

## **Preface**

The Road to Socialism USA is the Program of the Communist Party USA, adopted in 2005 and updated by our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention in 2019 in Chicago. It offers our view of the path from the struggles of the present all the way to socialism, a strategy of struggle, unity, reform, and revolution.

All of humanity is faced with multiple, interlocking crises--in the economy, in our shared environment, in extreme weather disasters, in the growing danger of pandemics. These crises expose the rampant income inequality, the disparate impacts of these crises on those facing exploitation and oppression, and, in the U.S. especially, the inhumane lack of health care for all.

These are crises of capitalism, an inhumane, exploitative, oppressive economic system of greed. In the present we struggle to improve the lives of workers and poor people, in our country and around the globe. Ultimately, to solve the challenges facing humanity, we need to replace capitalism with socialism, a system of cooperation, democracy, and equality.

The world is changing around us. As we adopted this program, the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic exploded around us. This pandemic has laid bare the economic weakness of capitalism. The system is unable to adequately compensate workers for lost income, unable to deal with the economic devastation for both small businesses that crash with only a few weeks of being shut down and the workers who are laid off as a result, unable to take the necessary concerted collective action when saddled with a financial system geared only to endless profit-taking instead of prioritizing the health of the entire population.

An economic system that demands death for seniors in order to "restart the economy" is a system that is morally and economically bankrupt. The immediate crises of health care and the economy are intertwined with the long-range crisis of climate change and the need for fundamental transformation. Capitalism is a cause of much of the problems we face, and is also the main obstacle to finding real and lasting solutions. We need a system that prioritizes the needs of the people before the greed of the few, the 1%.

The ultimate results of the pandemic, in lives lost, in economic devastation for billions of workers, in massive political repercussions for the ineptitude and criminality of the Trump administration's response, will not be understood for some time. We don't yet know enough to adequately address the crisis and its effects in this program. We will amend the program to account for those changes as both the total impact of the problems and the struggles to address and solve them become clear.

We stand with the workers of our country, and the working class of the whole world, for health care for all, for an end to income inequality, against racism, sexism, and all injustice. Join with us!

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#### **I Introduction**

A better world is both possible and essential for human survival. Working class people around the world need a future without war, racism, exploitation, inequality, environmental destruction, and poverty. Through growing consciousness and experience in struggles on the job and in our communities, we strive to build a brighter future based on democracy, peace, justice, equality, cooperation, a healthy environment, and meeting human needs. That future is socialism, a system in which working-class people control their own lives and destinies. The Communist Party USA is dedicated to the struggle for socialism in this country and peace throughout the world. This is our program.

Millions of working people have the power—if organized and united—to govern this country and create a government of, by, and for the people. The people of our country, suffering from an exploitative, oppressive economic system, have the right and responsibility to alter or abolish it. We can remove corporate financial donors from the election process, throw the speculators out of the banks, breakup or nationalize “too big to fail” banks, eject CEOs from their golden parachutes, and elect honest working people to represent us in government instead of corporate lawyers, multimillionaires, and billionaires.

#### **What socialism could look like**

Socialism, with the active participation of millions, will usher in a new era. The great wealth of the U.S. will for the first time be used to benefit all people. Democratic rights will be guaranteed and expanded. Racial, gender, and social equality will be the basis of domestic policies and practices. Foreign policy will be based on mutual respect, peace, and solidarity. Socialism is not a dream but rather a necessity to improve working class people’s lives and ensure the survival of developed human civilization. Only socialism has the solutions to the problems of capitalism. The working class, the vast majority of the population, will have full political and economic power with socialism.

We, the working class and people of the United States, face tremendous problems: exploitation, oppression, racism, sexism, a deteriorating environment and infrastructure, huge budget deficits to pay for tax cuts for the 1%, and a government dominated by the most vicious elements of big capital and its political operatives. We face the problems of everyday living, making ends meet, and having a voice at work and in our communities.

We, the working people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, need socialism—a system based on people’s needs, not on corporate greed. A radical critique of capitalism and the vision of socialism form the basic ideas of the Communist Party, USA.

#### **Our Party’s history**

The United States has a rich history of radical and revolutionary struggles. Mass movements have demanded and won economic and social programs to meet some basic needs of the people, of protecting and expanding democracy, and of uniting to overcome obstacles with initiative, energy, and innovation. The Communist Party is a proud part of our country’s radical traditions. Since our founding in 1919, we have participated in the historic struggles of our class and people: for Social Security, unemployment

insurance, the right to unionize, racial equality and justice through the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement, peace through the anti-Vietnam War and other anti-war movements, restoring a struggle orientation to labor, and many other struggles.

Over our history, the Communist Party has helped bring dedicated working class and other progressive forces together in united action. We understand that the battles for reforms, to protect and extend democracy, and to protect hard fought gains constitute the field upon which class and socialist consciousness will be built, laying the foundation for more advanced struggles.

### **Problems of Inequality, Exploitation, and Oppression**

Our current class divide is characterized by extreme inequality, between the CEO “earning” \$10,000 per hour and the minimum wage workers who must work multiple jobs to provide for their families—all while suffering discrimination, sexual harassment, and loss of the right to unionize. Workers are losing rights due to new restrictions on voting, attacks on unions and other organizations, and eroding living standards. Working class people, as individuals, have little power in the face of the elite corporate class that controls the banks and other large, multinational corporations.

The working class, all those who depend on a payroll check—the vast majority of the people—face a relentless, vicious, opponent: the capitalist class, embedded in an amoral system: capitalism. The U.S. working class and people are oppressed by one of the most controlling, entrenched capitalist ruling classes ever, concentrating enormous political, economic, and military power in the hands of a few transnational corporations, led by global finance banks and the politicians who do their bidding. They exploit workers on the job and at the checkout counter, as renters and homebuyers, and as taxpayers. In addition, these corporations seek to steal, embezzle, extort, and scheme more wealth from tens of millions of working people, from small businesses and family farmers, from men, women, and children, from seniors and youth, and from the employed, underemployed, and unemployed. Barbaric methods are used to divide workers and achieve excess profits. Their foremost weapons to maintain their dominance are racism, sexism, ultra-nationalist anti-immigrant hysteria, and anticommunism. The most backward corporate and wealthy elements work hard to extend the control of the political extreme right over the government and government policy.

Every movement for change and progress challenges the power of the corporations. Workers confront corporate power daily in their workplace and in every contract negotiation. African Americans, Mexican Americans and other Latinos/Latinas, Native Americans, Asian Americans, the LGBTQ community, and women all confront corporate power when they fight for equality on the job and in their communities. Youth confront corporate power when they fight for free quality education and relief from the student debt crisis. Environmental organizations confront corporate power when they try to stop global warming, pollution, the dumping of industrial waste, or the ravaging of the remaining wilderness areas for profit.

The threat of nuclear war, which can destroy all humanity, grows with the spread of nuclear weapons, space-based weaponry, and a military doctrine that justifies their use in preemptive wars and wars without end on behalf of corporate profits. Since the end of World War II, the U.S. has been constantly involved in aggressive military actions both big and small. These military actions have cost millions of lives and casualties, huge material losses, as well as trillions of U.S. taxpayer dollars. “Defense” costs

are a cash cow for the armaments industry and eat up more than half the federal budget, draining money desperately required for social needs.

Capitalists have been working for decades to reverse working-class gains, such as those won during the New Deal, as part of a global attack on workers, unions, and progressive movements and organizations.

The last decade has intensified the fight for dominance by the most reactionary section of the capitalist class. The only way to defeat this extreme right domination lies in building the broadest, most inclusive unity among our multiracial, multinational, multigender, multigenerational working class, along with the major progressive forces that are its allies. This starts with the labor movement unifying its diverse working class base and building alliances with the whole of the racially and nationally oppressed people, women, and youth. We must unite lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and straight people; professionals and intellectuals; seniors; the disabled; and the mass people's movements. These include the peace, environmental, health care, education, housing, and other movements. In limited instances, splits in the ruling class appear and the less reactionary segments of the capitalist class will join the fight against the more backward sections. This all-people's front to defeat the extreme right is in the process of developing, learning, and being tested in giant struggles: for peace, to address environmental crises, to protect social programs and services, to win health care for all, and to wrest control of all three branches of government from the stranglehold of the extreme right.

The extreme right is led by the most reactionary, militaristic, racist, antidemocratic sectors of the transnationals. They gain support for their extreme right agenda from other backward political trends, most of which are misled as to their real interests, sometimes blinded by the propaganda of fear and scapegoating, by racism, sexism, right-wing nationalism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and xenophobia.

Our people, our country, and our environment are being destroyed by the greed of a few obscenely wealthy capitalist groupings. Our world is threatened by relentless efforts to drive wages down to the lowest level, attempts to destroy unions and all protections won by workers, the spread of toxic wastes and greenhouse gases, and imperialist war. Global capitalist trends have resulted in more child poverty, higher infant mortality rates, less health care, less quality public education, higher income inequality, epidemics of drug use and depression, and the rise of Donald Trump and other neo-fascists.

### **Reform and Revolution**

Another world is possible. It is our job, the job of the U.S. working class to help win it. We need radical solutions, expanded democracy, and broad unity. We, the working class and our allies, need to take power from the hands of the wealthy few, their corporations, and their political operatives. We need real solutions to real problems, not the empty promises of establishment politicians and corporate bosses. We need peace, justice, and equality. We need socialism.

In constant battles over issues large and small, the working class learns that more fundamental changes are necessary to have a truly humane society. The struggles for the immediate demands and reforms needed by working people today are essential steps toward our ultimate goal of the revolutionary transformation of society and the economy, toward socialism and then communism—an even higher stage of social and economic development. Communism will be a society without exploitation, without social classes, without war, without constant attacks on our shared environment, and without any coercive apparatus, and with only such administration required to meet people's needs, create the

conditions for full democratic freedom, and for the humane development of society and the individual—for human happiness.

The appeal of a communist society is a response to the real human needs of the masses of people. Communism will enable people to set aside worries about health care and education, about losing their livelihood and their dignity. Communism will eliminate the economic insecurity of the masses of working people. Instead, it will offer us the opportunity to reach our full human potential.

### **Fighting Division**

Racism remains one of the most potent weapons to divide the working class. Institutionalized racism provides hundreds of billions in extra profits for the capitalists every year due to the unequal pay that racially oppressed workers and women receive for work of comparable value. All workers receive lower wages when racism succeeds in dividing and disorganizing us.

In every aspect of economic and social life, African Americans, Latinas/Latinos, Native peoples, Asians and Pacific Islanders, Arabs and Middle Eastern peoples, all people of color and other nationally and racially oppressed people experience conditions riddled with the effects of racist discrimination. Racist violence and the poison of racist ideas affect all people of color no matter to which economic class they belong. Attempts to suppress and undercount the vote of African Americans, Latinas/Latinos, Native peoples, and other racially oppressed people affect the very foundation of our country's democracy and thereby have an impact on all.

Racism permeates the police, the courts, and the prison system, perpetuating unequal sentencing, racial profiling, discriminatory enforcement, police brutality, police killings, immigrant deportations, and separation of immigrant families—even to the extent of ripping babies from their mothers' arms.

These attacks also include growing massive government surveillance, including of activist social movements and the Left; open denial of basic rights to immigrants; and violations of the Geneva Conventions up to and including torture of prisoners. These abuses serve to maintain the grip of the capitalist class on government power. They use this power to ensure their continued ideological, economic and political dominance.

The democratic, civil, and human rights of all working class people are under constant attack. These attacks range from increasingly difficult procedures for union recognition and attempts to prevent full union participation in elections, to the absence of the right to strike or even to unionize for many public workers. They range from undercounting communities of color in the census, diluting the vote of people of color through gerrymandered political boundaries, voter suppression through voter ID laws and other means, and disenfranchisement through mass incarceration. These attacks make it difficult for working people to run for office because of the domination of corporate campaign financing and the high cost of advertising.

Working class women continue to face a considerable differential in wages for work of equal or comparable value. Women confront barriers to promotion, physical and sexual abuse, a continuing double workload in home and family life, and male supremacist ideology perpetuating unequal and often unsafe working conditions. The constant attacks on social welfare programs severely impact single women, single mothers, nationally and racially oppressed women, and all working-class women and

their children. The reproductive rights of all women are continually under attack. The extreme right hypocritically projects an ideology of faux-Christian fundamentalism, promoting restrictions on the role and activity of women in society. Violence against women in the home and in society at large remains a shameful fact of life in the U.S., and a threat to the wellbeing of all.

These attacks are being met with fierce resistance. Women are not only rallying by the millions, they are running for office and winning in record numbers at all levels of government. The 2018 midterm elections resulted in the most diverse incoming group of representatives in history, including record numbers of women of color.

Youth, especially working-class and racially and nationally oppressed youth, are often subjected to segregated education and inadequately-funded public education, and increasingly priced out of higher education. Youth face school gun shootings, police harassment and violence, racism, sexism, and attacks on civil liberties. Poverty and lack of opportunity compel large numbers of young people to enter the military to face possible loss of life and limb in one war after another. Escalating environmental crises threaten their very existence. Taken together, these constitute the denial of a future for our youth.

Youth are fighting back, including the voter registration efforts led by the victims of the Parkland school shooting working against gun violence, demanding action in the streets and in the courts against climate change and the oil companies, demanding relief from crushing student debt, and supporting the rights of immigrant youth.

The crisis of the cities is chronic and growing and embraces all aspects of life. Financial burdens are steadily transferred from the federal government to the states and then to the cities, causing crippling budget deficits. As the majority of racially and nationally oppressed people live in urban areas, the crisis of the cities also reflects institutional racism. There is a chronic and growing shortage of affordable housing across the country, and a deterioration of public education, health care, mass transit, and infrastructure.

### **Capitalist Globalization**

By the 1980s, transnational corporations dominated economic and political life in the U.S. and around much of the globe. At the same time, the conditions that capital has created contain the seeds of the destruction of the capitalist system.

Combined with capitalist globalization, there has been a series of merger and acquisition waves, forming oligopolies or monopolies in almost every industry. As a result, there is an increase in the chronic relative overproduction of commodities, unused capacity, and currency imbalances and speculation. This has led to increased levels of unemployment and underemployment in all the major capitalist powers, as well as greater instability in most developing countries. The gap between rich and poor is growing both internationally and within the major capitalist countries, rising to unprecedented levels.

The transnationals have become increasingly intertwined with the governments of the leading imperialist powers. Multistate capitalist institutions, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and others, are dominated by the U.S. ruling class. Instead of promoting the welfare of all people, they work to politically and economically dominate developing countries and extract outrageous interest for the international banks.

Disproportions in the world's highly interdependent economy spread and are harder to control because of the transnationals' dominance. Regulation by any single country has less effect. International trade agreements in some cases even overrule national sovereignty in favor of the transnationals. Economies are therefore more vulnerable to supply and currency manipulations. Relative overproduction—while millions starve—and gross trade and currency imbalances are among the causes of the chronic volatility in the world capitalist economy. The result is greater instability, more severe boom-and-bust cycles such as that in 2008, and prolonged stagnation. Therefore, the contradiction between the increasingly international social character of production and distribution on the one hand and the concentration of capital among fewer and fewer of the obscenely wealthy on the other hand sharpens economic and social problems and contradictions.

This also sharpens the class struggle. The globalization of economic and social life, dominated by the transnational monopolies, requires higher levels of environmental protection, education, health care, culture, housing, and family care to produce the quantity and quality of labor now needed.

This is in contradiction to the greater quantities of capitalist profit needed to sustain the growth of the transnationals. This can only come from higher rates of exploitation of existing workers and from the exploitation of growing numbers of workers worldwide. Intensification of the class struggle and sharper attacks on the living conditions of the working class are inherent in the dominance of the transnationals. The increasing merger of the transnationals with the state in the main imperialist countries means that capitalist globalization is both an economic and a political process.

In some developed and developing capitalist countries, the labor movement has become a more militant force in both economic and political arenas. There is some renewed strengthening of socialist and other Left forces—including the communist movement—associated with the international and regional progressive social and economic forums in recent years. The movement leftward is not a simple direct movement toward socialism, Marxism, and Communist Parties. It is a multifaceted and wide-ranging process, with new left parties and political formations rising quickly in several countries.

### **Peace versus U.S. Imperialism**

There is growing worldwide resistance to U.S. military action and to military action by other imperialist powers. There is growing recognition that U.S. policies threaten not only world peace and the environment but the very existence of humanity.

The peace front consists of overwhelming world public opinion against war and for peaceful solutions, along with organized peace and social justice movements working directly to accomplish these aims. It includes the existing socialist countries and developing countries that maintain some degree of independent policies. The U.S. extreme right defies the existing world balance of forces for peace at the expense of weakening its general international influence. The peoples of the world don't hate the people of America, they hate the actions of U.S. imperialism.

There is also a growing resistance to U.S. international economic actions in international, bilateral, and multilateral relations, and an alliance of developing countries which resists the worst aspects of economic imperialism.



On the world scale, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa are developing as major economic and political players, providing at times a partial counter-balance to U.S. imperialism, and in some cases leading to new inter-imperialist rivalries. China's economic growth provides an alternative to trade with imperialist countries for developing and socialist countries, including Cuba and other progressive Latin American countries.

U.S. imperialism is home to the bulk of the dominant transnational corporations. It seeks control over the entire world, including over other imperialist powers. Under extreme right political leadership, U.S. imperialism has immense instruments for winning its aims—ranging from its direct military power to its various means of economic domination and political pressure, from sanctions to bribery to ideological attacks. But even with all of these instruments, U.S. domination is slowly weakening.

The need for international working-class unity is more important than ever. We cannot rule out the danger of war between imperialist powers in the future, though the destructive effects of modern nuclear and space weaponry, the overwhelming military superiority of the U.S., and the certainty of internal political opposition all serve to discourage ambitions for direct military inter-imperialist conflict. Working people are the victims on both sides of all imperialist wars and military adventures.

The absolute and relative exploitation of the working class of modern capitalism are at unprecedented levels and continue to grow rapidly. Each transnational corporation now exploits not only its own workers in many countries and the working class of its home country, but the working class of the entire world.

The development of modern capitalism and its exploitation, oppression, and imperialist ambitions requires the strengthening of the economic and political organizations of the working class and all working people both within our country and internationally.

The global working class has common interests in or mutual understanding of, solidarity, liberation, peace, environmental sustainability, and development. We share common enemies: world imperialism, particularly U.S. imperialism, its reactionary transnationals, and the governments they dominate. We support the broadest possible unity of the international working class. We also support international solidarity with other forces, peoples, and movements struggling for liberation worldwide.

### **A Better World**

The peoples of the world need a new economic order, one which helps countries develop at the expense of imperialism, the transnationals, and the super-rich. This will require replacement of the current capitalist international economic institutions with ones led by anti-imperialist countries.

The problems facing humankind—of exploitation, oppression, environmental degradation and human survival—can only be solved, ultimately, by the elimination of the exploitative system of capitalism. Our survival depends on a transformation to socialism. The U.S. working class, with a long revolutionary history of powerful mass movements and organizations, will be the main force making this transition in our country. That means building unity for peace, for protecting and expanding democracy, for sustainability, for living-wage jobs, for universal health care, for real equality for all those who are nationally or racially oppressed and for all women, for an end to the control of the extreme right over our political institutions, and for an end to the economic rule of the transnational

corporations. Building and strengthening organizations of the working class and unity with its allies, winning real unity in the course of struggle, is the path from our current struggles toward socialism.

The Communist Party USA is an organization of working class people dedicated to the fight for a better world. Our basic principles are rooted in today's struggles, informed by our history and experience, and guided by our scientific Marxist outlook and vision of socialism. Our bedrock principles include the leading role of the working class in the struggle for social change. Working class unity is a necessity. Fighting against racism and sexism and for immigrant rights is essential to build that unity.

Members of the Communist Party work to strengthen the labor unions, civil rights, peace, youth, student, religious and other community organizations and social networks in which they participate. They promote the voice and effective participation and leadership of the working class in all struggles for progress. They promote unity with the allies of the working class in the course of fighting for the interest of the working class and common goals shared with a majority of the people of our country. Our members organize to build activism and leadership at the grassroots level.

Our Communist Party is both a political party and the organized expression of a broad political movement, and we welcome all who accept our program. Our Party brings science into the struggle for socialism—an understanding based on an examination of real life and history and brings a history of organizing action based on that understanding. The Communist Party is guided by Marxism-Leninism, the theory and practice of scientific socialism. We seek to build a powerful majority movement to transform society and put working class people in charge.

We pledge to work with everyone fighting for a better world. Marx said, “The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.” The Communist Party USA is about changing the world.

As W. E. B. DuBois stated in his application to join the Communist Party USA, “Today I have reached my conclusion: Capitalism cannot reform itself; it is doomed to self-destruction. No universal selfishness can bring social good to all. Communism, the effort to give all men (and women) what they need and to ask of each the best they can contribute; this is the only way of human life. I want to help bring that day.” for

We hope you will join with us to bring that day!

## **II Capitalism, Exploitation, and Oppression**

The capitalist class owns the factories, agribusiness, financial institutions, distributive infrastructure, and retail giants—the means of production and distribution. This, not personal possessions, is what we mean by private property. Workers are the creators of all wealth and value not found directly in nature. Workers sell their ability to work in order to acquire the necessities of life. Capitalists buy the workers' ability to labor but pay them only a portion of the wealth they create. Capitalists keep the surplus wealth created by workers above and beyond the cost of workers' wages and other costs of production. This unpaid labor is appropriated by capitalists and used to achieve ever-greater profits. This surplus is the source of profit, interest, and private accumulated wealth. These profits are turned into capital, which capitalists use to further exploit the sources of all wealth—nature and the working class. Exploitation of

workers for profit is inherent in capitalism and causes or exacerbates all the major social and environmental ills of our times.

Capitalists are compelled by competition and greed to seek to maximize profits. They do this by extracting a greater surplus from the unpaid labor of workers, by increasing exploitation—what capitalists often call “increasing productivity.” Under capitalism, economic development happens only if it is profitable to the individual capitalists, not because of social need or benefit.

Exploitation of workers for profit is inherent in capitalism and causes or exacerbates all the major social and environmental ills of our times. Economic globalization and advanced technology have enabled increased exploitation. With the rapid advance of technology and productivity, new forms of capitalist ownership have developed to maximize profit and exploit new markets. In our globalized economy, capitalists export factories and even entire industries to other countries in a relentless search for the lowest wages and highest profits. This drive for profit fuels imperialism, as capitalist powers appropriate raw materials, maximize dependency, and export capital to exploit cheaper labor wherever it can be found around the globe, instigating a global race to the bottom.

Inherent in the laws of capitalism are periodic crises that cause millions of workers to lose their jobs, homes, health insurance, and pensions, as happened in 2008. Periods of stagnation and slow “recovery” from these crises drive the standards of working-class pay and conditions ever lower. After World War II the norm was one breadwinner per household, but now capital forces multiple household members to work, with parents often working second and third jobs to make ends meet. Retirement-age workers are often forced to continue working to provide food, medicine, health care, and housing for themselves and their families. Tens of millions live below the poverty level; many suffer homelessness and hunger. Public and private programs to alleviate poverty and hunger do not reach everyone and are inadequate even for those they do reach.

Capitalism uses ideological poisons to maintain the status quo. Racism remains one of the most potent weapons to divide, disarm, and confuse the working class. All workers receive lower wages when racism succeeds in dividing and disorganizing them. Racism permeates the police, judicial, and prison systems, perpetuating unequal sentencing and mass incarceration, racial profiling, discriminatory enforcement, police brutality, police killings, immigrant deportations, and the forcible separation of immigrant families.

Another potent weapon in the capitalists’ arsenal is sexism. All women are subjected to gender inequality. The constant attacks on social welfare programs, limitations on health care and reproductive rights, and wage differentials based on gender severely affect all women, but especially single mothers, nationally and racially oppressed women, and all working-class women. The reproductive rights of all women are continually under ideological and political attack, removing women’s autonomy over their own bodies and disadvantaging them in the labor market.

Capitalism uses other ideological poisons to divide the working class and allies from each other: national chauvinism, homophobia, transphobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and anticommunism, spread in part by huge capitalist media conglomerates, and in its most vicious forms by right-wing websites. Capitalist ideology promotes false beliefs: that capitalists rightfully earned their wealth, everyone has an equal shot at the “American dream,” poor people are merely lazy, discontent with

injustice is an adolescent phase, nature takes care of itself, and capitalism is the freest and most humane economic system. The divisive ideology of individualism has a particularly strong hold in our society.

The legal system is thoroughly racist and anti-working class. U.S. prisons are bursting with millions of prisoners and “detainees,” many in for-profit prisons. As many as two-thirds of prisoners are poor people accused of non-violent crimes; many cannot afford cash bail and must rely on underfunded and low-paid public defenders. Prisoners face widespread abuse and are often forced to work for subminimum wages, replacing organized labor. Many prisoners are subject to abuse, solitary confinement, and the threat of the death penalty.

At the same time, prosecution of “white collar” capitalist criminals is at a twenty-year low, despite the damages they caused working people during the Great Recession of 2008. Billionaire criminals are not apprehended, prosecuted, or punished. Corruption, speculation, fraud, market manipulations, and theft on a massive scale are all increasing, with the approval of, and increasingly with the participation of, high ranking members of the government.

### **Present Features of Capitalism**

A thorough understanding of capitalism, its essential features and durable conditions, and of the political balance of forces are key to guiding class and democratic struggles for progress. Exploitation of the working class has increased quantitatively and qualitatively. Automation and robotization using computer control and artificial intelligence, the “gig” or freelance economy, the looming possibility of a national right-to-work law, and the surreptitious gathering of vast amounts of data about individuals are all new weapons that monopoly capital has in its class warfare arsenal. At the same time, greater capitalist profits, which sustain the giant transnational corporations, come from the exploitation of growing numbers of workers worldwide, at the same time as they lay off workers in the U.S. and export jobs. These developments have reversed many of the gains made during the New Deal when the influence of the CPUSA was at its height, and have left workers with even less chances for healthy, dignified, and fulfilled lives.

Meanwhile, monopoly capital is doubling down on its privileges, accruing vast amounts of wealth and gaining ever greater control over the movement of capital throughout the world. Lately, the most backward elements of the capitalist class have funded, promoted, and built populist far-right white- and male-supremacist ultra-nationalist movements that attempt to divide and disable the working class. Monopoly capital strives to promote a culture of cynicism, low expectations, fatalism, violence, and distraction to hinder the working class from uniting and fighting for its own interests.

At the same time, the objective conditions that monopoly capital has created contain the seeds of its own future destruction. The grotesque economic inequalities are getting harder to hide and to rationalize; new means of communication developed by capital can be harnessed by the working class and used for its own purposes; more and more people are outraged by the links between monopoly capital and far-right-wing populist movements of nativism and white supremacy. In short, the working class is fighting back through the trade union movement and struggles for democratic and civil rights.

### **Capitalism versus the Environment**

We cannot have a healthy humanity without a healthy natural world. Humans are part of nature and rely on the resources of nature for our very existence. We can't continually harm major parts of the natural world without suffering the consequences.

Climate change is the most far-reaching symptom of the broader imbalance between humanity and the rest of nature. There are many environmental challenges: polluted water, air, and soil; respiratory and reproductive health problems; and disappearing animal and insect habitat, to name but a few. We are facing major adjustments to the balance between humanity and nature, which we can plan to address and ameliorate or suffer the brutal consequences of runaway CO<sub>2</sub> levels: rising seas, more frequent and damaging weather events, and more droughts.

Capitalism is both the major cause of these environmental challenges and the major obstacle to solving them. Environmental struggles rapidly run up against the rule of private property over our collective health and well-being. Communities faced with powerful companies dumping toxic waste into their sources of drinking water must wrestle directly with private interests. They run up against both the capitalist economic system and the politicians beholden to corporate interests.

As activists learn that the economic system must be fundamentally altered to meet the growing environmental crises, environmental activism provides a new pathway to socialist consciousness. Fixing environmental challenges requires social decision making based on the needs of society as a whole and the environment on which we depend. Private property "rights" and profits must be discarded as the main determinants on which decisions are based. In addition, if capitalism sufficiently degrades the environment, that will destroy the material basis necessary to build socialism.

Environmental issues will grow in importance and play an ever-larger role in electoral, legislative, and public policy struggles. Communities faced with powerful companies dumping toxic waste into their sources of drinking water must wrestle directly with corporate power. They run up against both the capitalist economic system and against politicians beholden to corporate interests.

Just as our politics and economy need fundamental transformation, so too does the entirety of the intersection between humanity and the rest of the natural world. We need a transformation of not only energy production but also agriculture, industrial production, transportation, distribution, waste disposal, and construction. We need immediate changes that can be won or begun under capitalism. However, permanent solutions require an environmentally conscious socialism.

We need to make personal changes as well. First and most important is for millions more people to become organized environmental activists, building alliances between the environmental movement and all other progressive movements they are part of—community groups, religious groups, unions, and more. Personal changes are most effective when part of mass campaigns that help change the habits and practices of millions of people. We are not chasing a short-lived personal purity but working for basic changes to the systems affecting all of us. Individual changes in consumption and diet can make a major contribution only when linked to changes by millions of people, and linked to changes in our systems of production, construction, and agriculture.

The environmental movement is one key element of the massive coalition that must be built to defeat the extreme-right stranglehold on too much of U.S. governance and public discourse. Environmental issues will grow in importance and play an ever-larger role in electoral, legislative, and public policy struggles.

Youth especially have a vested interest in finding real solutions for their future, the kind that only socialism can permanently institute.

### **III The Working Class, Class Struggle, and Forces for Progress**

#### **The Working Class and the Trade Union Movement**

Workers always seek to solve the chronic exploitation and oppression they face. Whether individual workers are conscious of it yet or not, the ultimate outcome of this struggle is socialism. To determine the strategy and tactics required for immediate progress and more basic change, it is necessary to be clear about what propels progressive change, and about which struggles, classes, and social forces have the potential to play decisive roles. The history of our country confirms the Marxist assertion that the struggle of our multi-racial, multi-national, multi-gender, young and old U.S. working class against the capitalist class is the chief driving force for fundamental progressive change.

The working class is compelled to resist increased exploitation. It seeks to improve living conditions by increasing workers' share of the new value they create, at the expense of the capitalists. This class struggle takes place in the workplaces where goods and services—commodities—are produced. This is a crucial part of the economic side of the class struggle.

The class struggle is not only the fight over wages, hours, benefits, working conditions, job security, and jobs. It also includes an endless variety of other forms for fighting specific battles: resisting speed-up, picketing, negotiating contracts, waging strikes (even general strikes), demonstrating, boycotting products, lobbying for pro-labor legislation, and working on elections. When workers struggle against the capitalist class or any part of it on any issue with the aim of improving or defending their lives, it is part of the class struggle. In every area of workers' lives, the fight is to defend themselves and their families from corporate assault.

The class struggle also takes place in the political arena. It plays out in struggles over governmental action or inaction, over social spending and tax policy, over elections, and ultimately over which class or formation of class and social forces becomes dominant in holding and exercising political power. The class struggle also exists in the realm of ideology, between social and political ideas and values that justify the political and economic policies of the contending classes.

Workers struggle to sustain themselves and their families. Every wheel that turns, every product produced, every service provided, is done by workers. Workers produce all wealth, but much of the value they produce is taken, in the form of profit-taking or exploitation by the capitalist class. Workers can run society without capitalists, but capitalists cannot function without workers. The working class is our society's only revolutionary class able, with its allies, to establish a new, better, more just society for all: socialism.

The working class is made up of all who must labor to make a living and their families. It constitutes the great bulk of the country's population and is continually growing. Some are low-wage workers, others have won higher wages through struggle; some are contingent workers, freelance workers, or part-time workers, but all are workers. Service workers, transportation workers, highly-trained workers, teachers, and laid-off workers and retirees are all part of the working class. The working class is being joined by some who were once independent professionals—including doctors and engineers—but are now

employees of vast corporations. Everyone who must make their living from wages and salaries, except for the CEOs and managers “earning” exorbitant salaries, is part of the working class.

The working class is diverse. It includes skilled and unskilled labor, white-collar and blue-collar workers, people of all ages, the organized and unorganized, and the employed, underemployed, and unemployed. Our working class is almost evenly composed of men and women. Most nationally and racially oppressed communities are more heavily working class and together constitute a major segment of the working class, one that is rapidly increasing in number.

Ours is a single working class, a class whose unity is growing and deepening as its consciousness of itself develops and strengthens. It reaches full class and socialist consciousness only when it understands itself as the central social force that in alliance with other social forces can and must win power and construct socialism. In the words of the Communist Manifesto, the working class is “the only truly revolutionary class” because only the working class has an interest in ending capitalism and replacing it with socialism. These qualities and experiences make the working class fertile ground for the ideas of socialism and Marxism, and for Communist Party membership.

The working class’s large size and experience of collective labor and collective struggle prepare it to lead the struggle for progress along with its allies. The working class and its allies are the only force capable of becoming the general leader of the struggle for full social progress and socialism. It is the workers who turn every wheel, manufacture every product, and provide every service. In doing so, they produce all wealth, but the majority of value they produce is taken, in the form of profit by the capitalist class. The capitalists depend on workers to create the wealth they appropriate, giving the workers not only a strategic role in the production process but also great potential power.

Marx declared, “Workers of the World Unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains.” From the smallest of class struggles to the largest, unity within the working class is key to victory. The experience of working people in their workplaces and neighborhoods demonstrates that only by joining together to fight for their common interests and demands can they win. This is the guiding principle of all unions and people’s organizations: in unity is strength.

As united as the working class itself needs to be, it cannot be the sole force in these struggles, because its opponents at each stage are powerful, with great resources at their command. Many of the key needs of working people cannot be won by the trade union movement or the working class alone. There are other major social forces whose interests substantially parallel those of the working class. Unions must engage in coalitions with community, civil rights, women’s, student, seniors’, and other organizations to increase their combined ability to win against a powerful enemy. From strike struggles to legislative initiatives to the fight for the White House, labor must build unity with these forces to achieve progress. Building unity requires relationships of equality, trust, mutual respect, and understanding. There is a constant need to reinforce and defend this unity.

The new stage of capitalist globalization makes unity even more imperative. As in the past, when capital’s production expands to new, wider forms, labor’s organization must do so as well, or lose its leverage in the fight against capital. Globalization demands a new level of labor internationalism to unite workers worldwide, regardless of nationality or ideology, to jointly confront our common enemy. In the U.S., the common struggle against capitalist globalization has ushered in an advanced phase of working

unity between the labor movement, civil rights movements, the women's movement, the environmental movement, the student movement, and others.

Workers organizations ranging from unions to labor-community coalitions bring to the people's movement their strength, experience in the struggle, infrastructure, context, and a fighting orientation. In turn, the wider people's movements bring a much-needed infusion of youth, enthusiasm, and optimism, as well as a history of fighting for equality and the advancement of democracy. Organized labor increasingly recognizes the strength and experience brought to the table by the movements of the racially and nationally oppressed, women, and youth.

When all sectors of the people's movement come together with labor's militant leadership, huge gains in the fight against corporate control can be made, as in the New Deal during the 1930s. Our nation's people are still enjoying the benefits of the gains from that period. Unity with the active multiracial, multinational, multigender, young and old, gay and straight, native and immigrant working class will position us to fight successfully for state power to establish a more just society: socialism. Only by joining together can the working class and its allies win the larger struggles for dignity, rights, and power. This principle is true not just in struggles in the workplace, on the campus, or in neighborhoods but also at the ballot box, in larger political and social struggles, and in the battle for the hearts and minds of the public.

Unity is not a given. One of the major obstacles to working class unity is racism, which is promoted by the capitalist class and must be fought by all. Unity depends on substantial numbers of white workers participating in the fight for full equality and against racism, based on an understanding of how racism injures and lowers the wages and living conditions of all workers. Another major obstacle to working-class unity is capitalist class-promoted misogyny and male supremacy. Misogyny, the hatred and disrespect of women, wage discrimination, employment segregation, and male supremacy must be fought by all—full unity will be built only when substantial numbers of working-class men participate in the fight for full equality and against misogyny and male supremacy based on an understanding of their self-interest and the interest of the whole of the working class in real class unity.

The labor movement is the organized sector of the working class and is the key strategic factor to achieving fundamental social change. The diversity of the labor movement is growing in composition and leadership. The labor movement is no longer limited to “pure and simple” trade union struggles. It plays a major, often leading role, in legislative and electoral struggles and has developed a large and increasingly independent labor electoral apparatus. Labor has increasingly become one of the leading forces for progress on many social issues. It has developed ongoing relationships with organizations of the nationally and racially oppressed, women, students, and others. It is increasingly seeking forms of international labor cooperation. Especially since the election of Donald Trump, many unions are encouraging and training their members to run for political office at all levels of government to represent the interests of working-class people. A related development is the large number of women and youth of many racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds, including those who support the idea of socialism, stepping forward to run for public office. New forms of working-class organization, such as the Fight for Fifteen and Internet-based organizing efforts, mobilize workers in different ways than the union movement of old and add to the organized power of the class.



Unions have lost membership due to massive corporate and government attacks. Speeding up the organization of unorganized workers is one of the most important challenges to labor and all progressive forces. For nation-wide success in new organizing, unity of the labor movement is crucial, overcoming narrow and sectarian interests in the interests of the working class as a whole. Organizing the unorganized by itself, however, is not sufficient—continuing to win unions and their memberships to class-struggle trade unionism and to broad trade-union unity is also required. The broad people's movement is dependent upon organized labor's ability to rebuild its strength.

Nearly a century ago, in times of tremendous struggle, communists and socialists, working with allies, helped bring the modern union movement into being, playing key roles not only in organizing but in helping workers then win victories that benefit all. Communists have a special responsibility to help labor win the fight to save and rebuild our nation's labor movement, the first line of defense for our nation's workers.

To this end, the activities of the Communist Party aim to:

- ☐ Build broad unity to achieve the strategic and tactical goals of the working class.
- ☐ Bring forward working-class leadership and the interests of the working class in all progressive movements. National progressive coalitions, community-based organizations in working-class communities, and student-labor coalitions are all forms that bring working-class leadership to the broader movement.
- ☐ Build full class and socialist consciousness. It is the job of Communists, while engaged with others in active struggle, to show how all struggles have common aspects and common interests, to show the interests of organized labor and all the people's movements in uniting against our common capitalist enemies.

### **Special Oppression and Exploitation**

The most important allies of the working class are those who suffer special oppression due to capitalism and are also overwhelmingly members of the working class. Special oppression is discrimination, extra-exploitation, and social domination based on race, nationality, gender, and/or age. The racially and nationally oppressed, women, youth, and immigrants all face types of special oppression, as do seniors, the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Queer (LGBTQ) community, and the disabled and mentally ill. All specially oppressed social groups are in their majority working class, but also include some members of other classes. Those who are part of the working class suffer the exploitation and social problems of all other workers and, in addition, suffer from special oppression that is not solely based on class, such as racism, national discrimination, and male supremacy. Some people experience triple and quadruple oppression, since they face multiple layers of intense exploitation, discrimination, and social domination.

Many features of special oppression cut across class lines and affect to some degree all members of each oppressed social group. Oppression affects not only those who are workers or part of professional and small business groups but to some extent even those from sections of the capitalist class. This common experience of oppression creates a wide basis for unity within each oppressed social group and among all groups facing discrimination and social domination.

Capitalists directly gain from special oppression. Extra profits to the tune of many hundreds of billions of dollars per year are extracted by the special oppression and exploitation of the working-class section

of each group and from the disunity caused among the entire working class. Capitalists and their apologists use ideological poison to justify and cover up both the special oppression and the exploitation of all workers. Working-class members of specially oppressed peoples and groups play a key role in building alliances between the working class and oppressed groups, since they are an important part of both.

### **The Complexity and Interconnection of National and Racial Oppression**

Our discussion of national and racial oppression is not intended to be comprehensive or limiting. These are complex issues, intertwined with each other and with class exploitation and oppression. There are variations in national oppression, not just broad categories—for example, different Native Indian nations have distinct histories, cultures, languages, resources, treaties, and territories, so within Native Indian communities there are many different national questions, not one. Within groups, too, there are variations—for example, people of Japanese descent whose ancestors came to the U.S. during the latter part of the 1800s do not face identical issues as those who came following World War II. People from Caribbean countries who have English as their first language have different issues than those from the Caribbean whose first language is Spanish or French. We can't ignore or reduce these complexities, we have to understand, appreciate, and respond to them in order to create a solid basis for strong working class unity and to advance the power of the working class with its allies.

People of many nationalities face special oppression related to their national origins—issues of language, culture, history, immigration rights and status, professional status or lack thereof, historical and colonial oppression, the various reasons and pressures for their immigration, and more. Another complexity is that though most of the discrimination following the terrorist attacks on the U.S is directed at Arab and Middle Eastern peoples; many Latinos/Latinas face racial profiling due to claims that they “look” like people from the Middle East. African immigrants have their own specific nationality issues but also face the generalized racial discrimination directed against African Americans due to skin color. Mexican Americans whose families have been citizens for centuries face harassment from immigration authorities due to racist assumptions based on skin color.

We can't ignore or reduce these complexities, nor do we artificially separate discrimination and oppression into either national or racial categories. Instead our purpose is to understand the interconnections of these categories and the different oppressions faced by individuals and peoples. Understanding, appreciating, and responding to these categories will help create a solid basis for strong working-class unity.

### **Multiracial, Multinational Unity for Full Equality and Against Racism—Core Forces for Progress**

Some of the foremost allies of the working class, through the various stages of struggle all the way to socialism, are the nationally and racially oppressed peoples. They live and work in every region, in every state, and in every major city. Likewise, the working class is the most multiracial, multinational entity in our society. Among the nationally and racially oppressed are African Americans, Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans and other Latino peoples, Native peoples, Muslims, Asian American and Pacific Islanders, Arabic and Middle Eastern peoples, and many groups of immigrants and their descendants.

Racism is one of the most important weapons the ruling class uses to weaken the unity within the working class itself and the relationship between the working class as a whole and nationally and

racially oppressed peoples. A classic divide-and-conquer tactic, racism is used to spread division and weaken all movements and struggles. Against this division, we must build multiracial unity—with the struggle against racism and the fight for full equality at its core.

Racism in its many forms continues to play a negative but central role in every aspect of U.S. life, including keeping the extreme right in power, producing extra profits, and developing, justifying, and maintaining institutionalized discrimination and oppression.

From its inception, the United States was built on racism. From the displacement and near genocide of Native people, to the enslavement of Africans, to the theft of huge sections of Mexico, to the racist exclusion of Asian and Pacific Islander immigrants, to the current xenophobic hysteria against Latinas/Latinos, Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians, racism has been a convenient tool for the maintenance of power and extra profits by the ruling class at the expense of oppressed people and all workers.

The working class must fight against racism, for full equality of all nationally oppressed, and for affirmative action, if it is to unite internally and form lasting alliances with the organizations and movements of racially oppressed peoples. Similarly, the nationally and racially oppressed groups must support working-class demands in order to unite internally and to ally with labor.

Racism affects the unity of the working class at all levels. Racism is a tool that not only exploits racially oppressed people but also aids in the exploitation of white workers. Racial discrimination in hiring, racist wage and salary policies, and racial stratification of various industries and trades has resulted in the lowest-paying, most dangerous jobs generally being held by workers from nationally and racially oppressed groups. This undermines the interests of all workers. The ability of employers to pay workers differently based on skin color, country of origin, immigration status, or hire date in two-tier wage systems exerts downward pressure on the wages of all workers. It allows bosses to extract even higher profits from racially oppressed workers. Racism is good for business but bad for working people of every race. White workers have a powerful self-interest in fighting racism—they will gain greater victories to the degree that they unite with nationally and racially oppressed workers. Multiracial unity in the workplace and on the shop floor is key to lifting wages and improving working conditions and honoring the dignity of every worker.

The workplace is not the only place where building multiracial unity is essential. Multiracial unity is necessary at all levels of class and democratic struggles. This is the reason for the long-standing coalition between the labor and civil rights movements. Not only do these movements have common enemies, they have a common agenda of expanding economic, social, and civil rights. The working class and racially oppressed people have common interests in housing, employment, education, voting rights, the environment, world peace, and other areas.

Members of the working class who are white must take an initiating and leading role in combating all instances of racism and national oppression wherever and whenever they occur and provide support to people of color who are in leadership of movements and organizations. Such acts are the building blocks of grassroots unity and trust. They prove that the struggle against racism is not for racially oppressed people to combat alone. It is in the self-interest of all workers, leading to greater unity, respect, and strength, for the labor movement and all other movements.

The depression of wages, the suppression of voting power, and the oppression of culture and language all hurt the working class. An essential aspect of class and socialist consciousness is for the working class to have a deep understanding of exploitation and national, racial, and gender oppression.

To fully understand its own exploitation and oppression as a class, the working class has to understand the extra-exploitation and special oppression of its component parts and allies. This means understanding the historical experience well enough to develop an organic allegiance to the specific democratic demands for equality of each. This includes taking action as a leading, solid advocate of those demands. The working class cannot win without the collective class achievement of an understanding of the complexity of its natural allies and of building multiracial, multinational working-class unity. This understanding must be utilized to guide action. Racially and nationally oppressed people have a history of being subjected to oppression on the one side and resistance and fightback on the other, all of which contribute to the collective wisdom and range of action of the entire working class.

### **African Americans**

Historically and continuing today, African Americans and their organizations play a tremendous role in democratic and class struggles, and in building alliances with progressive movements, especially the labor movement. An exceptionally high percentage of African Americans are members of the working class. In addition, the struggle for equality and against racism in relation to African Americans has played a central role in the entire struggle for democracy and progress. The labor movement and the African American people have achieved a significant level of coordinated struggle.

Today, forms of extra-exploitation and oppression against African Americans include voter suppression, criminalization and mass incarceration, police brutality including murder, wage inequality, continued segregation, and cultural domination.

The African American people play a major role in national politics. Their concentration in large urban centers and the South, high working-class composition, heavy concentration in the labor movement, and high level of political/social organization including churches and mosques, civil rights organizations, and social and fraternal organizations, all make it possible for these groups to politically mobilize millions, including many beyond the African American community. From the historic NAACP, to the Civil Rights Movement led by Rev. Dr. Martin L. King, Jr., to the more recent Black Lives Matter movement, African Americans have a long history of resistance and struggle, beginning with the fight against slavery. The Poor People's Campaign that grew from the Moral Monday demonstrations in North Carolina is playing an important national role in struggles for racial and economic justice.

In national elections, African Americans, especially African American women, vote overwhelmingly against the extreme right. There are thousands of Black elected officials nationally; almost all run as Democrats. In many areas, the Black vote is decisive for victory against more backward candidates. Recent elections revealed that the only way the most backward candidates can win, even in the deep South, is through voter suppression and vote theft directed especially against the African American community. Because they vote almost unanimously as a block in most elections, African Americans have a level of influence beyond their numbers.

### **Mexican Americans**

Mexican Americans together with African Americans are the two largest nationally oppressed peoples in the U.S., with Mexican Americans being one of the fastest growing sections of the population. The Mexican American population is concentrated in the U.S. Southwest, land that was originally stolen from Mexico, with U.S. domination being imposed on the many Native and Mexican American people living in those areas. With the entrance of Mexican Americans into the agricultural, industrial, hospitality, and service industries, Mexican American communities exist in most major cities and in small towns throughout the country.

Among the problems faced by Mexican Americans are racial and national oppression, language discrimination on the job and in schools, cultural suppression, anti-immigrant laws and abuses, lack of full political representation, police brutality, and hate crimes.

Mexican Americans have played an important part in U.S. history, from resistance to U.S. imperialist annexation to struggles for full civil rights for immigrants, from resistance to cultural domination to the struggle for a holiday honoring Cesar Chavez and his groundbreaking leadership organizing farmworkers, from community battles for bilingual education to struggles for voting rights and full participation in the electoral process, among many others. The historic Chicano Moratorium broadened the peace movement in the fight against the Vietnam War.

Mexican Americans mainly vote against the extreme right and have a major and growing impact on national elections. They have emerged as perhaps the most decisive group of voters in California and the southwestern states. Nationally, there are thousands of Mexican Americans holding public office, most elected as Democrats. The Mexican American people are overwhelmingly working-class and are a major force in the trade union movement nationally. There are also many large national, regional, and local mass organizations among the Mexican American people that have a big impact on the U.S. political scene, especially with the increase in the Mexican and Mexican American population all over the country.

### **Puerto Ricans**

There are more than five million Puerto Ricans in the U.S. Puerto Ricans are the second-largest Spanish-speaking Latin American population in the country, Mexicans and Mexican-Americans being the largest. While concentrated in New York, especially New York City, Puerto Ricans are found in every state of the union.

The overwhelming majority of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. are an integral part of the working class. Puerto Ricans have a higher rate of union membership than the general population. Puerto Ricans unite with other Latinos, as well as with African Americans, to fight against national and racial oppression. In fighting for their self-interests on the important issues that affect them, Puerto Ricans fight for all peoples.

The features of the Puerto Rican people in the U.S. cannot be completely understood without taking into account that Puerto Rico is a U.S. colonial possession. Puerto Rico is an oppressed colonial nation. Colonial oppression takes many forms, from control of the economy by subsidiaries of U.S. corporations to imposition of U.S. death penalty laws on Puerto Ricans.

This colonial oppression is the main reason Puerto Ricans have been forced to immigrate to the U.S. The horrific conditions experienced in Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria exemplify the subordinate status that U.S. right-wingers constantly try to impose. This left the island to suffer from the destruction of most infrastructure for much longer than necessary, and ignored the debt which has been saddled on the government of Puerto Rico. Inadequate and incompetent actions by the Trump administration exponentially increased the suffering of Puerto Ricans, forced many to move to the mainland U.S.

The first step to freedom from this oppression is the acquisition of their internationally recognized right to independence and self-determination for Puerto Rico.

U.S. colonialism has forced Puerto Rico's economy into dependency. For Puerto Ricans to exercise their right to independence they must be able to break with the colonial dependency forced on them by the U.S.; otherwise independence would be a sham. We support the full transfer of all powers to the Puerto Rican nation and monetary compensation with no strings attached to Puerto Rico to make up for the super-exploitation of Puerto Ricans and for colonial oppression. Usage of those funds is to be wholly decided by Puerto Ricans so that Puerto Rico can develop freely.

A free and independent Puerto Rico would not mean that all Puerto Ricans in the U.S. will go back to Puerto Rico. Puerto Ricans in the U.S. are an historically constituted permanent community.

### **Native Peoples**

There are many unique features to the national struggles of Native peoples in the U.S. Issues of sovereignty and treaty rights, language and cultural rights, fishing and hunting rights, land rights, health care, and education, give a different character to these struggles, which vary from Indian nation to Indian nation. The kidnap and murder of Native women is also a major issue. In addition, the abuse and mismanagement by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), as well as tribal government issues, impact Native American Indian forms of organization and struggle. Native peoples have played an important role in the ironwork, construction, and other industries in some regions of the country, and have a long history of struggle for survival and democratic rights.

The genocide against Native peoples must be recognized and acknowledged by honoring treaties and tribal sovereignty, by reparations and affirmative action for Indian nations as well as urban Indians, and by the replacement of the BIA by a body composed primarily of representatives of Indian nations.

Native peoples are playing a vigorous role in the electoral process. The struggle against the suppression of their vote is intense and expansive. This growing political clout contrasts with the most vicious effects of racism on the living conditions, education, employment, health, and survival of many, who on some reservations are subjected to the worst possible living conditions and the highest rates of infant mortality, disease, suicide, unemployment, and murder at the hands of the police. The growth of gambling casinos on many reservations has not alleviated conditions for the large majority of Native peoples and is not a solution to the racism and national oppression they face.

### **Other Indigenous Peoples**

Other indigenous peoples, including Aleuts, Inuit, and native Hawaiians, have their own cultures and traditions. Hawaii, one of the most multiracial states, had its independent monarchy overthrown by an

invading army, and was a colony of the U.S. for many decades. Native Hawaiians face national oppression with distinct language, cultural, and economic issues, in addition to the problems faced by Hawaii as a whole.

The U.S., contrary to myth making in many U.S. histories, maintains several colonies around the world. To hide this fact, the government uses the term “protectorate” or “commonwealth” to describe the occupied nations. The U.S. maintains colonies in Guam, the Virgin Islands, and Samoa, whose populations have no vote and no sovereignty.

### **Immigrants**

The labor movement has in recent years embraced the importance of unity between immigrant and native-born workers. Not only did anti-immigrant sentiment and racist repressive laws allow bosses to relegate immigrant workers to near-slavery conditions with no recourse, but also undercut the attempts by native-born workers to organize unions and win concessions from management. Attacks on immigrants in farm fields, at the borders, at their workplace, and by law enforcement lay the basis for undermining everyone’s rights. Raids purportedly against undocumented immigrants often also impact family members who have been citizens for many generations.

The U.S. has large communities of immigrant workers. These workers are often violently exploited, working in the most unhealthy, non-union conditions. Each immigrant group faces its own oppression based on nationality, and many face racial oppression as well. Basic human, civil, and labor rights are often denied. Thousands of undocumented workers crossing the border with Mexico are subjected to the murderous policies of the Border Patrol and racist vigilantes. They are hounded and chased down like criminals. Hundreds have tragically died or been murdered, especially in border areas, for simply trying to unite their families or find a better life. Many immigrants come with advanced degrees but are relegated to the lowest-paid jobs. Wage theft against immigrant workers is common.

Latinos/Latinas are extremely diverse culturally and in terms of national origin. Common use of Spanish or Portuguese and shared experience of discrimination in the U.S. are forging unity among most Latino peoples. At the same time, some immigrants from Latin America speak an indigenous language as their first language or do not speak Spanish at all. Over half of all Latinos in the U.S. are foreign-born and face discrimination as immigrants, including Brazilians whose main language is Portuguese.

Mexican Americans and newly immigrated Mexicans are increasingly targets of xenophobic, racist hysteria. The extreme right (including neo-fascists and white nationalists) is manufacturing a political climate of fear against immigrants of color. Mexican immigrants are verbally attacked as “criminals” and “rapists” and as national security threats. These racist attacks are meant to scapegoat Mexican immigrants as the cause of low wages and a lower standard of life for U.S. workers in general, and for supposedly “draining” social benefits. The extreme right weaves a false story of illegal voting by undocumented immigrants to help justify voter suppression. These xenophobic attacks blame Latino immigrants for unwelcomed cultural changes, as though non-white immigrants are not quite American. The extreme right combines these racist attacks with nationalism and the politics of fear.

The extreme right opposes comprehensive immigration reform. Millions of immigrants are denied equal protection under the law and denied a clear path to citizenship with voting rights. They are taxed without representation and excluded from government programs supported by their taxes. Refugees fleeing

Central American violence are denied due process and refugee and asylum rights in violation of international human rights laws. The children of detained refugee immigrants have been separated from their parents and placed in detention centers, a euphemism for concentration camps. The extreme right is deporting Dreamers—young undocumented children whose deportation was deferred by government programs called DACA (Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals). Dreamers were brought to the U.S. by their undocumented parents as very young children, and many currently attend institutions of higher learning or serve in the armed forces. These racist attacks have met with broad united resistance, including the creation and defense of sanctuary cities and civil disobedience.

Many people come to the U.S. as a result of wars due to either direct U.S. military involvement or military campaigns by surrogates financed and trained by the U.S. For example, many flee repression caused by U.S.-supported death squads in Central America. In response, many received Temporary Protected Status, a program the Trump administration is trying to eliminate. People from many countries emigrate to the U.S. because of dire economic situations in their home countries, in many cases caused by U.S. banks and U.S.-led international monetary institutions.

Backward forces use such immigration to bolster their claim that the U.S. is a beacon of freedom. Being forced to leave one's homeland is most often a result of U.S. transnational corporations and their intensive exploitation abroad, backed up by U.S. foreign and military policy. Many people who immigrate to the U.S. looking for economic survival are refugees from the economic policies of U.S. imperialism and the neocolonial, neoliberal "free trade" exploitation experienced around the world.

Many refugees flee their countries due to right-wing dictatorships and death squads supported and trained by the U.S., such as those in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and elsewhere in Central America.

Many immigrants from the Caribbean are trying to escape the U.S. stranglehold on their home countries. Dominicans, Haitians, Jamaicans, and others play vital roles in many communities in the U.S. Haitian immigrants, from the poorest country in the hemisphere, have experienced U.S. support for dictators and death squads, have witnessed U.S. attempts to subvert and co-opt popular democratic movements, and have been subjected to direct exploitation by U.S., French, and other transnational corporations. Once in the U.S., they face continued impoverishment, health crises, racism, and discrimination.

Increasing populations of immigrants from countries in Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe have come to the U.S. in recent years, fleeing economic oppression, war, decreasing living standards, lack of opportunity, famine, and genocide.

### **Muslims and Middle Eastern Peoples**

Three and a half million Muslims of various backgrounds live in the United States. An estimated five million people of Middle Eastern descent live in the U.S., including 3.7 million Americans of Arabic descent, a half million from Iran, and substantial populations from Syria, Iraq, Armenia, Turkey, and others. People of Middle Eastern descent are concentrated in communities in Michigan, Illinois, California, and New York. Most are workers, with many active in the labor movement and in organizations fighting for civil rights and for a more humane foreign policy. People of all these nationalities have been citizens of the U.S. for generations; at the same time, many are recent



immigrants. Under the Trump administration, the number of immigrants from these areas has been deliberately decreased through the so-called Muslim ban and limits on the number of refugees.

As a result of U.S. aggression throughout the Middle East, especially in Afghanistan and Iraq, a substantial majority of Arabs, Muslims, and South Asian peoples in the U.S. have become active opponents of the extreme right. The U.S. has close relationships with the most reactionary forces in the region, supports Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, refuses to accept the rights of the Palestinian people to form their own autonomous state, and demonizes Muslims. Islamophobia and discrimination have dramatically increased in the last two decades, first in the immediate wake of the 2001 attack on the World Trade Center when Muslim men and boys were required to register with the federal government, and in the intervening years, when open hostility toward and discrimination against Muslims and people of Middle Eastern descent became widespread. Despite the fact that the majority of acts of random violence and political terrorism are not committed by foreigners or non-whites, the label “terrorist” is reserved for people of color, especially Muslims. Since the election of Donald Trump, racist violence against Muslims and people of Middle Eastern descent has increased substantially, including racial profiling by government agencies and brutal attacks by Islamophobes inspired by right-wing rhetoric. There are more restrictions on freedom of religion, and more voter intimidation, imprisonment without due process or legal counsel, and mass deportations.

The demonization of Arabs, South Asians, and all Muslims does not make anyone safer. It is in reality a support for the aggressive military policies of U.S. imperialism and a racist justification of oppression. Muslims and people of Middle Eastern descent have been mobilized by groups fighting discrimination and Islamophobia, struggling for rights through the courts, lobbying, education, organized protests, and in the electoral arena. In the 2018 mid-term elections, the first two Muslim women were elected to Congress.

### **Asians and Asian Americans**

Asian Americans come from many different nations, with different cultures, histories, languages, and politics. The widely varying conditions in their homelands have a big impact on the consciousness, level of organization, and integration into U.S. society of the different Asian immigrant groups. While a large number of Asian Americans are foreign-born, millions of Asian Americans are from families that have been living in the U.S. for generations.

The timing and conditions of immigration are important factors in the political consciousness of Asian American communities. During World War II, many Japanese Americans, most of whom were citizens, were wrongly incarcerated in internment camps. They have a different life experience and political history than the Vietnamese who immigrated during the turmoil of the defeat of U.S. armed forces in the mid-1970s. Filipinos whose parents or grandparents came to the U.S. in the 1920s to work in the agricultural fields of California have different national issues than South Koreans who immigrated following the Korean War. Cambodians, Laotians, Indonesians, and nationalities from within those countries endure virulent racism, discrimination, and forced exclusion from major parts of society.

Pacific Islanders come from countries and lands with widely varying political and economic conditions, from colonies of the U.S. like Guam, to independent nations like Fiji, to hundreds of smaller islands which are struggling to create and maintain their own national identities. Samoans, Fijians,

Micronesians, and other Pacific Islander nationalities all face national discrimination and particular forms of racial discrimination.

As more recent immigrants from Asia live in this country for longer periods, they increasingly face and understand the racial and national discrimination rife in the U.S., and increasingly struggle against that oppression.

### **The Struggle for Full Equality for Women**

The ideology of gender inequality and misogyny is another potent weapon against unity within the working class and between the working class and the people's movements. Sexism causes working-class women to suffer additional forms of oppression and exploitation. Capitalists gain extra profits as a result of the gender pay gap—hundreds of billions of dollars each year. They also gain greater profits when male supremacy helps capitalists divide male and female workers, weakening the struggle for all workers' rights. As a result, working-class women, men, and families suffer reduced incomes.

Although women now make up almost half of the workforce, the gender stratification of the job market ensures that many women are relegated to the lowest-paying, least secure jobs. As a result, more women and children are pushed into poverty. Cuts in social welfare programs and rapidly increasing health-care and housing costs hit single mothers and their children especially hard. Women of oppressed groups, including LGBTQ and women of color, can be hit even harder.

Working-class women of color are subject to extra-exploitation on the basis of gender as well as race and class, which adds to individual and collective suffering. Race and/or sexual orientation can become a dividing factor among women, and gender and/or sexuality can divide communities of color. The working-class and people's movements must work to bridge such divides, respecting differences and participating in the struggle for the democratic and civil rights of all. In the movement, we have to ensure that all voices are heard and the participation of women, including in leadership, is encouraged.

Women continue to be compelled to shoulder, on an unpaid basis, most childcare and domestic labor (work in the home). Access to quality, affordable day care remains extremely limited. Changes in domestic arrangements have not kept pace with the increased prevalence of women working full-time, which has added to the difficulties of and demands on women's lives. Women face special challenges in balancing family and work, especially when managing the added responsibilities that come with being an activist. It is especially important for childcare to be provided so that women can participate fully in activities and play leadership roles.

Additional forms of oppression women experience are attacks on their reproductive rights and domestic and sexual harassment and violence. These forms of oppression are valid reasons for immigrant women to request amnesty. The extreme right has launched an ideological attack on women's roles in society and the family. The extreme right is trying to force women to carry unwanted pregnancies to term and to revert back to a submissive role. It wants women to be limited to taking care of the family and children and seeks to assign blame for the high rates of divorce and poverty on women. This "blame the victim" approach seeks to divert attention from the system that oppresses women along with all workers.

The treatment of women as sexual objects brings additional profits to the capitalists. A misogynist culture, which includes pornography, violent video games, and human trafficking, demeans all human

beings, but especially women, and contributes to sexist and abusive attitudes in the home, workplace, and online. Courageous women have launched the “#Me Too” movement to draw attention to the widespread prevalence of sexual harassment, assault, and the embrace of rape in capitalist culture. In addition to the personal harm they inflict, such behaviors limit women’s freedom and effectiveness in the public sphere and warp the full development of both men and women.

The special oppression of women cuts across class lines. This cross-class oppression means that women play a progressive role as a social group. Partnerships between national women’s organizations, the labor movement, and other progressive organizations are important in building the all-people’s front against the extreme right.

Today, more women are accepting leadership roles and running for political office—and winning on issues of broad appeal, such as jobs and housing, and their special experiences as women are increasingly valued. Women of all ages are playing creative, important, high-profile roles in the struggle for democracy, including robust movements for equality and against gun violence, police brutality, and racial profiling. Women are leading fights for public schools, public unions, free universal childcare, and for the rights of all.

Working-class men must realize that childcare, domestic work, and equal wages are not just women’s issues; they are issues that affect everyone. They have an important role to play in leading other men to combat gender discrimination and inequality. They should speak out when they see gender discrimination and advocate in a way that wins other men to the fight for gender equality. They should take an initiating role in combating all instances of sexism and male supremacy in the labor and people’s movements as well as in the family. Women need and deserve an equal place as elected officials, and in the ranks and in the leadership of the labor movement, the people’s mass democratic movements, and in the Communist Party.

Working-class men have a strong self-interest in this project. Whether subtle or overt, the capitalist culture of male supremacy and misogyny is a barrier to collective activity and struggle. This culture creates an environment in which especially working-class men experience pressure to conform to ruling-class ideology.

The effort to develop equality, full respect, and trust gives men the opportunity to understand how women’s experiences under capitalism promote mutual interests and a stake in a better world. The working class otherwise loses the valuable contributions women make. Half of all human potential is lost when women are excluded or when their participation is limited or stunted. Also, people whose thinking is clouded by male supremacy, misogyny, and racism cannot have clear, reliable insights into the dynamics of social inequality, oppression, and exploitation. In addition to hurting women and limiting human progress, such attitudes hurt the men whose thinking and behavior they distort. Greater principled unity between working-class men and women means greater victories for the whole of the working class. A working-class conscious of and aligned with the fight for women’s equality is a working class that can unleash its full power in every arena.

### **Youth and Students**

Today’s youth face unique and unprecedented challenges as a result of capitalist exploitation, class stratification, and climate change. Youth are acutely aware that the planet they live on will be drastically

changed unless we reduce carbon emissions. Under capitalism, youth and students experience special oppression and exploitation. Capitalists gain from pitting generations of workers against one another. Capitalism gains extra profits using two-tier contracts imposing lower wages for new hires and through extremely low minimum wages. Both have a devastating impact on young workers.

Capitalism deprives youth of free access to quality education, of cultural and sports activities, of living-wage jobs and entry-level training and apprenticeship programs. Poverty and great uncertainty in the job market compel large numbers of young people to enter the military and face possible loss of life and limb in one war after another. Youth are highly impacted by the opioid crisis, which benefits big drug companies at the expense of the rest of society. Youth also face additional racism, sexism, and attacks on their civil liberties.

Youth, especially working-class youth and racially and nationally oppressed youth, are subjected to inadequate, underfunded, and segregated public education. The ruling class is ensuring its own survival across generations by crippling public education and profiteering off substandard charter schools that under-educate kids in the inner cities, while the children of the wealthy are provided the best education money can buy. Austerity programs at the state level have shifted more and more of the costs of higher education to students and their families. Those who are not priced out of higher education often begin their working lives with heavy debt burdens—totaling \$1.5 trillion as of 2018—that tie them to the big banks for decades, narrow their choices, stifle their creativity, and start their adult lives on a stress-laden footing.

The forces of extreme right reaction attempt to appeal demagogically to the young generation, especially on college campuses and in the military. Simultaneously, the extreme right wages an ideological war on our youth by criminalizing them, attempting to pit them against seniors, and blaming them for various social ills such as drugs, crime, and sexually transmitted diseases. This assault especially affects black and brown youth, who are disproportionately incarcerated and thrown into the school-to-prison pipeline. Simultaneously, there are efforts to mobilize youth to support the extreme right, especially on college campuses and in the military. Capitalism seeks to use youth as cannon fodder in its imperialist adventures.

Taken together, these challenges constitute a complete denial of a safe, clean world and a secure future for our youth.

Working-class youth and students of today are in a powerful position to act as a key link between the overall working class and youth; they are the core element of the labor/youth alliance. The youth who experience special oppression in addition to generational oppression can act as a link to ally youth with other core forces in the struggle for social progress and change. The increasing desire of today's young people to secure a safe future for themselves and upcoming generations encourages the ongoing alliance between themselves and the labor movement. Further, today's youth are more open to socialism than their parents. They are on the march, whether against gun violence or for a sustainable environment and clean planet. All these factors are advancing the youth movement in a leftward direction.

### **Additional Social Forces for Progress**

### **LGBTQ Community**

As do all other people, LGBTQ Americans demand and deserve full and equal civil rights, including the right to marry. The LGBTQ community consists of people from all classes and all sections of the country and economy, and it increasingly votes against the extreme right. LGBTQ organizations play an important role in many coalitions and are increasingly allied with many progressive organizations and the labor movement.

Members of the LGBTQ community face discrimination in housing and employment, lack full legal and civil rights, and are frequently subjected to hate crimes. Hiring discrimination is so pervasive as to condemn large numbers of LGBTQ people to long periods of joblessness, forcing them into dangerous situations.

The extreme right uses homophobia, transphobia, and attacks on gender non-conformists, gays, and lesbians as wedges to split the working-class and people's movements. Using false notions of “morals” and “family values,” the right attempts to use homophobia to gain allies for its corporate agenda among the working class and other social forces. The real threat to working families is not LGBTQ civil rights but the extreme right agenda of maximum profits and war. Homophobia, a weapon used by the Nazis and later by the McCarthyites in their attack on democracy, continues to be called on by the extreme right in attempts to split the growing unity against their right-wing program.

Unity against homophobia and for LGBTQ rights is an important defense of human rights for all people and is a key to building unity against the broad antidemocratic agenda of the right. Discrimination in housing, employment, education, and public facilities, as well as hate crimes against the LGBTQ community, need to be punished under existing antidiscrimination laws, and such laws created where they do not exist.

### **Farmers and the Rural Population**

All working people are affected by the chronic crisis in rural America. Food prices are soaring, while family farmers, farm workers, and workers in food processing who place that bounty on our tables receive a shrinking share of the food dollar. Most of the wealth is flowing into the coffers of ADM, Monsanto, Cargill, Tyson, and other agribusiness giants. These leeches suck the lifeblood out of rural America, leaving farmers and rural communities to shrivel and die while delivering to the supermarkets and fast-food chains modified and processed foods of dubious safety and nutrition.

Family farmers, farm cooperatives, and workers have a heroic history of fighting common enemies—the banks and corporations. Examples include the Populist Party, North Dakota’s Non-Partisan League, and the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party that embraced socialist Governor Elmer A. Benson. African American and white tenant farmers in Alabama joined the Sharecroppers Union. The unity of farmers and workers was the bedrock of the New Deal. Smashing this alliance contributed to the seizure of power by the extreme right over the past thirty years. Methodically they targeted progressive lawmakers in predominantly rural states, replacing them with hardline, extreme right supporters of agribusiness.

We support legislation to ensure fair commodity prices for farmers who today are forced to sell their commodities at prices below the cost of production. Such legislation is being blocked by the right-wing, pro-agribusiness majority in the House and Senate.

We need federal programs that enable farmers to stay on their farms and encourage young people to go into farming. We need programs to stop rapacious real estate developers from gobbling up fertile farmland. The federal government must stop stalling and pay Black farmers the restitution ordered by a federal judge for a century of racist discrimination in farm loans. The Communist Party USA supports a policy of sustainable agriculture that produces safe and nutritious food, fair farm commodity prices for farmers, and union wages for farm workers.

A growing movement by independent farmers, farm workers, and workers in the food processing industry is fighting for union rights and the rights of small independent farmers. But so far, those struggles are on parallel tracks that have not yet merged into one mighty voice for progressive change in rural America. This remains an urgent task.

### **Seniors**

Seniors and retirees are under attack. This attack includes right-wing efforts to privatize Social Security and slash Medicare, price gouging by pharmaceutical companies, and the divestment of pension plans by businesses eager to avoid their contractual obligations. Many public workers and retirees face pension and benefit cuts. Some aspects of our culture devalue seniors, their ongoing contributions to society, and their rights to full participation in public life. Increases in the retirement age, the rapidly escalating cost of health care, company demands that workers and retirees pay more for their health care, and cuts in funding for social programs all make life more difficult for seniors, threatening their health, economic security, and quality of life. The escalating cost of housing and over-reliance on regressive property and sales taxes in most urban areas have a disproportionate impact on seniors living on a fixed income. Assisted care living facilities are often run by for-profit companies that shamelessly exploit workers and cut corners in caring for the elderly.

The high level of organization of seniors, including union retiree groups, combined with high rates of voting, give seniors the political muscle, in alliance with the labor movement and other progressive forces, to defeat these attacks and to expand social programs that provide essential support for them. National health care, including coverage of catastrophic illness, increased Social Security benefits and COLAs, expanded housing programs for low-income seniors, social support for culture accessible to all, and the acknowledgment of seniors' contributions to society will all help this expanding sector of society.

### **The Jewish Community and Anti-Semitism**

Jewish immigrants in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries contributed substantially to the development of working-class consciousness and the fight for socialism in the United States. The seven million Jews in the U.S., religious and secular, continue to vote heavily (more than 70%) against the extreme right. One reason for this is the extreme right's efforts to erase the separation of church and state to favor their religious fundamentalist allies. There have long been strong progressive trends in the Jewish community on a wide range of domestic issues and for peace. Most U.S. Jews favor a two-state solution and an end to the occupation of the Palestinian lands. However, a substantial number are also influenced by right-wing Israeli demagoguery.

Anti-Semitism is on the rise as an instrument of reaction, and under the Trump administration has reached new extremes, including the deadly rampage in October 2018 at the Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburgh. When the right danger gets stronger, so does anti-Semitism as an instrument of division

and diversion. It is the responsibility of the working class and its allies to condemn and work against anti-Semitism whenever and wherever this danger appears.

### **Social Movements for Progress**

Other class and social forces and movements play important roles in the political life of our country. These include small-business owners and professionals who operate private practices. Numerous movements support improved public education and public health care, the rights of the disabled and mentally ill, and democratic reform of our electoral systems. There are peace groups, environmental organizations, and civil liberties organizations. Also playing important roles are independent media groups, various community and neighborhood organizations, and democratic progressive sections of religious denominations and organizations. This remarkable breadth of organizations and movements affords many opportunities for alliances with the working class.

At times, one or another struggle led by these groups can be the sharpest battle in a region or in the nation, galvanizing new support, understanding, and activism. For example, the massive worldwide movement to end climate change brings together environmentalists, young people concerned about their future, and workers advocating for clean-energy jobs. The movement to end mass incarceration brings together African Americans, whose communities are inordinately affected by this scourge, civil liberties advocates, and even conservative libertarians. Medicare for All and universal health care are demands supported by workers, health-care professionals, and youth.

It is not our intention here to make a comprehensive estimate of all social movements, as this changes rapidly and includes significant complexity. Here we give some examples of how social movements and currents are related to our estimate of the balance of forces and strategic policy.

### **Progressive Culture**

Our people have a rich heritage of many kinds of culture, a heritage that needs to be celebrated, supported, developed, and preserved. Public support for the arts, the encouragement of many forms of cultural expression, and the appreciation of the rich diversity of ethnic and multinational cultural celebrations are all part of our struggle for ending racism, prejudice, and negative stereotypes. Public funding can deepen our education about the important contributions of all peoples to our multicultural country. Many forms of artistic expression have a humanistic, democratic content—even some commercial art forms—and can and do contribute to the struggle against the extreme right. Many popular artists support progressive candidates, take pay cuts to appear in humanistic films, volunteer for fund-raising efforts for pro-people causes, make public statements about crucial political issues, and join demonstrations and marches.

The increasing commodification of mass culture and the restriction of the availability of some forms of art to only the wealthy undermine the democratic participation of all in developing progressive culture. The entertainment industry fosters a popular culture that brings it the greatest short-term profits rather than an all-sided development of all forms of culture. This distorts education and culture, exploits artists, and increasingly impoverishes and limits the cultural forms available to masses of people. Corporate sponsorship of culture, in addition to providing an alternate form of advertising, also tends to restrict or censor progressive or anti-corporate content.

Progressive, democratic artists and cultural workers struggle to create art that reaches and involves the working class and all people, often in the face of serious obstacles—lack of funding, difficulty being heard over the din of commercialism, small audience base, and lack of encouragement and support for anything that challenges the dominant capitalist culture. People’s artists create for picket lines, mass movements, various forms of independent media, and venues outside mainstream commercial markets. Artists who work in commercial media run up against the barriers the system places in their way. They search for ways to combat the antidemocratic, chauvinistic culture promoted by the extreme right.

Developing a vibrant people’s culture, with working-class culture at its core and an appreciation for the cultural expressions of all peoples, is an essential part of building mass struggle against the system. A people’s culture offers a hopeful alternative vision, a means of communicating working-class and democratic values, and a venue for celebrating our multicultural society.

### **Health Care Struggles**

U.S. capitalism’s aversion to ensuring health care as a human right has hurt working people the most. Because so much profit flows to large pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies, and other for-profits, the United States spends more on health care than any other nation, and yet experiences poorer outcomes than other developed countries. Before the Affordable Care Act of 2010, some 44 million Americans had no health insurance. Due to Trump administration cuts and sabotage, that number began rising once more. For the first time in a decade, the number of young children without health care is rising. Health care costs, especially drug costs, are soaring even for those with coverage. Millions work at jobs with no health insurance or other benefits. Even some unionized workers have been forced to negotiate lower wages to pay for their health benefits, or face reductions in health benefits and increased out-of-pocket costs. As a result, the demand for Medicare for All is gaining support among the public and in Congress. Single-payer coverage would be the most comprehensive and cheapest way to guarantee quality health care for everyone.

In many countries health care is recognized constitutionally as a human right, but not in the United States. Unorganized workers are left with little or no real access to health care, which forces them to pay for their health services out of pocket and often beyond their means. Millions of people are forced to choose between critical needs such as medicines, hospital appointments, food, education, and housing. Many more have woefully inadequate health insurance benefits.

In the United States, health care is a big business. This industry comprised nearly 18% of the U.S. Gross National Product in 2017. Removing profit from Wall Street–controlled health industry can fully fund a system that puts health before profit. Communists support comprehensive and free guaranteed access to quality care whenever needed, and the more robust funding of preventative programs. Until socialized medicine is achieved, the CPUSA advocates protecting and expanding the American Care Act and implementing Medicare for All.

A health care system is more than just medical care. Health care also means prevention of occupational and community environmental hazards and eliminating infectious conditions that threaten people’s health. It means guaranteeing that women are fully in control over their own reproductive health and family planning. It means expanding mental health and suicide-prevention programs. Health experts now view poverty as a major health issue, as it may lead to inadequate nutrition, diabetes, heart problems, and other poor outcomes. Gun violence is also increasingly seen as a health emergency, as it takes over 30,000 lives annually, mostly suicides. In addition, the lack of affordable housing has become



a major public health problem. A comprehensive health care system would mean that all health workers in hospitals and community clinics must reflect the populations they are serving—we support the aggressive application of affirmative action programs for equal access to medical, nursing, and other professional training and education programs.

### **Progressive and Democratic Religious Movements**

Many organized religions have within them segments of progressive and democratic religious activists who seek to make their moral values of peace, equality, and justice into a positive force for progress. They increasingly confront the efforts of the extreme right to mobilize religious groups for reactionary or backward causes. Some religious organizations have long traditions of progressive activism, and they increasingly ally themselves with the labor movement, the peace and justice movements, anticapitalist globalization movements, and all democratic movements. They participate in efforts to build people-to-people international solidarity.

There is a small but growing trend among the religious community which considers capitalism as immoral and socialism as the answer. The Communist Party welcomes these developments and expects them to grow.

## **IV The Democratic Struggle**

Our country's revolutionary history is filled with massive struggles to protect and expand democracy. The people have won democratic gains such as the inclusion of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution, successful legal battles ensuring that all people have inalienable rights, elimination of property requirements for voting, outlawing of poll taxes, enrollment of former slaves as voters, voting rights for women and Native peoples, lowering of the voting age, the Voting Rights Act, and the restoration of voting rights to felons who have served their time.

The desire of people to actively participate in decision making drives battles for voting rights, expanding the electorate, reforming the electoral system, protecting civil liberties, guaranteeing civil rights, ending all forms of discrimination, eliminating the power of large financial contributions that enables the rich to dominate elections, and ending all forms of exploitation. The constant struggles of the working class to expand its political power and opportunities are struggles to expand democratic rights. The fight to protect and expand union rights is a fight for democracy. The democratic struggle embraces class and other social forces in struggles against one or another sector of the capitalist class and its dominant transnational monopolies. Many victories have been won in this struggle; however, democratic rights in a capitalist society are not only restricted but always under attack.

The characterization of the U.S. as the “most democratic country on earth” is propaganda. Our democracy is restricted and has been from the start, when the Constitution originally limited the right to vote to property owners who were white men. Today, many people don't vote because obstacles have been placed in the way of exercising their franchise; or they are discouraged when they see no real alternatives and little real change. The U.S. winner-take-all form of elections limits choice and denies those who are not in the majority a real voice and real representation.

Democratic rights are being attacked in multiple ways all over the U.S. Republicans have successfully restricted the size of the electorate by making voter registration harder for workers, people of color, youth, and students. This has been achieved by requiring forms of voter identification that many do not

have, by restricting or eliminating early voting and decreasing the number of polling places in their opponents' districts, by creating gerrymandered legislative districts to prevent fair representation, and by purging voters from the rolls without informing them and without reasonable precautions against abuse of the process. The racist "war on drugs" and resulting mass incarceration have further reduced the number of voters; even after their sentences have been served, ex-prisoners are often denied the right to vote.

Corporate funding of elections also restricts democracy. *Citizens United* and other court cases have enshrined the notion of corporate personhood, giving corporations free speech rights and equating speech with money, thus setting the stage for unlimited spending on elections by corporations and billionaires. Under capitalist rule, people's voices over their government are constantly being restricted, leaving only the trappings of democracy. We have the right to vote, but often only very wealthy people can run for national office.

Both Democrats and Republicans have collaborated over many decades to restrict ballot access for "minor" parties, massively increasing signature requirements to get on the ballot and increasing the percentage of votes needed to remain on the ballot over several election cycles. Many media outlets also restrict democracy by focusing on the horserace and personality aspects of elections, reporting endlessly on polls and perceptions rather than on coverage of the issues of importance to voters.

Democracy is under attack when Republicans seek to limit, and in some cases eliminate, the right of organized groups to fully participate in the electoral system. Examples include attacking the right of unions to donate money to candidates, their right to set up their own political campaigns, and their right to play a role representing their members in the legislative process. Republicans have attacked institutions that organize opposition to their policies, from Associations for Reform Now (ACORN) to Planned Parenthood to unions.

Another area where democratic rights are under attack is the public space. Efforts to bar protest on public property, to force organizers to pay for insurance for demonstrating in public places, and to criminalize protest are on the rise. At the same time, decriminalizing violence against demonstrators and demonizing those who object to the steps toward fascism is the order of the day.

Finally, democracy is restricted in the workplace. In reality, workplaces often function as dictatorships. Only where unions have forced limitations on corporations do workers have some voice in the economic and workplace decisions that impact their working lives. Even the limited victories that have been won are constantly under attack. Workers deserve democracy on the job as well as in their communities. Workers deserve a say in the economic decisions that determine the quality of life of their families.

We must sharpen our understanding of the class nature of the ways that democracy functions differently under capitalism and socialism, and of how to fight to expand people's rights.

A workers' democracy is more expansive, meaningful, and inclusive than democracy under capitalism. Democracy is about democratic rights, civil liberties, and free and fair elections. It is about the right to protest, demonstrate, and work for change. It is concerned with protecting an independent media and access to an Internet free of political censorship. But a workers' democracy also means having

democratic input and control of the economy and being free from corporate power and domination at work, in the community, and in government.

Democratic struggle includes struggles for peace and sharply reduced military spending; equality for the racially and nationally oppressed and for women; job creation programs and an increased minimum wage; adequate health care, education, day care, and housing; social security, pension, and other retirement benefits; and much more. The struggles of all class and social forces who seek to curb the power of the transnationals are democratic struggles.

The class struggle and the democratic struggle are closely linked; they overlap and intertwine. However, they are not identical. The class struggle in an immediate sense pits groups of workers against specific capitalists at the point of production as well as in broader social and economic struggles. The aim of working-class struggle is to subordinate capital to the will of labor. In the long term, this means winning power to construct socialism. The aim of the democratic struggle is to advance equality in all its forms and in all arenas and to widen the democratic space for all working people as much as possible.

The interaction of these two streams objectively advances the struggle for socialism because socialism is necessary for us to permanently eliminate inequality. After a revolution, a qualitative change happens, with democracy progressing in a planned process in harmony with the dominance of working-class power. The victory of socialism will open a new stage in the continual development of democracy.

Every specific class struggle is part of the democratic struggle because in those struggles, masses of workers seek to enlarge or protect democratic possibilities. Often, class battles are played out in the political arena where the democratic action of millions of workers can powerfully affect the battle's outcome. Examples include battles to increase the minimum wage, to make labor laws that encourage union organization, and to stop so-called right-to-work laws in many states and nationally.

The democratic struggle brings together the working class and other class and social forces for common struggle against one or another sector of the capitalist class. The democratic struggle is where alliances and coalitions between labor and other forces take place. This is one reason the extreme right seeks to curtail and limit democratic rights. As the battle against the extreme right intensifies, extreme right attacks on democratic rights also intensify.

There are millions of workers organized into unions, but there are also millions who belong to organizations in their neighborhoods, cities, and states. Workers and allies join together in many kinds of struggles, for a better life, for progressive change, for saving the planet, and for full democracy for all.

The fight for the right of workers to organize is a fight for democracy. Workers fight to make their voices heard—in election campaigns, in legislative battles, and in the workplace. Toward this end, since the mid-1990s many unions have established their own independent, issue-based, worker-to-worker political apparatus. They are working at better communication, with education and mobilization of union membership as key tasks. Unions are increasing their efforts to organize workers, build relationships with allies, and fight in the political arena, making labor the key element of many progressive coalitions and election campaigns. As a result, the votes of union members and their households are consistently more progressive than the general voting population.

Third parties which recognize the need for Left-Center unity to defeat the extreme right play an important and positive role toward shifting the balance of forces and moving closer to the formation of a viable anti-monopoly third party. Some successful projects work by building local independent electoral formations, some by utilizing fusion tactics, some by building national networks or parties—such efforts can make a great contribution to the defeat of the extreme right. Some, however, adopt tactics which divide them from the main forces necessary to sustain long-term independent political action.

The Communist Party, as part of the developing all-people's front to defeat the extreme right, participates fully with the labor movement and its allies in building a strong people's electoral force. Communists fight for expansion of democratic rights, including the participation of working people not only in voting but also in running for office and decision making at every level, whether local, state, or national. The Communist Party's approach to people's electoral politics reflects our view that the current stage of struggle requires an all-people's front to defeat the extreme right and requires within that front a strong and growing labor movement, Left, and Communist Party. This is an essential strategy for this historical period, not just a temporary tactic.

Extreme right political dominance threatens the vast majority of people in this country—even including some sectors of monopoly capital—and very broad unity is both possible and necessary to bring about a major political shift. The struggle to protect and expand democracy is the path to defeat the extreme right. It is the way to prevent fascism. It is the path of curtailing the power of the monopolies. In and through the democratic struggle, the class struggle advances toward victory. Democratic struggle is the way to bring the working class and people's forces to the brink of socialism.

Often, class battles are played out in the political arena, where the democratic rights of millions of workers can powerfully affect the outcome, strengthening the ability of the working class to survive, flourish, and win power. Every democratic struggle, by weakening the capitalist class or a section of it, objectively helps shift the balance of forces, strengthening the working class. The struggle to defend and enlarge democracy in every realm of life is therefore the only path to socialism in our country—any other path will fail and is politically indefensible. As Lenin said, “All ‘democracy’ consists in the proclamation and realization of ‘rights’ which under capitalism are realizable only to a very small degree and only relatively. But without the proclamation of these rights, without a struggle to introduce them now, immediately, without training the masses in the spirit of this struggle, socialism is impossible.”

***(sidebar of the following list)***

The Communist Party supports all efforts to protect and expand the right to vote and guarantee democracy. Here are some:

1. Restore and expand the protections of the Voting Rights Act to ensure an end to discrimination and gerrymandering, and apply voting rights guarantees nationally.
2. Eliminate the Electoral College, institute direct elections for President and Vice-President.
3. Establish non-partisan redistricting commissions to end hyper-partisan gerrymandering.
4. Implement ranked-choice voting, as in the state of Maine, enabling voters to vote for both their first and second choices, allowing more voters to support both minor party candidates and their major party candidate of choice.

5. Allow automatic voter registration for all eligible voters, as already happens in Oregon, New York State, and several other states.
6. Implement proportional representation.
7. Allow fusion voting (the same candidate nominated by more than one party), as already practiced in New York State.
8. End right-wing voter purges, which are aimed at placing obstacles in the path of voting by people of color, poor people, and students.
9. Expand opportunities to vote, such as extended voting days and hours, voting by mail as in Washington State and Oregon, same-day registration and same-day registration updating, and Election Day as a federal holiday.
10. Prosecute voter suppression as a form of electoral fraud.
11. Restore voting rights to felons who have served their time, as already happens in Maine and Vermont.
12. Provide a pathway to citizenship for immigrants; enable non-citizen immigrants to vote in local elections.
13. Support congressional reversal of the *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision allowing unrestricted and unreported money in politics, or if necessary through a Constitutional amendment. End the corrupting influence of private money in politics by expanding democratic election rights and establishing public financing of all elections.
14. Make ballot access for minor parties easier, expanding democratic choice.
15. Make it mandatory that states maintain paper ballots, to prevent computer fraud in our election system.
16. Hold debates with all candidates for an office, including “minor” party candidates.
17. Expand the range of issues requiring democratic input, for example instituting elected civilian review boards.

*(end sidebar)*

The battle for full democracy, in the political and in the economic systems, is a battle to win the support of the majority. There is no successful path to lasting revolutionary change without waging such a struggle.

## **V Unity against the Extreme Right**

We cannot wish our way to socialism; the struggle to transform our country will of necessity pass through several stages of struggle, with each successive stage taking us closer to a direct struggle for working class power.

Understanding the present stage of struggle requires knowing the level of development of the capitalist economy and social system, and the extent of organization and unity of working-class and progressive forces.

Analyzing the objective stages of struggle is essential to developing correct long-term strategy. This is not a mechanical prescription; these are stages of struggle, not stages of social development from one socioeconomic system to another. The social system remains capitalist during all stages up to the conquest of power by the working class. There is no firm, complete barrier between these stages. In the current stage, while identifying the most reactionary sector of the transnationals as the main opponent and developing an anti-extreme right consciousness, Communists seek to grow anti-monopoly

consciousness and class and socialist consciousness. While the extreme right is the focus of the overall struggle in the present, a transnational which is not part of the extreme right may be the opponent in a political fight or a strike struggle.

The present period of capitalist development poses a grave danger to democratic rights and civil liberties in the United States. Since the early 1980s, the Republican Party, increasingly dominated by its extreme right wing, has controlled much of the national legislative agenda, while the leadership of the Democratic Party often ceded ground and initiative. Some Democrats openly collaborated with fossil fuel companies, and some engaged in unprincipled compromise with Republicans, with anti-people objectives such as “welfare reform” and “three strikes laws” that led to mass incarceration.

Ever since the major victories for the working class during the New Deal of the 1930s, the rich and their paid operatives have worked diligently to chip away at or destroy these concessions to the political power of workers. They have attempted to slow down or restrict progressive programs that benefited people’s lives, and to undermine every victory for unions, civil rights, and the environment. Now the extreme right seeks to eliminate many of these programs, which they refer to pejoratively as “entitlement” programs. They want a government that has no role except to facilitate the ruthless power grabs and accumulation of wealth by the giant monopoly corporations: banks, giant retailers, brokerage houses, private equity companies, insurance companies, fossil fuel transnational corporations, agribusiness, pharmaceutical companies, and arms merchants.

After suffering setbacks in the 1970s, sections of the U.S. ruling class sought to reassert their power by seriously funding right-wing think tanks and extreme-right political campaigns and bringing religious fundamentalists into the electoral arena. They constructed an alternate media universe to endlessly repeat right-wing propaganda. They sought to build a mass base that would enable them to reassert U.S. military dominance through massive investments in new weapons systems, reaping super profits for “defense” contractors in the process. They sought to break up the grand political coalition that supported the Democratic Party, starting with building their own coalition of transnationals and economic and social conservatives who worked to dominate the Republican Party. Conservative Evangelicals aiming to roll back women’s reproductive rights joined the new Republican coalition.

Central to their political program was the “Southern Strategy,” a two-pronged approach to maintaining political control of the South: drawing southern whites away from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party using racist “dog whistle” code phrases such as “law and order” and “reverse discrimination,” and disfranchising African Americans through voter suppression tactics.

### **The Extreme Right**

Two major political tendencies have developed in the capitalist class in recent decades in the U.S., both among the transnationals and among the political parties and administrations with which they are intertwined.

The first tendency represents the interests of the most reactionary section of the transnationals. It took over the Republican Party and elected Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush as presidents. The candidacies of Pat Buchanan were used to drive the Republican Party sharply to the right, at first giving off a whiff of fascism and then escalating to the full-blown embrace of policies that lay the basis for fascism, as we see clearly today.

The extreme right coalition also includes the mass base of voters in Republican primaries. The Koch Brothers–funded Astroturf movement known as the Tea Party helped drive this mass base further rightward. “Establishment” Republicans encouraged this development, seeing in it a hope of postponing the consequences of major demographic shifts and growing progressive sentiments among younger voters.

The extreme right is not a monolithic group. It includes elements of national and international corporate power, neoconservatives determined to use military adventurism to promote the interests of the fossil fuel industry and others, and the more traditional conservatives, who refuse to reject the extremes of Trumpism in order to gain more tax cuts and who seek the privatization of Social Security, Medicare, and other social safety-net programs. The extreme right relies on non-party forces such as neo-Nazis, ultra-nationalists, extreme religious fundamentalists, and right-wing militias to promote the interests of the top 10th of the 1%.

The extreme right includes the military-industrial complex, the oil and energy industries, and the pharmaceuticals. It also includes sections of the high-tech industry, finance capital, massive manufacturing corporations, and distribution giants such as Wal-Mart. The extreme right includes the so-called neoconservatives, social and fiscal conservatives, religious fundamentalists, nativists, libertarians, and other right-wing groupings. The extreme right has achieved a mass base among sections of different class and social forces that currently support extreme-right candidates, often against their own interests.

Following the election of Reagan, the impact of the extreme right was felt immediately, both locally and internationally. They worked to establish and maintain a unipolar world with the U.S. as the sole superpower, starting with the dramatic buildup of the U.S. military. They demonized foreign opponents of the U.S., covertly funded right-wing-initiated civil wars in Nicaragua and elsewhere in Central America, and gave weapons to Al Qaeda’s al-Nusra Front in Syria. Starting in the late 1970s and dramatically escalating following the election of Reagan, the U.S. government increased the U.S. military build-up. Most Republican and Democratic elected officials supported capitalist globalization. This led to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and other international trade agreements and organizations, and to increased outsourcing of union manufacturing jobs. This reactionary coalition attacked the very existence of unions and bargaining rights, gave tax cuts to the rich, and imposed cuts to social programs. They worked to establish and maintain a unipolar world with the U.S. as the sole superpower.

The extreme right capitalized on the economic failures facilitated by the Clinton administration’s removal of banking regulations such as the Glass-Steagall Act, which separated investment and commercial banks. This change played a large part in the 2008 global financial crisis. Other neoliberal policies resulted in escalating economic and social inequality. While the extreme right suffered some setbacks during the Obama years, it did not receive a major, lasting rebuff. After Obama’s election, the extreme right stepped up attacks on Democrats, liberals, and progressives, and the social programs promoted by them. With the presidency of Trump, this trend took an even sharper turn to the right, publicly allying itself with avowed racists and fascists.

Extreme right policies on the domestic front are openly anti-union, anti-worker, misogynist, and racist. They diligently promote the interests of the biggest transnationals and the wealthy, especially the most reactionary sectors, through further tax cuts and giveaways. Concurrently, the extreme right attacks the social safety net—measures such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps), Head Start, and environmental protections. To divide working people, the extreme right opposes affirmative action, has shredded the social safety net in ways that disproportionately affect women and people of color, and has fostered increased police profiling and brutality. They increasingly rely on anti-immigrant hysteria to divide, divert, and scapegoat.

Its policies include open domination by the transnationals over most of the government, with corporate lobbyists actually drafting bills, subverting the democratic process. The extreme right actively seeks the elimination of governmental regulation and all opportunities for popular intervention in the public interest in key sectors of the economy. It has enshrined a radical shift of the tax burden from the transnational corporations and wealthy onto the working class, professionals, and small capitalists. There has been a dramatic reduction of government spending on the needs of the poor, the nationally and racially oppressed, and the working class, while increasing various forms of subsidies and tax cuts for big corporations and the super-rich.

The international policies of the extreme right are no less oppressive. Determined to use the overwhelming military power of the United States, neoconservatives claim the right to dominate the world for U.S. capitalist economic and political-military interests. They rationalize their doctrine with phony claims of “freedom” and “democracy,” really meaning freedom for the corporations and finance capital to exploit and oppress. Austerity measures are imposed worldwide to guarantee the “freedom” of capitalist investment and transnational domination.

The extreme right claims the moral right to attack and subvert any country, establish unilateral economic sanctions, conduct war without end, use “tactical” nuclear weapons, and militarize space. The U.S. government established and uses organizations like the National Endowment for Democracy, the International Republican Institute, and USAID to routinely interfere with the self-determination of people all over the once-colonized world. More recent examples of interference include the overthrow of the elected government in Ukraine, attempts to undermine and overthrow those of Venezuela and Nicaragua, and support for coups in Honduras and Bolivia.

Under the Trump administration, the extreme right has used ultra-nationalism and Islamophobia to justify its attempts to dictate to the world and to beat down internal opposition. Whenever international organizations such as the United Nations do not follow U.S.-dictated policies, they are ignored until the U.S. government is able to dominate, undermine, or override them.

The present extreme right government is not an ordinary bourgeois-democratic regime—it is authoritarian in nature. To consolidate power, the extreme right seeks not to unite the capitalist class through compromise but rather to dominate the less militaristic sections of the capitalist class. The current success of the right wing in the electoral arena is not just the replacement of one set of politicians by another; it is a grab for control by one section of the capitalist class over all other sections and over the whole of society.



Another way the extreme right is consolidating its power is to undermine democratic and constitutional rights. It does this in part by wielding the threat of terrorism as a cudgel. Using the “war on terrorism” as a smokescreen, several administrations have curtailed constitutional rights of free speech and assembly. Police powers, control of the media, and surveillance of legal opposition movements have accelerated. Reaction declares “big government” the enemy of individual freedom and prosperity at the same time it is increasing government powers and curtailing democratic rights. In reality, the greatest terrorist threats come from the domestic racist, white nationalist, right-wing fringe.

The extreme right’s consolidation of power, the chipping away of democratic and constitutional rights, the Electoral College victory of Trump, and the spineless capitulation of almost all Republican elected officials have dramatically escalated the danger of fascism. Fascism would be the open terrorist dictatorship by the most reactionary, militarist, racist section of monopoly capital and the elimination of all avenues of popular resistance and protest. Fascism is not inevitable, but the working class and allied forces will not be able to prevent the extreme right section of the capitalist class from moving further toward fascism unless we combat structural changes in that direction now.

To pursue their aims, Trump and the most reactionary transnational corporations seek to maintain a mass base of support to hold governmental power and sustain the illusion of legitimacy. This mass base is largely unaware of the agenda of the extreme right.

Part of this mass support comes from some Christian fundamentalists. Although they have real material interests in opposing the basic program of reaction, Christian fundamentalists have been won over by the extreme right’s false appeals supposedly based on “family values” and “human life.” In reality, they oppose women’s reproductive rights, attack the civil liberties of LGBTQ communities, oppose all affirmative action to move toward equality by the racially and nationally oppressed and women, attack all social welfare programs, and seek to undermine the separation of church and state. At the same time, they set records for immorality by repeatedly lying to the entire country, engaging in corruption on a large scale, and by killing and maiming tens of thousands of people in pursuit of their imperialist designs.

However, other sections of the religious community oppose the direction of the extreme right and support peace and democracy because of their moral beliefs and religious values. Millions of believers vote against and actively fight the program of the extreme right. Among the religious forces weighing in on the side of democratic struggle are the predominant church forces in the African American communities, continuing a long tradition growing out of opposition to slavery and racism. But even here, the extreme right actively seeks to co-opt churches for reactionary purposes.

### **The Other Capitalist Camp**

In pursuit of their particular imperialist interests, other sectors of transnational capital and their political representatives are somewhat more reluctant to use military force. They see a greater role for the United Nations and other international bodies. Domestically, they see a continued need for economic regulation and social welfare programs to keep social peace and avoid the extremes of destructive capitalist competitiveness. They acknowledge the reality of climate change and the immediate need for climate action and environmental protections.

These divisions in the capitalist class contain opportunities for working-class and progressive forces. On some issues, the more moderate, more realistic sections of the capitalist class and their political operatives move in parallel with the people's movements, as important though partial and temporary allies. They can be pressured to adopt a more progressive stance by the strength of the people's movements and mass sentiment.

While the Democratic and Republican Parties are both controlled by capitalists, they are not identical, and the Left and Communist movements cannot ignore these differences. The Democratic Party has been the main vehicle used by African American and Latino communities to gain representation, as well as the main mechanism used to elect labor, progressive, and even Left activists to public office, especially at the local level. There exists an internal struggle within the Democratic Party among centrist forces who collaborate with the right wing, centrist forces opposed to the right wing, and more progressive, even socialist, trends. Those opposed to the right wing are sometimes willing to align with progressive elements that seek to defeat the program of the extreme right. There are struggles within both the Democratic Party and within the labor and people's movements, which are reflective of the overall struggle to gain political independence from corporate dominance. The Left must help build the movement against the extreme right, while strengthening the ability of the working class and its allies to effectively exert their will through massively broadening and deepening their organized reach. Any serious strategy that hopes to win millions of people to a more advanced political program must contend with this reality and relate to these struggles.

### **Defeating the Extreme Right**

The only strategy capable of defeating the extreme right's implicit and explicit drive toward fascism is the widest possible organized unity of all class and social forces whose interests run counter to those of the most reactionary section of the transnationals. Such an all-inclusive coalition needs to be led by labor and the working class in close alliance with the core forces and everyone except the most reactionary section of transnational capital. This unity will include an ever-growing Left-Center political coalition that includes the Democratic Party base, left and progressive independents, independent parties who recognize the danger the extreme right poses, and all the progressive social movements on the major issues of our day. This unity will be strengthened by the issue-based, door-to-door grassroots efforts by African American, Latino, Asian American, women's, youth, LGBTQ, and environmental organizations. This all-people's front must strive to increase working-class voter participation and attract even some who voted Republican in the past out of anger or delusion, influenced by extreme right propaganda and ideology.

The struggle to defeat the extreme right is a democratic struggle which has the potential to shift the balance of forces in a direction more favorable for winning working-class victories, for mounting offensive struggles to improve the quality of life for the vast majority of our people. Defeating the extreme right will expand the freedom of working people, and such a defeat requires the most rigorous defense of all democratic rights, even partial, limited rights.

The struggle against the extreme right, against the most reactionary sector of the transnationals, and for achieving a decisive electoral defeat of its political power, is of great significance. However, such a defeat alone will not end the extreme right danger. There will still be the danger that the most extreme reactionaries, militarists, and racists in our country will seek to impose fascism. In the struggle to defeat the extreme right and in subsequent stages of struggle, the working class must seek to strengthen its

ideological bearings, organizational capacity, and political muscle, along with building alliances. It must become evident that only the replacement of capitalism, which gives birth to these backward and antidemocratic political trends, with socialism can finally do away with the extreme right threat.

Defeat of the extreme right in the political/electoral arena will weaken the most reactionary sector of the monopolies. In doing so, their defeat objectively weakens all monopolies and the capitalist class as a whole. The struggle against that sector of the ruling class also serves the purpose of uniting, educating, and assembling a major portion of the forces needed for the next historic task of the working class, that of struggling to radically curb the monopolies as a whole. The struggle against the extreme right helps millions of people understand more clearly who the next main strategic opponent is and who can and must unite to achieve that next goal. Through their own activity, millions are taught the methods of struggle, forms of organization, and demands necessary to move forward.

Grassroots organizing around a program for working people's needs is key to shifting the balance of forces to the left. Building a multiracial, multinational movement and expanding union organization and other movements into the South and rural areas are crucial to overcoming that which weakens us: the racism and bigotry utilized by the extreme right.

The labor movement has made significant shifts in its organization and outlook. It now leads many coalitions for progress and change, as well as defensive struggles against the attacks of the corporations and the extreme right. Labor's intensified participation in electoral struggles has resulted in the election of thousands of union members to office, the creation and development of labor's own independent political apparatus, and better communication with, education of, and mobilization of union membership.

Some demands and victories that begin to curb the power of monopoly may be won in part or in whole in the course of the struggle against its extreme right section. Some essential people's demands may not be won completely or at all in the anti-monopoly stage and may have to await the succeeding stage of working people's power and the construction of a socialist society.

It is not the specific demands but rather the strategy of that particular period of struggle, the depth and breadth of mobilizing masses, and the level of unity that develops which are the most crucial factors in defining the stage of struggle. The shift between stages is not a mechanical calculation but rather is based on a changed balance of forces—when the people's forces gain strength and unity sufficient to administer significant defeats to the extreme right and to decisively shift the balance of forces, then advancing to the anti-monopoly stage becomes possible.

## **VI Building the Anti-Monopoly Coalition**

U.S. capitalism is presently in the transnational monopoly capitalist, imperialist stage of development: state monopoly capitalism. Once the most reactionary extreme right transnationals receive a major defeat, it will be both necessary and possible for the people's democratic forces to take on the transnationals as a whole. This more advanced, anti-monopoly stage of struggle will be the next key step on the road to socialism in the U.S.

The strategic aim of the people's forces will be to radically curb the power of the transnational monopolies over the political, economic, and ideological life of our country. A serious effort to curb that

power to a substantial extent requires a broad coalition of all class and social forces whose actual interests conflict with those of the monopolies. It will need to embrace all the social movements and political tendencies who oppose these transnationals on some or many issues.

Such a coalition will build on the alliances and organizational forms developed in the current struggle to defeat the extreme right. Because an anti-monopoly coalition will seek to curb the power of all sections of the transnationals, it will no longer include the less backward section of the transnationals and their political representatives. But that shift need not mean a narrowing of the anti-monopoly coalition. It must involve a great mass upsurge of millions. The coalition can broaden and deepen as sections of the objectively anti-monopoly strata shed illusions through their experience of struggle and the successful achievement of a major shift of the political balance of forces against the extreme right.

This coalition must include all who share with the working class the common enemy of monopoly power. They all have a stake in radically curbing the power of monopolies and in seeking to win an anti-monopoly government.

*(sidebar)*

### **An Anti-Monopoly Program**

The anti-monopoly people's coalition will put forward a program of public policies and government practices as the coalition grows and strengthens. A developed anti-monopoly program will build on the many struggles and issues already begun and won in the fight against the extreme right. As part of that coalition, the Communist Party will propose radical democratic demands aimed at curbing the political, economic, and ideological power of the monopolies. Unless they are already won at an earlier stage, our demands will include

- The building of a mass people's party capable of contending for governmental power, a party free of domination by any monopoly interests.
- Removal from the electoral system of the financial contributions of monopolies, to be replaced by public funding and guarantees of honest elections where each vote counts and all votes are counted.
- Full restoration and expansion of the Bill of Rights and all democratic rights; the complete separation of church and state.
- Full legal protection from hate crimes and racial profiling, the institution of police accountability by civilians, an end to police violence, and the outlawing of oral and written racist propaganda.
- No discrimination in the workplace on the basis of race, gender, nationality, or disability and against other protected groups. Employers must provide equal pay for equal work. Employers must prove performance-based non-discrimination.
- Implementation of affirmative action and compensatory programs to achieve actual equality for the racially and nationally oppressed and women.
- Prevention of the "freedom" of monopolies to move assets in ways that harm workers and communities without full compensation; the guaranteed right to a job at living wages through public works and public service jobs or full income; the growth of public ownership of industries; nationalization of "too big to fail" banks.
- The right to form and join a union free from interference or retaliation; guarantees that corporations must fulfill their contractual obligations of providing pensions and other benefits.

- Full funding for public education, affordable housing programs, day care, Social Security, and a universal health care program, youth job training and recreational and cultural programs.
- Accelerating the transition to a green, carbonless economy, as part of a massive public works jobs program
- Creation of a social fund to make up for past and continuing wrongs and to help achieve equality in facilities and infrastructure for communities of the racially and nationally oppressed and women.
- No taxes for low-income people; progressive taxation of the wealthy, for-profit corporations, and taxation on financial transactions such as purchases and sales of stocks, bonds, derivatives, and other investment instruments.
- Replacement of the imperialist foreign policy of preemptive strikes and dictating to the world in the interests of U.S.-based transnationals by a policy of international cooperation to solve problems of war and aggression, poverty, education, environment, health, and development.
- Military budget slashed to a fraction of current spending with funding transferred to social programs.
- All media to be free of monopoly corporate ownership.

*(end sidebar)*

### **A Labor-Led People's Party**

Currently, the development of political and electoral independence for the working class and its allies mainly supports candidates who utilize the Democratic Party to run for office. Despite the various new political forms and experiences of the labor and people's movements, "third" parties have had only limited success. Undemocratic, legal difficulties remain a barrier to creating a successful national political party free from control of the monopolies. Major restrictions on full democracy include the "winner take all" electoral system, as opposed to proportional representation and ranked-choice voting. Other restrictions on democracy include excessive requirements for ballot access and virtually no limits on campaign spending. These and other obstacles need to be eliminated to allow the fullest democratic participation of all people. Further, public financing of elections will enable more working-class candidates to contend for major public offices.

The development of a national mass people's party will take place through electoral and other progressive struggles inside and outside the two-party system. The political and organizational forms that are currently developing toward such a party include:

- labor's independent electoral apparatus;
- independent election financing;
- labor candidates, and candidates who come from grassroots movements;
- independent electoral apparatus in the African American community and other oppressed communities;
- independent progressive political action committees and campaigns, get-out-the-vote, and voter registration campaigns;
- Internet-based activist networks not controlled by the Democratic Party;
- issue-based organizations such as the League of Conservation Voters and Planned Parenthood;
- movements running candidates in the Democratic Party, or on two ballot lines, or as independents;
- Communists running for office—as Communists, as independents, for nonpartisan offices, and as part of progressive slates; and

- organizational forms that provide unity among these different forces and movements.

Independent election tickets and parties, when they support the current central objective of defeating the extreme right and do not weaken that effort, are objectively preparing the ground for a powerful people's anti-monopoly party in the future. The successful candidates will be those who fight for real economic and political reforms and who build coalitions that reach into the neighborhoods and communities with campaigns that produce sustainable wins. This means putting forth working-class demands and platforms that respond to the reality on the ground at a particular moment and in a particular area.

The struggle for a program that radically curbs the power of the transnationals will take place not only through a people's party but also through non-electoral struggles at all levels—workplace and neighborhood grassroots forms, and city, state, and national coalitions. These organizational forms can gradually coalesce into ongoing multi-issue coalitions and an anti-monopoly front of struggle. Methods of struggle include demonstrations, strikes, petitioning, picketing, boycotts, civil disobedience, and mass and general strikes, in addition to electoral struggle.

It is possible and desirable that a people's party and anti-monopoly coalition will win governmental control at the local, city, state, or even national level. The goal of this governmental participation is to implement those parts of the program of radical democratic demands not already won and to organize for the next stage in the struggle—the fight for socialism.

### **The Left in the Anti-Monopoly Coalition**

Curbing the power of the monopolies weakens capitalism and puts the country on a new, sustainable development path. The building of a people's party and an anti-monopoly coalition capable of competing for governmental power leads to shifts in the balance of forces toward the qualitative change, which will open the direct struggle for working people's power and socialism.

The growth of an anti-monopoly coalition and a people's party depends on a greater socialist-minded current, a mass Communist Party, and a larger Left. A large and growing Left within all the class and social forces and social movements is essential to help keep the grand anti-monopoly coalition unified and moving forward. A much larger Left will help all democratic anti-monopoly forces focus on the transnational monopolies as the main enemy and will help assure a leading role of the multiracial, multinational, multigender working class in close alliance with all nationally and racially oppressed peoples, women, and youth.

A mass Communist Party is necessary for developing an anti-monopoly coalition, overcoming obstacles placed by the transnationals, solving difficulties internal to the coalition, and moving ahead to a coalition of working people's power led by the working class. The Communist Party will help assure that the anti-monopoly coalition moves on to seek an end to capitalism itself and the construction of socialism. Our Party, with its deep roots in U.S. history and culture, and its long-standing principled fight for working-class unity, civil rights and full equality for all, genuine reforms, and maintaining and extending Constitutional rights, is an indispensable component of the coalition needed to win socialism.

It is not possible to predict to what extent an anti-monopoly people's coalition and government will implement its radical anti-monopoly program before the lesson is learned by tens of millions that

winning radical anti-monopoly reforms is not enough. So long as the capitalists and transnationals own the means of production and are able to command political and economic power, new social problems will emerge, and old ones will be reintroduced in new forms. A full, lasting solution to modern social, economic, and environmental problems requires socialism, starting with social ownership of the key major sectors of the economy and working people's democratic power led by the working class.

The wider and deeper the unity of the anti-monopoly coalition, the more the working class and its key allies lead it, the stronger the Left and socialist-oriented sector, the bigger and more influential a mass Communist Party, more the power of the transnationals will be curbed by radical measures. These will make easier the move to the next stage of struggle, the direct struggle for immediate revolutionary change. This move to a new stage will be made possible by a major change in the balance of political power in favor of working people led by the working class.

Although the coalition of working people fighting for socialism will not include any section of the monopoly capitalist class (except those individuals who might abandon their capitalist class interests in favor of the interest of the working class), it can be broader and deeper than all previous political coalitions of the working class and its allies, embracing nearly the entire population of each of its class and social movement components. The anti-monopoly coalition that brings the working class to full political power will be a fuller expression of democracy of, for, and by the vast majority. It will be and require a more developed expression of class and socialist consciousness by tens of millions of workers and their allies.

## **VII The Revolutionary Transition to Working People's Power**

Because of the capitalist class's enormous power, its dominant ideology in the media and educational systems, and its ability to create and foster division, the next major social transformation, to socialism, requires a massive movement infused with both class and socialist consciousness. Revolutionaries must be steeled in the battles of the working class for better wages and working conditions and a better quality of life for all, tested in building alliances between workers and all oppressed peoples, and consistent in battling real and perceived divisions based on age, sex, nationality, and sexual orientation. Being a revolutionary requires a mindset of thinking beyond oneself, thinking about what will move the working class forward. Class and socialist consciousness must be solidified within the entire working class.

Working-class power comes from the united action of tens of millions of working people and their allies, from their commitment to end exploitation and oppression. Anything short of that will be unable to succeed in bringing about a fundamental transformation of the economic system, redirecting priorities to solve people's needs, both short and long term.

We see revolution as a profoundly democratic process, one that involves the actions and decisions of the vast majority. The more unified the majority, the more likely it is that a transition can be accomplished without the capitalists using violence to block the building of socialism. We reject all approaches that welcome and seek violent action. We fight for and commit ourselves to building enough unity to win socialism peacefully, though we recognize that the ruling class may initiate violence against progressive and radical movements in an attempt to maintain its power. We have no illusions that the capitalists will willingly give up power and control unless they have no possibility of successfully stopping social transformation by initiating capitalist class-led violence.

A revolutionary majority, based on mass organizations and political parties, must work to make it politically impossible for the former ruling class to use political or military means to return to power. As with all governments, should any forces try to take power by unconstitutional means, by coup or counter-revolutionary insurrection, the full weight of the government and mass people's power would be used to uphold socialist legality and working people's power.

The Communist Party aims for a peaceful transition to socialism, based on all forms of mass democratic expression and social action, electoral and non-electoral, to win and maintain working people's power. Our Party, with deep roots in U.S. history and culture, with its long-standing principled fight for working-class unity, for civil rights and full equality for all, for genuine reforms, for maintaining and extending Constitutional rights, is an indispensable component of the coalition needed to win socialism.

The struggle to achieve power and construct socialism will be difficult. The capitalists have great resources and great determination to keep their riches and power. For an organization to play a leading role and develop strategy and tactics that fit the objective circumstances requires Marxist-Leninist analysis based on the actual material conditions of society. It requires the ability to influence millions, based on long experience of common struggle and mutual respect. It requires a Communist Party steeled in action. A leadership role in the struggle for socialism is not proclaimed; it can be won only through millions of working people gaining direct experience with a Communist Party, with its deeds, and with its application of theory to real struggles. A Communist Party must win this respect anew at every step of the struggle.

We do not propose any detailed plan for exactly how this transition will come about, since it will depend on the specific circumstances at the time. Revolutionary transformations have happened differently in each country that has gone through such a transition. In some cases, it was under the leadership of a single party, in others it was a multiparty coalition. In some, it came as a result of a direct struggle for socialism; in others, socialist goals only came following an anticolonial or anti-imperialist revolution. We can't predict the exact challenges we will face; we can only focus on building a revolutionary movement strengthened and seasoned by participation in mass struggles.

A socialist USA will be democratic, egalitarian, humane, and sustainable. The working people of our country need this transformation, and the people of the world need us to work for it, to take the threat of imperialist domination and invasion out of their political calculations.

The creation of a better world is both possible and essential. This will only happen with the creation of an environmentally-conscious socialism. A democratic society based on working people's power will enable us to solve exploitation, oppression, remove the power of finance capital from our necks, and create and maintain a healthy balance with the natural world on which we depend.

## **VIII International Capital versus International Solidarity**

### **Capitalism in the Era of Monopoly and Imperialism**

Because capitalism is a global system, the struggle of the working class for a better life and for socialism must be global. The chronic problems working people face today are rooted in the birth and history of the capitalist system itself. "Free" competitive capitalism was replaced at the end of the nineteenth century by monopoly capitalism. Great amounts of capital were concentrated in a few companies in each



industry, both in our country and internationally. At the same time, industrial and banking capital merged into finance capital. These monopolies proceeded to divide up the world economically, each with its own sphere of control. To ensure the stability of investment and free access to resources, corporations sought to dominate the governments within their spheres. The transnational corporations succeeded in backing up their economic division of the world with a military-political division of the world. Africa, most of Asia and Latin America, and parts of Europe were divided into colonies or semi-colonies of the U.S., Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Belgium, and the other monopoly capitalist states. Colonial domination resulted in concentration of worldwide wealth in the hands of the few and the impoverishment of the many. Imperialism is not just a policy of the major capitalist powers; it is a stage of capitalism itself.

The current stage, state monopoly capitalism, provides greater and more permanent economic and political support to capitalist monopoly corporations, especially global banks. Despite the trappings of democracy, the U.S. government, like those of other imperialist countries, implements foreign policy as a direct instrument of monopoly capital, enabling the accumulation of capital for the monopolies. The government maintains international economic institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. State monopoly capitalism also develops international trade agreements that impinge on national sovereignty.

Unlike labor, capital moves freely across borders in most of the world in search of higher profits. Stimulated by the internationalization of economic life and the scientific and technical revolution, transnational corporations control many aspects of economic life. These range from financing, to research and development, to sources of supply, to production, all the way to wholesale and retail distribution. Globalization gave the monopolies more alternatives for resource extraction and production based on which country is cheapest for each operation. This enabled greater coordination and planning within the bounds of a single corporation and in cartel-type arrangements with other transnational corporations.

As of 2017, of the 100 largest economic entities in the world, 51 were transnational corporations, the rest being entire countries. Transnationals increasingly dominate many industries worldwide. These include Walmart and Amazon in retail; JP Morgan and Goldman Sachs in investment banking; Google, Facebook, Apple, and Netflix in technology; News-Corp, Viacom, Comcast, Disney, and Fox in mass media; and Pfizer, Roche, Sanofi, and Johnson & Johnson in pharmaceuticals. These and other transnational corporations dominate the governments of the leading imperialist powers as well as multistate institutions, and politically and economically dominate many less developed countries.

Global corporations have led to unprecedented concentrations of wealth, and the resulting degree of inequality is even more staggering at the individual level; the three wealthiest individuals in the United States have more wealth than the poorest 163 million Americans combined. Twenty-six individuals have more wealth than half of the world's population.

Growing wealth inequality, joblessness, and wars have resulted in mass human migrations. More recent human migrations include refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and North Africa moving to Europe; Central Americans to the U.S.; and more. These mass migrations have been used by the extreme right in Europe, the UK, and in the U.S. to stir up racist/xenophobic anger against immigrants and all people of color. Refugees from the climate crisis will only add to the numbers of economic and political

immigrants, as extreme weather, crop failures, drought conditions, and imperialist oppression affect countries without the resources to adapt.

### **The International Front for Peace and Progress**

With each major international issue of struggle comes a new balance of forces. Peace sentiments and movements worldwide constitute a major force against imperialism and aggression. Our people have a material interest in ending the attempts of U.S. imperialism to use military power to dominate the world—the tax dollars used to invade and control other countries and regions are desperately needed to fund adequate services, programs, and benefits for our people.

The U.S. is the main imperialist power in the world and is therefore the main threat to peace worldwide. The Communist Party and progressive forces in the U.S. have a responsibility to our own people and to the people of the world to build the broadest, strongest peace movement opposed to U.S. imperialist aggression anywhere in the world. We must demand the dismantling of U.S. military bases in other countries. We have a responsibility to all past, present, and potential future victims of direct U.S. military aggression, including those from Vietnam, Afghanistan, Cuba, Syria, Yemen, Russia, Iran, Central America, and North Korea.

Building international unity against war and aggression is increasingly a matter of human survival. Unity against the development and use of nuclear weapons and against expanding the arms race into space is an escalating necessity.

On some issues, only a handful of client states side with the U.S. because there is growing recognition that U.S. policies threaten not only world peace but increasingly threaten the very existence of humanity. The most flagrant examples are the U.S. imperialist invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, Trump's abandoning the Paris Agreement and Iran nuclear deal, moving the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, backing off US-Cuba rapprochement, continued attacks against Venezuela, threats against Central America over the migrant-refugee crisis and against Nicaragua, support for Saudi attacks on Yemen, threats against North Korea, and the arming of Ukrainian fascists.

The peace front consists of overwhelming world public opinion in all countries against war and for peaceful solutions, along with organized peace and social movements working directly to accomplish these aims. It also consists of the existing socialist countries and developing countries that maintain some degree of independent policies. Even most other developed imperialist powers, less dominated by weapons manufacturers and other war capitalists, recognize that military options result in highly dangerous consequences and seldom are useful or lasting even for their imperialist aims. The extreme right forces in the U.S. and across the global economy work in opposition to the broad peace front.

After the counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, the U.S. escalated its aggressive, unilateral foreign policy. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was expanded after the end of the Cold War. The U.S. continued its imperialist policy of containment of socialism in China and also against Russia, the second most powerful military country. It continued to surround China with military bases in the Pacific and intensified the military and economic containment of China through its "Pivot to East Asia" policy. The U.S. helped orchestrate a successful coup against the elected government in the Ukraine with the assistance of neo-Nazi elements trained in Poland. The primary aim was adding the Ukraine to NATO and the E.U. and military containment of Russia.

The U.S. also created a now-defunct trade arrangement with Pacific Rim nations called the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The TPP was meant to economically isolate China. The U.S. continues to challenge China militarily in the South China Sea. Countries bordering the South China Sea must resolve island and maritime claims without U.S. intervention. The Trump administration has escalated a tariff war against China. The purpose is to push U.S. elections to the right and to pressure China against the DPRK (North Korea). The U.S. wants to unilaterally denuclearize the DPRK with no corresponding steps to end the U.S. military and nuclear presence on the Korean Peninsula. World peace continues to be threatened by the belligerent, hegemonic actions of U.S. imperialism.

The U.S. and transnational corporations dominate most of the world through economic means, not just military ones. With nearly all the socialist and developing countries now members of the WTO, IMF, and other international trade alliances, struggle also takes place within these organizations. Increasingly, the developing countries have challenged the trade alliances' aim to regulate international economic relations in the interests of the transnational corporations and their "home countries," particularly the U.S.

There is a growing recognition that the globalization of economic and social life means that social problems anywhere in the world affect all countries, including the richest ones. Mass poverty and hunger, extreme inequality, debt, lack of access to health care and education, and environmental devastation are problems facing all humanity and require international solutions.

In the 2000s, there was a resurgent leftward movement in several parts of the world, most notably in Latin America with the election of Left and Left-Center governments. They rejected imperialist "free trade" schemes, worked to expand social benefits, and politically rejected U.S. domination. In attempts to reverse this trend, U.S. intelligence and diplomatic services have supported and organized massive efforts, including supporting the 2009 coup in Honduras and aiding fascists in Brazil and coup plotters in Venezuela. The extreme right gained ground in some countries and continued its political dominance in others. With the defeat of some of the "Bolivarian" and progressive governments, neoliberalism is again on the ascendancy in Latin America.

In a number of developed capitalist countries, the labor movement has become a more militant force in both economic and political arenas. There is some continued strengthening of socialist and other Left forces. It is multifaceted and eclectic, with the eventual outcome uncertain at this point.

In Europe, there is a sharpening of inter-imperialist conflicts with the U.S. and among the European powers. There is a growing opposition by much of the labor movement and Left to further European integration at the expense of working people. The extreme right is threatening democracy by seeking victories for right-wing governments, as in Poland and Hungary, and for ultra-nationalist parties in France, Germany, Austria, Britain, Italy, and elsewhere. There is also a resurgence of right-wing parties across Scandinavia. Many of these parties base themselves on anti-immigrant hysteria and anti-Semitism.

China, India, and Vietnam, with their rapidly growing economies, provide some counter-balance to U.S. imperialism in their region. At the same time, the Duterte regime in the Philippines engages in the open military oppression of all opposition.

In the Middle East, there is a growth of resistance to U.S. attempts to dominate military, political, and economic life, through its own direct intervention and invasion and through support for the Israeli occupation and military control of the territory that must belong to the Palestinians under the necessary two-state solution.

The U.S. is the leader of world imperialism and home to the bulk of the dominant transnationals. It seeks control over the entire world, including over its rival imperialist powers. Under extreme right political leadership, U.S. imperialism has massive power at its disposal—ranging from its military preponderance to its various means of economic domination and political pressure, from bribery and ideological weapons to force and violence. But even with these extremely dangerous instruments, U.S. domination is slowly weakening.

The “war on terrorism” has been a cover for higher military spending, excessive war profiteering, and internal repression. Imperialism has been a chief supporter of terrorism, both by individual and small-group actors and by states, to promote its global agenda. The targeting of civilians for military attack is just as terroristic as individual acts of violence. U.S. imperialism’s role in promoting Osama bin Laden, state- and corporate-sponsored terror in Colombia, the terror-based regimes of Pinochet in Chile, Suharto in Indonesia, the Argentine military junta and its Dirty War, Saddam Hussein, and many others, is well known. U.S. support for Israel in its use of state military terrorism against the Palestinian population of the occupied territories is one of the main obstacles to a lasting solution to conflicts in the Middle East. U.S. imperialism has also supported, employed, and harbored terrorists, who used such methods as bombing civilian airplanes, in an effort to destroy Cuba’s socialist state.

### **International Working-Class Solidarity**

The need for international working-class unity is more important than ever. U.S. imperialism, particularly under extreme right dominance, is increasingly warlike and belligerent. There are similar trends in some competing imperialist powers. In their attempts to spread economic, political, and military control across the globe—in short, to spread their empires—some capitalist nations do not hesitate to start war on weaker nations. We cannot rule out the danger of war between imperialist powers in the future, though the destructive effects of modern weaponry, the overwhelming military superiority of the U.S., and the certainty of internal political opposition all serve to discourage ambitions for direct military imperialist conflict. Working people are the victims on both sides of all imperialist wars and military adventures.

Terrorism substitutes individual acts of violence, frequently targeting civilians, for the mass action essential to real progressive change. We have long rejected and opposed terrorist methods as a means of struggle, even for a just cause. The organizers of much individual terrorism in the world today are not pursuing social progress but rather are trying to impose right-wing regimes, often under the banner of religious extremism.

Imperialism has promoted terrorism by installing and supporting reactionary, oppressive regimes around the world and helping to suppress and eliminate communist and other democratic and working-class movements that offer broad avenues for positive social change.

The global and exploitive expansiveness inherent in capitalism is laid out clearly in the Communist Manifesto. Lenin’s revolutionary strategy was grounded in a clear understanding of imperialism.

Workers of all countries will have to unite in a multifaceted international movement to bring a socialist future into being.

Like other forms of unity, international unity must be built on respect, trust, and joint action on issues of common interest. International working-class solidarity and unity is not built in the abstract but in the process of specific struggles.

The Communist Party is rooted in working-class internationalism—we recognize that the working classes of the whole world have common interests in mutual understanding, solidarity, liberation, peace, a sustainable environment, and development. We share common enemies: world imperialism, particularly U.S. imperialism, the most reactionary transnational corporations, and the governments they dominate. We support the broadest possible unity of the international working class. We also support international solidarity with other peoples and movements struggling for liberation worldwide. One such expression of international solidarity is the annual Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, in which our Party participates.

Only much greater unity and solidarity by the labor and people's movements internationally can counter the ravages of capitalist globalization, its exploitation and oppression, and its environmental destruction.

There exists today a growing level of international consciousness and functional unity among working people which proclaims, "A better world is possible."

## **IX Socialism in the USA**

Socialism will solve many of the intractable problems of capitalism and provide mechanisms for solving others over time. Once human need replaces greed and private profit as the driving force of the economy, once working people can together make decisions about the priorities of society, once serious steps to end exploitation and oppression are being implemented, once the people remove the power of the transnational corporations from the U.S. political system, then we can begin real, humane problem solving and create lasting solutions.

The most successful movements for workers' rights around the world are not imposed from without but emerge from within. Socialism in the United States will have distinctive characteristics because it will emerge from our unique political culture. The Communist Party seeks to build socialism in the United States based on the revolutionary traditions and struggles of the people of our country. From before the start of the American Revolution up to today, workers and their allies have struggled to create and extend democracy.

One unique aspect of U.S. political culture is the foundation of working people's rights embodied in the Bill of Rights—the rights to free speech, to free assembly, to freedom of religion, to a secular government. It is these rights and the struggles to realize them that guarantee the right of all to work for a better world, for a more perfect union.

Our Party since its inception has fought for democracy; we have fought for voting rights for women and people of color, against Jim Crow voter suppression in the Deep South, and for the right to organize and strike. Our Party fought against efforts to restrict free speech rights throughout the McCarthy period. We waged battles in the court system and in the court of public opinion for our and the public's right to

freedom of assembly and association. Our commitment to democracy has been tested as we fought against efforts to deport many of our members, to outlaw our organization, and to restrict the democratic choices available to citizens. A socialist USA, resting on the foundation of the Bill of Rights, will open up possibilities and potential for all.

A Socialist Bill of Rights, enshrined in amendments to the U.S. Constitution, will guarantee all the freedoms we have won over centuries of struggle. It will include freedom from unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, discrimination, and oppression. It will include extended rights fundamental to socialism: the rights to justice, liberty, and equality; free quality health care and education; living-wage jobs and decent housing; and a healthy environment.

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Our vision is of a humane socialist USA, which can be achieved in part by enshrining more freedom and democracy in a Socialist Bill of Rights:

- Where working people run the country on behalf of the needs of all, where people, peace, and planet come before profits;
- Where all can participate, no matter their religion, race, or nationality;
- Where immigrants have the same human rights as the native born;
- Where the strength of our multinational, multiracial, multigenerational, gender-diverse working class can solve the problems we face in the interests of all people;
- Where creating a sustainable, demilitarized economy takes priority over profits;
- Where the supposed “right” of companies to pollute is outlawed;
- Where working people are guaranteed union rights;
- Where women have full rights and actual guaranteed equality;
- Where all ethnic, national, gender, and racial groups have full guaranteed equality and civil rights, implemented through an immediate and urgent program of compensatory measures;
- Where fully funded quality education from pre-school to university is the highest priority;
- Where fully funded universal health care for all is a right;
- Where a job and a superior standard of living are a right.

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Socialism will not create an instant workers’ paradise. Socialism is a phase of socioeconomic development during which millions of people increasingly decide their own destiny and work step-by-step to build new democratic institutions to run the economy. Socialism will provide mechanisms by which working people can work together cooperatively to extend political democracy into substantive democracy in all spheres of social life including the economy. Socialism will put an end to oppression and exploitation and create a sustainable, equitable, democratic economy. Socialism will enable us to work to end the unsustainable exploitation of nature.

Socialism is an economic system in which the decisive sectors of the economy—its “commanding heights”—will be socially owned and controlled; that is, the anarchy and destructive competition of capitalism will be replaced by a strategically planned economy. Under socialism, key industries will be nationalized, but there will be other forms of socialist ownership: public ownership at many different levels from national to state to municipalities, private ownership of small businesses, joint ownership cooperatives, and other mixed-economy forms that best fit production and social needs. The forms of

ownership will reflect both political developments and the needs of economic development and sustainability.

And of course, every individual will privately own their personal possessions and personal property.

Socialism will eliminate the waste of the capitalist system and the private appropriation of profit generated by the working class. This unearned profit will be utilized for the public good. To make the economy more effective and efficient, a socialist economy must tackle issues of incentives, productivity, the organization of production and distribution, research and development, sustainability, and technological change. While capitalism uses technological improvements and increases in productivity to further exploit the working class, socialism uses these to fund social programs, shorten the workweek, and provide free health care and education. Socialism is not a utopian system but bases social programs on the achievements of social production: people working in concert for a better life for all.

Socialism will eliminate much inequality by taking unearned profit away from the capitalist class and utilizing it for the public good. Workers will be paid according to the principle, “from each according to their ability, to each according to their labor.”

The people of our country have the potential to eliminate the greedy corporations that doom working people to poverty, to deteriorating working conditions, to plant closings and the export of jobs, to wage differentials between male and female workers, between racially and nationally oppressed workers and white workers, wage differentials which place hundreds of billions of dollars of excess profits every year in the coffers of the already obscenely wealthy. The people can thwart the power of corporations which dooms working people to elections where money speaks louder than votes, to a court system which protects the “rights” of private property over the basic human rights of the majority. The people can end unequal education, homelessness, malnutrition, and lack of health care.

Our country has vast resources and productive industrial plants, extremely advanced technology and science, a huge reservoir of skilled workers, and great traditions of democracy, initiative, innovation, and creativity. In a socialist society, the millions of people now unemployed, homeless, and underemployed could create more wealth for all to share. Once the power of the corporations is broken, the vast majority of the country can use the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, a Socialist Bill of Rights, and local governments to build real democracy and equality.

Society and government should have the responsibility to steadily improve the lives of the majority. Government and the people should measure progress by improvements in human rights and justice, in living standards, in real equality, in environmental sustainability.

As the working class and its allies accomplish these goals in the context of a new socially owned and governed society, our country will be able to afford social programs on a constantly expanding basis. To ensure the productivity and efficiency of labor, we would:

- Consider which aspects of production and distribution will be socially owned and how;
- Strive for strategic planning that maintains the necessary balances in the economy between our use of natural resources and the need for nature to regenerate itself, and between the production of goods and commodities, heavy industry, and the production of machinery;

- Seek the proper combination of material and moral incentives at all levels of the economy—from the individual worker and work collectives in specific industries, through city, state, regional, and national levels;
- Consider market mechanisms in combination with strategic planning and regulation;
- Seek mechanisms for the daily functioning of the economy such that the quality, variety, flexibility, and efficiency of production are constantly increased.

Many details of the constructing of socialism will of necessity depend on the specifics of the socialist transformation, the politics of the time, and the wishes and demands of the majority. Should the governing coalition of class and social forces led by the working class make substantial mistakes and lose the confidence of the majority of people, it could be voted out of office. The Communist Party will work hard to keep this from happening, both by working to keep the confidence of the working class and by working to win contested elections.

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Many myths have been propagated about socialism. Contrary to right-wing claims, socialism would not take away the personal property of workers, only the private ownership of major industries, financial institutions, and other large corporations. It would eliminate private wealth derived from stock speculation, the export of capital and jobs, and the exploitation of workers. Socialism would not make all wages completely equal but would end the great disparity in income between workers and the former ruling class, whose wealth is unearned. Socialism would not do away with small businesses or family farms. Small business owners, professionals, and farmers, who currently suffer from the heavy hand of monopolies, are important potential allies of the progressive majority even after the advent of socialism.

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There are two major reasons why socialism has become even more imperative for the survival of the human race in recent decades. One is the development of nuclear, chemical, space-based, and biological weapons, which threaten the very existence of humanity. These weapons dramatically escalate the dangers of war, already a horrendous and destructive force. The war-oriented extreme right could drive the world to the brink of destruction or even over the brink. For our very survival, we need a world in which the arms trade is curtailed and then eliminated, in which nuclear proliferation is ended by the complete destruction of all nuclear weapons, and in which all chemical and biological weapons are outlawed and destroyed. As an initial step, we need all nations to pledge no first-use of nuclear weapons, no preemptive nuclear war, and no extension of the arms race into space. A socialist world, in which the economic incentives for war would be eliminated, is humankind's great hope for peace and survival.

The other development which makes socialism necessary is the threat to the world's environment. Tackling the solutions to global warming, air and water pollution, habitat loss, mass extinctions, and other environmental crises will require the combined cooperation, scientific knowledge, and research resources of all the countries and peoples of the world. Only global multinational agreements can address major environmental problems. The forces of nature, the laws of nature, cannot be violated without paying a heavy cost; if the violations are serious enough, this could threaten our very existence as a species, as well as the planet's ability to reproduce life as we know it.

Many environmental problems are rapidly approaching a turning point after which the ability of nature to regenerate and overcome problems will be forever altered. Capitalism, while not the sole cause of



environmental problems, exacerbates and escalates these threats. For this reason, our survival depends on establishing a system that places human needs ahead of private profit, which enables the working people of the world to make decisions about the threats to our survival. Humanity needs a system that takes away the ability of capitalists to make short-term, profit-based decisions which threaten our long-term survival.

Communists advocate socialism as the first phase of a new stage of society, but we don't think that social and economic development will end at socialism. We see socialist society eventually leading to a higher phase—communism—where the capitalist class and all classes will no longer exist, replaced by a commonwealth of all working people, where national, racial, and gender enmity and prejudice will be things of the past. In a communist society, the essentials of life will be readily available to all, and the repressive apparatus of government will wither away, leaving purely administrative functions. In the communist phase of society, social production and distribution of wealth would be according to the principle, "From each according to their ability, to each according to their need." In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels wrote, "In place of the old bourgeois [capitalist] society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."

### **X The Role of the Communist Party**

Within the struggle to achieve a more democratic, equitable socialist society, the Communist Party plays an indispensable role. As Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote in the Communist Manifesto, "in the movement of the present, the Communists also represent and take care of the future of the movement."

The working class needs its own political party, a party dedicated to the interests of the whole class, dedicated to the long-term vision necessary for winning fundamental changes, dedicated not to an abstract ideal but to the real people who make up the working class and their struggles. Even when a labor-based anti-monopoly people's party is built, the working class still needs a revolutionary party which can project strategy for socialism and do so more clearly and consistently than a coalition electoral party. Victory relies not on slogans, gimmicks, or conspiracies but rather on developing the understanding of millions cultivated in hard struggles, an understanding that grows into full class and socialist consciousness. Such consciousness cannot develop out of ordinary life experience and spontaneous struggle alone. Advanced consciousness must be brought into being through education and training in the ideas of scientific socialism, formulated by Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and through practical experience in struggles with the working class. We work to enhance the growth and development of socialist consciousness and scientific socialism in today's world and for the future. This is the work of the Communist Party USA.

From the moment of its inception in 1919, the Communist Party's history has been deeply entwined with that of the U.S. labor movement. Under the leadership of great working-class leaders such as William Z. Foster, the Party struggled successfully to free itself and the labor movement of the ideas and practices of narrow, conservative craft unionism, which opened the door to organizing millions of workers into industrial unions.

Providing unique leadership to the movement for industrial unionism, the CPUSA fought for and implemented the slogan "Black and white, unite and fight!" as well as demands for full inclusion and equality for women in the labor movement. As an organization rooted in immigrant communities, the

Party advanced demands for protection of the foreign-born. It was Communist efforts to organize the unemployed that laid the groundwork for broad working-class unity leading to the building of the CIO and the growth of the AFL. Often overlooked is the Communist Party's role in infusing many of the new CIO unions with the democratic principles it inherited from the IWW and other pioneering labor organizations.

The Communist Party fights the abuses of the capitalist class by participating in organizing at the grassroots in working-class communities, workplaces, and in broad coalitions for immediate needs. We expose the capitalist system as the root cause of exploitation, oppression, poverty, racism, continuing male supremacy and misogyny, war, threats to the environment, and human suffering, and we point the way to socialism as the fundamental solution. We strive to provide timely analysis of problems in mass movements in a way that illuminates the path to the deepest, widest unity for progress. We propose and support, where useful, advanced demands for reform in order to mobilize and organize our class struggle. Our theory and analysis guide our action and contribute to winning immediate reforms and the promotion of a new system based on people's needs rather than private profit.

The Communist Party upholds both the immediate and long-range interests of the multiracial, multinational, multigender, and multigenerational working class and people of our country and builds unity of the entire working class with its allies.

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The critique of capitalism and the promise of socialism and communism form the basic ideas of the Communist Party, USA, which came into being in Chicago in 1919. The Communist Party celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2019. Over its history, the Party has distinguished itself in numerous ways:

- Developing leadership of working-class people striving for a better world, organizing collective struggle against the capitalist ruling class.
- Providing leadership to eradicate systemic and institutionalized racism.
- Extensive participation in the struggles for African American equality and other civil rights struggles and a history of building principled multiracial unity. Examples include the initiating role of the CPUSA in global campaigns to save the Scottsboro Nine, engagement in the Civil Rights Movement, building the movements to Free Angela Davis and defeat South African apartheid.
- Making key contributions to the working-class struggles of the United States: building industrial unions, organizing for rights on the job and for a social safety net including Social Security and unemployment compensation.
- Its steadfastness in the struggle for labor and union rights for all workers—the formation of the CIO, the great strikes of industrial workers in steel and coal for example, bringing an end to child labor, and the establishment of the eight-hour day.
- Upholding democratic rights against the threat of fascism and the extreme right and supporting international working-class solidarity against imperialism and for peace. The Party was heavily involved in the Abraham Lincoln Battalion of the International Brigade, which fought against fascism in Spain, and in the anti-Vietnam War movement. We fought attempts to subvert democratic rights while under attack during the McCarthy period.
- Striving to develop the application of theory to the specifics of the U.S. and to apply theory to practice, with practice as the test of theory, by being the most consistent fighters for broad-based

unity and against all divisions opposed to working-class interests—racism, sexism, nationalism, chauvinism, homophobia, and anticommunism.

*(end sidebar)*

The capitalist class has long feared socialists and communists who campaign for the logical and viable alternative to capitalism. It has fought wars against awakening socialist and communist movements worldwide, throughout the last century and continuing today. The capitalist ruling class has long singled out the Communist Party USA for special repression, from making membership illegal in some states during the McCarthy period to pressuring unions and community organizations to expel CPUSA members.

The Communist Party contributes to the struggle of the working class to win its ultimate aim of working-class political power, socialism, and eventually communism. The Communist Party combines and promotes political, economic, organizational, and ideological struggle, the exact nature of which changes alongside changes in the stages of struggle and in the balance of power. The role of the Party during each stage of struggle leading up to socialism is to combine participation with the millions in struggles where they are at, agitation for the next phase of struggle, and advocacy for socialism, linking activism in the struggles of the present with preparation for the struggles of the future.

To advance to the immediate struggle for working people's political power for the construction of socialism, the Party will seek to win a leading role among the working class and its core allies. The strategic opponent in this stage becomes the capitalist class as a whole and the system of capitalism. The alliance for socialism will have to embrace a large majority of the labor movement and the whole working class, who will have developed class and socialist consciousness through their own experience of struggle and through the activity of the Communist Party. The Party's role will include organization, education, agitation, and advocacy for a fully developed socialist society. The Party will contribute concretely to the examination and projection of an approach to the way forward. Our goal is a society without an oppressive state or exploiting classes. The working class, indeed, all of humanity, needs a society that meets people's basic needs and achieves the conditions for the full development of the individual—genuine freedom.

To fulfill this role, the Communist Party needs to be a party:

- of the working class and of all the exploited and oppressed. Our Party is part of the class, its most conscious and consciously active segment that defines its objective as the construction of a society without exploiters or exploited, a socialist society;
- with a revolutionary theory, Marxism-Leninism, a scientific socialism that explains not only how society works but also how to change the world for the better;
- that is simultaneously internationalist and a defender of the interests of our own country's working class;
- with internal democracy and a central leadership; and
- that is completely independent of the interests and ideology of capitalism.

To accomplish all this requires a much larger Communist Party USA. Building Communist Party clubs—with strategy, tactics, education, and organization within workplaces and working-class neighborhoods—helps win day-to-day struggles. Grassroots Communist Party clubs are vital to bringing the Party's vision, strategy, and tactics into local work with masses of working people. Being of the

working class and sharing its problems and struggles, the policies of the Party are tested and honed and become the property of more and more working people, eventually of millions.

Since the publication of the Communist Manifesto in 1848, the communist movement has engaged in prolonged struggle against the capitalist system, playing a conscious role in working to end exploitation, oppression, and injustice worldwide. The experiences of the world communist movement, along with the experiences of our own Party since its founding, enrich our theory and practice. The Communist Party USA has had many victories and some defeats, accomplishments and mistakes, successful tactics and errors from which we have learned. Continuing along this course and becoming ever bigger and better will enable us to play a key role in the transition to socialism.

The science of Marxism-Leninism positions the Communist Party to take a leading role in the struggles of the working class. The continuous development of strategy and tactics and a scientific vision of a socialist USA are combined with efforts to build our size and mass influence. If our policies prove sound, if we can learn from others, if we are rooted in the working class, if we are able to develop coalition ties with mass movements and organizations, if we can learn from our mistakes, the Party will grow steadily and strengthen its leading role. As the struggle proceeds through the anti-monopoly and socialist stages, the Communist Party will reach the point where along with other socialist forces it wins a role in the leadership of the millions of workers and their allies.

*(sidebar)*

Marxism-Leninism provides a scientific foundation that corresponds to the interest of the working class. Its essential aspects consist of:

1. Dialectical and historical materialism—the laws of social development which enable masses of people to be active and conscious shapers of their destiny, and a philosophical methodology for understanding how change and development take place.
2. Political economy—the laws of capitalist development and theories of its functioning.
3. The theory of socialist revolution—how to move through the stages of struggle to achieve socialism, and the organizational forms necessary to accomplish that.

*(end sidebar)*

Taken together, with the experience of the world working-class movements for justice and socialism, Marxism-Leninism provides a scientifically based grounding which helps in the development of a guide to action. It enables the Communist Party to have a starting point from which to make important contributions at every stage of struggle, and to point the way forward. It does not make us infallible, nor does it mean we cannot learn from others. It does enable our Party to be the most consistent fighter for unity, progress, and socialism.

The Party must wage a constant ideological battle on two fronts, to keep from being pulled in either direction away from a sound Marxist analysis of the real existing conditions of struggle. We must continuously struggle against the capitalist ideological pull to the right, toward reformism, social democracy, and weakening of the Communist Party. Reformists try to limit the working-class struggles and coalition to reforms alone, indefinitely postponing the struggle for socialism. Social Democratic parties want to build “socialism” without ending the exploitive system of capitalism.

We must also struggle against left sectarianism, a form of utopianism which claims that socialism can be achieved without engaging in the mass economic and political struggles necessary to raise working-class and socialist consciousness, without building a united mass working-class movement.

Our party claims no monopoly on wisdom or on Marxism. We seek to work with all who are genuinely interested in building united mass movements—those on the Left and Center, all who participate in progressive social activism and working-class organization. There have been instances in some countries where more than one organization saw themselves as proponents of socialism. In most cases, these organizations eventually merged with the Communist Party or developed a strong working coalition with the shared aim of winning and constructing socialism. Only Communists, in coalition with mass movements and other working-class parties, have overthrown capitalism and are building socialism.

The Communist Party depends on its working-class form of organization, of turning individual work into collective strength. Just as a union requires all workers to go out on strike after a strike vote no matter how any individual worker voted, so too a working-class revolutionary party needs both democratic decision making and centrally led, unified action. In addition, the Party requires unity of purpose, of vision—in other words, acceptance of the Party's general program. We call this approach democratic centralism. We strive for flexibility, unity, collectivity, and mutual commitment, strive to win all our members to our democratically agreed-on policies, not to artificially impose discipline on the minority. We ask a voluntary commitment and discipline from our members to achieve our mutual goals, our collectively agreed-on strategy.

Democratic centralism starts with the connection of local Party organization with the working class in struggle. Once decisions have been made based on democratic discussion, the whole Party must strive to implement them. It means we strive for collective functioning, not just individual good work. It means encouraging and organizing the full democratic participation of all members, but with a prohibition against factional organizing. It means working to unite theory and practice, and to collectively advance the development of theory based on the continual examination of a constantly changing world. Unity—of purpose, of action, of vision—is important not just in a union, mass movement, or coalition; it is crucial for a Communist Party.

We have epic struggles ahead of us that we must win on the way to building a socialist and then communist society. We need an organization that identifies these stages, alliances, and their interconnections. That organization is the Communist Party USA. Join us!