integration with WFP look like in different states, given power-building plans of existing organizations on-the-ground?
- How can a disaggregated state-based formation develop into a true national independent electoral formation which continues to have a state-based foundation?
- What are the practical and political implications of taking on this challenge for the socialist Left?

6.2 Convergence Magazine

Convergence (formerly Organizing Upgrade) has initiated a project to further cohere the broader inside/outside trend by creating a hub for strategic debate and lesson-sharing among the most forward-looking movement leaders and practical activists within the Left wing of labor, social movements, and left-progressive electoral movements. This project is led by Leftists (most if not all of whom are socialists), primarily from the middle strata and including a majority of social movement Leftists of color.

Convergence has the potential to become the principal communications hub for advancing a electoral-centered strategy for governing power while also organizing constructive debate around the centrality of the fight for racial justice and national liberation in the struggle against capitalism; the interrelationship between deep organizing and mass protest, and the possibility and necessity of building a new popular democratic bloc. Convergence will likely be sponsoring frequent cross-movement events, webinars, study circles, and exchanges aimed at sharing best practices, debating knotty theoretical questions, and deepening strategy in order to facilitate the further coherence of the inside/outside political trend. If successful, over time Convergence could grow into the ideological center of the inside/outside trend, while also adding elements of organizational scaffolding which the trend sorely needs.

The Inside/Outside Project as a whole and its individual core organizations could identify many ways to provide relevant political analysis, practical summation, strategic thinking, and ideological grounding. All socialists—both organized and unaffiliated—who identify with our emerging political trend should determine how best to add value to this ambitious and significant intervention. The Convergence initiative, along with other initiatives, offers an avenue to help

cohere over time a consolidated Left pole needed to lead the broader United Front towards a Third Reconstruction.

6.3 Sections of DSA

As we write this, Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) has just completed its 2021 convention. A huge and dynamic organization containing nearly every variety of socialist and a very large number of committed, capable and creative organizers, DSA is largely based in middle strata college-educated youth (though a very broad definition of “working class” may allow it to see itself as “worker-led”). Its institutionalization of caucuses with often widely divergent views limits its ability to create a unified leadership or carry out a unified strategy. Nevertheless, there are significant caucuses within DSA—especially the Socialist Majority Caucus—which promise to make and in some cases are already making extremely significant contributions to the development of the inside/outside electoral trend both in theory and practice.

In addition, some sections of the Bread and Roses caucus which had previously misestimated the threat of the New Confederacy, unwisely abstained from the presidential election, and sometimes deviated in the direction of a kind of class-reductionist syndicalism, have moved closer to the more nuanced positions of the Socialist Majority Caucus. If Socialist Majority, Bread and Roses and other tendencies are able to isolate the ultra-Left anarcho-Trotskyist tendencies in the organization and enact adopted resolutions which embody a sophisticated, non-dogmatic approach to the class struggle in today’s U.S., including the centrality of the fight against white supremacy, the need for an inside/outside electoral strategy for governing power, and a united front vision of popular bloc-building beyond simply building DSA itself, DSA could maximize its enormous potential.

6.4 The Inside/Outside Project (I/O)

The convergence within the inside/outside trend is also happening within the Inside/Outside Project. Through the Inside/Outside Project there is an increased possibility of coalescing sections of the socialist Left around a shared Left strategy and program. The current participants in the project are Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism (CCDS), Communist Party USA (CPUSA), LeftRoots, Socialist Majority Caucus of DSA, and Liberation Road.

The Inside/Outside Project has the potential to bring together this trend’s organized socialist Left in several ways:

- It uniquely convenes key socialist organizations and consistently maintains some connection among their leaderships. Through regular electoral strategy events and activities a cross-organizational camaraderie has developed, especially among organizational representatives of the core (most of whom are in leadership of their respective organizations).
- Since the beginning of 2020, when an intentional program was developed for the project, and because of the rallying effects of all that was 2020, the I/O core organizations have grown closer in political and strategic outlook.

- It is possible (though far from certain) that the organizations can rise to a higher level of consolidation around a shared strategic objective (such as the Third Reconstruction) in combination with the linking of that core to the development of the larger, more dynamic, and more mass-based inside/outside trend and its center of gravity.

The further consolidation of this organized socialist Left core through the inside/outside project would entail a 1-2 year strategic alignment process starting in early 2022 (taking into account the 2022 midterms). This process would engage issues of strategy, program, and organization. Discussions of strategy would include the overall balance of forces, main trends and dynamics within both the right and the multi-racial pro-democracy United Front, developments among key forces for social change, and long-term strategic objectives. Discussions of program would attempt to translate unity around strategic objectives into relatively short-term programmatic vision for this period (for example, what would an objective like the Third Reconstruction mean for political program in various movements right now?). Discussions of organization would consider national vehicles for strengthening the state-based inside/outside electoral trend, how to provide guidance to local and state-based IPOs and other organizations building independent political power, how to relate to the Organizing Upgrade expansion, and what forms of organization and organizational unity might help consolidate a nationwide socialist core. At minimum, the development of a shared strategic orientation and programmatic vision would be a leap forward for this section of the socialist Left.

6.5 Cohering a Socialist Core

A nationwide socialist core consisting of both organized and currently unaffiliated revolutionary socialists who share a similar strategic vision is essential to accomplishing our strategic objectives. Without the emergence of such an organized core, it will be difficult if not impossible for disparate advanced forces to navigate the twists and turns and realize the promise of this moment, and it will be hard to imagine the formation of the kind of popular democratic bloc necessary to bringing about a Third Reconstruction.

Such an organized core would maximize our trend's ability to create a national vision and political program grounded in and led by the demands of the strategic alliance of the multinational, multigendered working class and the oppressed nationality movements. It would enhance our ability to build out and foster the type of mass-based organizations which in this political moment can act with the initiative and independence at a scale necessary for breaking new political ground. And it would hasten the construction of a significant conscious Left pole within the united front against the new confederacy.

In conclusion, we are in an exceptional political moment, one rarely experienced in our lifetimes, one full of pain, loss, despair, and challenge, while simultaneously full of hope, possibility, excitement, and gain. Whether our movements make significant advances depends partially on the Left's ability to organize itself and take advantage of the opportunities presented by the moment. Building up the advanced forces in the Multi-Racial Pro-Democracy Front, developing strategy, program, practice and organization around the fundamental expansion of democracy and popular bloc-building, and taking practical steps towards the consolidation of a nationwide

socialist core will all be critical in defeating the New Confederacy and working towards a Third Reconstruction.

Liberation Road National Executive Committee

June 2022

SECTION 7 – GLOSSARY (and Map)

Bargaining for the common good: In these campaigns, labor and community groups work with a broad group of stakeholders acting in their own interest to demand that corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share so that our communities have what they need to prosper. Unions that have the right to bargain use contract fights as an opportunity to organize with community partners around a set of demands that benefit not just the bargaining unit, but also the wider community as a whole. These are campaigns for investing in our communities, not just settling a union contract. (from the *Bargaining for the Common Good Network*)

Neo-fascism - Fascism is a radical movement for the elimination of capitalist democracy. Its mass component is based largely on the middle strata (sometimes referred to as the petty bourgeoisie in revolt), and in the U.S. the white middle strata in particular. Such movements emerge during periods of political, economic, and ideological crisis, though not all such periods necessarily result in the emergence of fascism. It is militaristic, racist, misogynistic, and xenophobic. It promotes a radical vision based on myths about the past and the path forward for the “chosen” or the “pure,” a vision which in the U.S. is rooted in white supremacy, xenophobia, and patriarchy.

In power, fascism suppresses all dissent and sees itself as above the rule of law. A reorganization of the hegemonic capitalist bloc may be facilitated through fascism when some capitalist class fractions feel blocked by the state bureaucracy and by other competing segments of capital.

Fascism in power is a form of exceptional capitalist state. There are other forms of exceptional capitalist states, such as military dictatorships, Bonapartist regimes, etc.—that is, not every capitalist dictatorship is fascist.

Neoliberalism: Neoliberalism is the air we’ve breathed for more than 40 years. In ideology and policy, neoliberalism gained strength in response to the global economic and political crises of the ‘60s and ‘70s, as the 40-year Keynesian capitalist consensus ran aground amid stagflation and worldwide national liberation struggles. It gained dominance through its economic policy implementation at the point of a gun in Chile; through the Thatcher years of “there is no society” and “there is no alternative” in the UK; through the Reagan attacks in the 80s on the public sector, the “welfare state,” “crime,” unions, the Black and Chicano Liberation struggles, and the independence of developing nations; through the crisis of socialism; and through the capture of the Democratic Party in the U.S. (Carter, Clinton) and Labor in Britain (Tony Blair).

Neoliberalism includes a deep ideological focus on individualism, individual liberty and competition; an economic focus on an unfettered market, privatization of the public sphere, and financialization (elimination of pensions in favor of individual 401Ks, expansion of student loan debt, expansion of credit, rent-seeking privatization); and a political focus on a state—whether democratic or authoritarian—in full service of the market, privatization, and international capital penetration.

In the U.S., the neoliberal project has meant:

- The decimation of unions;
- The decimation of the common good in ideology and the public sphere in policy;
- And—since white supremacy is our characteristic form of bourgeois rule—a restructuring of white privilege and national oppression (mainly in the form of the new Jim Crow and creation of the carceral state and privatized prison system) in response to the “second Reconstruction” of the civil rights movement and the Black, Chicano, Native American, Asian-American and Puerto Rican upsurges of the 1960s and 70s.
- It has also meant the growth of an authoritarian state characterized by intensified control over ever-greater spheres of social and economic life, combined with the decline of political democracy and the curtailing of basic liberties. Symptoms of this include Citizens United, rampant gerrymandering and voter suppression, militarization of police, endless wars and so on, all culminating in Trump and the capture of the Republican Party by Trumpism.

New Confederacy: the white united front which has grown over more than forty years into a powerful alliance of the most reactionary factions of capital, ardent white supremacists, nativists, right-wing populists, and neo-fascists, with a mass base white middle strata, white rural sectors, and some sections of the white working class. Its main aim is the preservation of the white republic, the Republican Party is its political instrument, and the foundation of its power lies in control of state governments--particularly, though not exclusively, in the South.

Pragmatism: In politics, community organizing and labor organizing, pragmatism refers to practices that prioritize the short-term, immediate factors of a given circumstance over broader ideological, political or ethical considerations. In the context of community organizing, the term is associated with the Alinskyite organizing model, with its focus on “winnable demands” and relatively apolitical single-issue campaigns rather than larger systemic problems or structural transformation. In labor, the term refers to apolitical models of union organizing that eschew social justice unionism in favor of pragmatic accommodation with management, employers and capital. In diplomacy, pragmatism is synonymous with the term *Realpolitik*, with its focus on immediate material interests over beliefs, doctrines, or ethics.

Preemption, Dillon’s Rule, Home Rule, Trifecta, Triplex:

Preemption occurs when law at a higher level of government is used to overrule authority at a lower level.

Dillon's Rule states that local government powers are quite limited and only extend to those powers which are: 1) granted in express words; 2) necessarily implied or necessarily incident to the powers expressly granted; and 3) absolutely essential to the declared objects and purposes of the corporation – not simply convenient, but indispensable. The rule also states that any reasonable doubt by the court as to whether a power has been granted will be ruled against the local government.

Home Rule represents a counter-argument against this limited autonomy of local governments and state influence in local affairs. States began to amend their constitutions and state statutes to provide local governments more autonomy over local affairs. This occurred, and continues to be implemented, in different forms. One of the first steps in some states was to prohibit or limit issues on which the state legislature could pass special or local laws, which are laws affecting only a specific municipality. States also began to authorize home rule charters, essentially reversing Dillon's rule such that a municipality has a power unless it is expressly denied by state law. (Ballotpedia)

Trifecta: A state government trifecta describes single party government where one political party holds the governorship, a majority in the state senate, and a majority in the state house.

Triplex: A state government triplex exists when one political party holds the following three positions in a state's government: governor, attorney general, and secretary of state.

Renewed Jim Crow: The Renewed Jim Crow combines reactionary racism with conservative religious moralism in an assault on the multinational working class, oppressed nationalities, and oppressed genders, all in an effort to ensure white minority authoritarian rule. Characterized by a reactionary racism directly associated with original Jim Crow era-policies of widespread voter suppression, and borrowing from the “New” Jim Crow’s appeal to “law and order,” it is also distinct from the “New Jim Crow” which marked the expansion of the carceral state. What’s new, in addition to the creative and allegedly race-blind means of voter suppression, is the re-invigoration of conservative Christian ideologies (far from monolithic) which share a determination to use the state to intervene morally in our lives through laws enforcing the gender binary, eliminating the right to abortion, and restricting what can be taught in schools.

This Renewed Jim Crow effort is an expression of a revanchist bloc determined to reclaim “what’s rightfully theirs,” responding to the pandemic and the record-breaking turnout of oppressed nationalities and genders in the 2020 elections, and leveraging their advantage in states to reconstruct power and society in their own image. The impacts of their efforts at widespread disenfranchisement may first be felt on a mass scale in the 2022 midterms.

Sectarianism: Rejection of connection with people who do not adhere to a particular set of beliefs, doctrines or ideology. Sectarians prioritize ideological purity over relating to the broad masses in their complexity and contradiction. This is an error as it divorces sectarian forces from the real movement of the social and political struggle. (As Marx wrote: "The sect sees the justification for its existence and its point of honor not in what it has in common with the class movement but in the particular shibboleth which distinguishes it from the movement.") In an electoral context, the

term refers to those who refuse to engage with “bourgeois electoral politics” or with forces and candidates who are not explicitly socialist.

State Power Caucus: The State Power Caucus (SPC) is a peer-to-peer collaboration of state-based, power-building organizations and allies. It is a formation of twenty-four organizations, primarily people of color led, from eighteen states (*see map below*). It was established in 2017 during the volatile moment of both political crisis and opportunity that was solidified for some with Trump’s victory. Its political aims are to build multi-racial independent political alignment and secure governing power that will advance racial, gender, immigrant, economic and ecological justice and achieve a truly democratic and equitable society. The founding organizations initially set out to organize themselves into a national political force, but that has not materialized for a number of reasons, and they have since settled more into a network sharing resources, best practices, etc.

Some of the participating organizations formed the basis of thinking and praxis that helped inform Liberation Road’s embrace of the strategic necessity of IPOs, state-based power building, and an inside/outside approach to the Democratic Party and electoral arena.

If you are interested in learning more about why they formed and what they’d originally set out to do, read their concept paper written in 2017: <https://convergencemag.com/articles/power-caucus/>

Sunbelt: There are many definitions of the Sunbelt, some of which include even parts of the Ohio Valley or the state of Virginia. The most common definition is the geographic region encompassing North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, southern Nevada and Southern California. The Sunbelt area includes or is near the territories of the African-American Nation in the South, and the Chicano Nation in the Southwest.

United Front: United front strategies and tactics enable us to narrow the target of struggle while engaging the broadest possible popular forces in alliance to accomplish a specific objective and defeat the main enemy at any given moment. For more information see [Our United Front Policy](#).

●	State Power Caucus Chapters	18 states, 24 organizations (18 led by POC, 17 by women) Also affiliated with non-state based organizations (Grassroots Policy Project and Social Transformation)
▲	Working Families Party Chapters	WFP has 12 state chapters and also endorses candidates in states that do not have chapters
■	Other State IPOs	Carolina Federation

