

FRS[★]O

Freedom Road Socialist Organization

Program

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The political program of Freedom Road Socialist Organization has grown out of a long process of waging struggle against the class enemy, building the people's movements, and conducting study and analysis of the conditions we live under. The point of knowing the world is to change the world, and this program is a declaration of what this country's working and oppressed peoples want and need, along with what it will take to get there.

Some parts of this program were written more than a decade ago. Others were adopted at our ninth congress in the spring of 2022. The program is a product of FRSO's collective efforts at applying the science of revolution, Marxism-Leninism, to the day-to-day struggles we build and lead. We analyze the concrete conditions we are up against, while maintaining the long-term outlook of obtaining real change.

We are an organization of revolutionaries. Our members are African American, Chicano and Latino, white, Asian American, Arab American, and Native American. We are workers, students, and professionals—women and men, and LGBTQ. We are uniting the many to defeat the few.

Many of us are active in the labor movement, where we are going all out to strengthen our unions and make them effective in the class struggle. We are in the forefront of the fight against police crimes and the battle to end racist inequality. FRSO members build and contribute to the student, anti-war, and immigrant rights movements. We work actively to promote solidarity with the oppressed who are fighting for national and social liberation—from Palestine to the Philippines and points in between.

Freedom Road has a proud past. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was a tremendous upsurge in the struggles of African Americans, Chicanos, Asian Americans, and other oppressed nationalities. At the same time, a powerful student movement arose, which drew inspiration from the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people, the resilience of socialism in China, and the revolutionary movements against colonialism and neocolonialism in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The result was the creation of a powerful new communist movement. While this new movement of young communists had some real accomplishments, it lacked staying power. In 1985, some of the best elements of this great upsurge came together to create the Freedom Road Socialist Organization. Later we were joined by some members and leaders of the Communist Party USA, who shared our commitment to revolution and socialism.

Over the years we have faced challenges, from within and without. In the late 1980s and 1990s, a section of our leadership decided that they did not want to be revolutionaries, so they abandoned Marxism-Leninism and split from our organization. Later, in 2010, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) used the pretext of our anti-war and international solidarity work to launch a protracted campaign aimed at our destruction. We met these challenges, overcame adversity, and have grown. We appreciate the veteran revolutionaries in our ranks and are glad that most of our members are young.

Capitalism must go!

The U.S. is a land of contradiction and conflict. On the one hand, there is an accumulation of wealth into the hands of billionaires to a degree unknown in human history. The wealth of Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates, and Warren Buffet is equal to that of one-half of the U.S. population. On the other hand, most people in this country face a declining standard of living, expenses that are running ahead of wages, and the prospect of having nothing to pass down to the next generation. The masses of the homeless stand as an indictment of monopoly capitalism.

Capitalism is a shortsighted, unplanned system that has one aim: the achievement of the highest rate of profit, which in turn concentrates wealth into fewer and fewer hands. Systematic and ever-present inequality is a built-in feature of capitalism. The oppression of women, the inequality faced by oppressed nationalities, and class exploitation, extend into the foundations of capitalism. Nothing about this society is just or fair.

Advances in science and technology that could serve to improve our lives, instead are a source of misery and a means to forge new, more deadly weapons of war. Automation that could make our work lives better or improve our livelihood becomes a source of unemployment and instability that devastates entire communities. We have a for-profit health care system that excels at making money for pharmaceutical companies and other big corporations, while failing the rest of us. Even public education is under attack by privatizers out to make a buck.

Capitalism gives rise to alienation, hopelessness, crime, and corruption. Police and the criminal justice system are unable to keep us safe. In fact, they are guardians of oppression and defenders of the existing order of things. The U.S. imprisons more people than any other country on earth. This mass incarceration is the product of a system that has forfeited its right to exist. U.S. culture glorifies greed, selfishness, and brutality—a harrowing reflection and a means to reinforce capitalism's ugly reality. The U.S. military has hundreds of bases around the world, waging war on countries, nations, and peoples who want freedom from the U.S. Empire.

This system of exploitation and injustice cannot be reformed out of existence. We want better lives—so we fight for exactly that. Every step of the way we try to win everything that can be won, raise the level of struggle, and organize our collective movement. But we are also doing something else: we are building an organization of revolutionaries to bring this monster down. The capitalists give with an eye dropper and take with an earth mover. We cannot reform our way to a better way of life. We need to take the sledgehammer of revolution to the chains of oppression.

The monopoly capitalists, the ruling class, have every interest in keeping things the way they are. They benefit from low wages, unemployment, and every kind of inequality. What is good for them, is bad for us, so we have nothing in common with the billionaires. In fact,

there is not a single issue on which we can find common ground. Not one. For example, take climate change. Corporations benefit from destroying the environment—that is why they always push back against environmental protections, going so far as hiring scientists and politicians to say that climate change is a hoax. They are very willing to destroy the planet in order to make as much money as possible, as quickly as possible—they will do anything for their bottom line. It is us or them.

So, our class needs to take power by revolutionary means. We need socialism, where the commanding heights of society are occupied by the working class, placing all political and economic power in our hands.

Proud history, bright future

The history of the U.S. is a history of class struggle, of epic battles that shine a spotlight on the criminality of the class that rules, while demonstrating the great capacity and potential for resistance on the part of this country's working and oppressed people.

The outstanding Russian communist V.I. Lenin stated that the American Revolution of 1776 was a "great war of liberation" that was part of the era's wave of progressive democratic struggles against the landholding autocracy and feudal reaction that dominated Europe. At the time, capitalism was a relatively young system that played a progressive role in developing the productive forces, while breaking down the stagnant societies dominated by feudal kings and lords.

From its onset, capitalism in the U.S. was based on genocide, directed against the Native peoples, and fueled by slavery. A large section of the people were locked in indentured servitude and women were disenfranchised. Despite the deep and real democratic aspirations of the times, the cry of "Liberty and Justice for All" rang hollow for most. In practice, it was liberty for a relative handful of wealthy white men to rule over the vast majority of the people. The result was struggle. Native peoples waged wars of resistance. Slaves launched repeated and heroic rebellions. There were constant attempts by working people, in the cities and on the farms, to fight for their own interests.

The rapid development of competitive capitalism on the eastern seaboard gave rise to one the world's first trade union movements. It was also accompanied by the genocidal westward expansion of one country that had two different social systems: one in the North, based on wage labor and small farms, and the other in the South, based on slavery on big plantations. In 1846, the U.S. launched a war that resulted in the theft of northern Mexico and the extension of slavery into Texas. A result was the development of the Chicano nation. Located in what is now the U.S. Southwest, the Chicano people were robbed of their land, denied equal rights, including the right to equality of languages, and faced brutal national oppression. The Chicano nation has always resisted. This powerful record of struggle is a bright point in U.S. history.

The Civil War was the product of the irrepressible conflict between Northern capitalism and the slavocracy. The defeat of the Southern slave system was a second revolution, ushering into being, one of the most profoundly liberating episodes in U.S. history, Black Reconstruction, which challenged the power of the planter class, implemented voting rights, public education, and so much more. In 1877, the Northern capitalists withdrew federal troops from the South, abandoning the reconstruction governments to a tide of terror launched by the white planter class. The result was the forging of an African American nation in the Black Belt South that was denied economic and political power. The federal troops departing the South were then used against the great railway strikes for the 8-hour day in the North. The end of slavery paved the way for a more rapid expansion of capitalism and gave rise to great battles between labor and capital.

The militancy displayed by the U.S. labor movement and the viciousness of the U.S. employing class is known around the world. Before the First World War, miners in the western part of the U.S. waged powerful strikes and engaged in armed combat. In the 1930's, the great sit-down strikes, and workplace takeovers inspired workers across the globe. The two main holidays of the international working class, May Day and International Women's Day, were born right here in the U.S.

The U.S. Civil War sowed the seeds of monopoly. After the Civil War, competitive capitalism gave rise to robber barons and gigantic trusts. By the late 1890s, U.S. monopoly capitalism had arrived on the world stage, seizing Hawaii, fighting a war with Spain for colonies, including Puerto Rico, and embarking on the road to world domination, with an empire extending across Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia. Following the First World War, the U.S. emerged as the strongest of the imperialist powers.

After World War Two, the rulers of the U.S. proclaimed the "American Century." However, the combined might of the national liberation movements, the socialist countries, and the struggles here at home, coupled with monopoly capitalism's limitations, brought an early end to the "American Century." By the early 1970s, U.S. monopoly capitalism entered a period of stagnation and decline.

The people of the U.S. have never peacefully submitted to our oppressors. Be it the pitched battles waged by women textile workers, Chicano miners, African American sharecroppers, or Asian American farmworkers, the history of the U.S. is a history of struggle. The massive labor battles of the 1930s, the Civil Rights movement and the Black rebellions, the anti-war movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and events like the Chicano Moratorium and the Stonewall Rebellion are some of the many highpoints that show what working and oppressed peoples can do. It is a rich legacy for all who want change.

The decline of monopoly capitalism is accelerating. The Trump presidency and his attempt to retain power on January 6, 2020, show the fragility of the political system. The great rebellion following the murder of George Floyd shows that this country is ripe for the

development of a revolutionary movement. It is in this spirit that we are publishing additional sections of the FRSO program. We are naming an enemy and proposing solutions. We are making every effort to build a new, revolutionary, communist party that is capable of contending for power. We are not there yet, and there is a lot more, hard work to be done to get there. The road ahead may be difficult, but the future is certainly bright.

Exploitation, inequality, and oppression are not things that “just happen.” Everything that is wrong with this country is the product of a system: monopoly capitalism. Capitalism has not been around forever—it had a beginning, and it is certain to come to a finish. How this system works is not some big, unknowable mystery. Monopoly capitalism has economic laws that we can understand, and developing this understanding assists us in our effort to bring it to an end.

The huge array of goods and services that are all around us are the product of human labor. At no time in human history has there ever been such a vast quantity of wealth as what now exists in this country. Never. Workers go to work and are paid enough to keep us coming back, along with enough subsistence to maintain a future labor force.

These commodities—the goods and services we create at work—have far more value than we are ever paid in wages. This gap, between what workers create and what we get in wages, is how the capitalists grow rich - this is the real source of the capitalist's profits. Therefore, you do not get rich by working hard—the capitalists get rich by having others work hard for them. That is why a fair day's pay is impossible. Everything of value that the owning class has was created by the working class. Capitalists are parasites. The wealthy cheat us and they cheat each other. They take what is created by the working class, try to make additional money from these goods and services in the marketplace, and then invest in where they think they can make more—be it a factory fish farm in Chile or a credit card company that charges huge interest rates. For the capitalist, the economy is one vast casino where wealth is extracted from those who work.

The production of goods and services is social. It involves people coming together to make things, be it cars, computers, or something else that is wanted or needed. But workers do not own the places where they work. While there are small businesses, most workers are employed by big corporations, like UPS, Ford, or McDonald's. In any case, those who are making the big money here are those who own the means of production. Production is social, but the wealth created is taken by capitalists who do not work. We make and they take.

In a capitalist society like ours, the goal of production is not to create things that are good and useful—it is to make the maximum possible profits. Low-income housing is needed but not profitable, so it does not happen. The same goes for affordable health care and quality mass transportation. If it is more profitable to shut down a factory and move it somewhere else—inside or outside the U.S.—that is what the owners will try to do. The goal of production is to enrich those who own the places where workers make things. This is not about good corporations or bad corporations. Companies that do not strive to make, and actually achieve, the highest rate of profit will be pushed out of business by corporations or monopolies that do. Competition is the enforcer of this drive to get the greatest profits possible.

The race for maximum profits leads to anarchy in the production and distribution of goods. Each capitalist tries to produce as much as possible with the hope of making as much money as possible. The ability of the capitalists to produce grows and grows as they reinvest their profits into more machinery and more advanced technology. But there is a limit to the effective demand of consumers. Workers collectively produce far more than they could ever afford to buy back. Eventually, the marketplace is flooded with goods that cannot be sold, and workers are laid off because it is no longer profitable to keep them working. The economy then enters a period of crisis, a crisis of overproduction, where the working class and others cannot afford what has been produced, which ends with the destruction of unsold goods and the least efficient means of producing things. Financial crises that worsen a crisis of overproduction can also be triggered by speculation, currency manipulation, government policies, and bank failures.

Imperialism

Monopoly capitalism extends its reach across the globe, in search of new venues for exploitation and profits. When capitalism reaches its monopoly stage, it is also known as imperialism—the highest and final stage of capitalist development. Monopoly capitalism is characterized by an incredible concentration and centralization of wealth, where big banks become intertwined with industry, creating a financial oligarchy. Big corporations invest all over the world, and export of capital is the norm. Monopoly capitalism is irrational, chaotic, and slow to adapt to changes in science and technology. It is a decaying and dying system.

Imperialism, racism, and national oppression

We live in a country that has many nationalities within its borders, and racist inequality in all spheres of life is a defining feature of the U.S. today. This systematic discrimination visited upon oppressed nationalities, including African Americans, Chicanos and Latinos, Hawaiians, Native American and indigenous peoples, Asian Americans, Arab Americans, and others, is an ugly, built-in feature of monopoly capitalism.

For oppressed nationalities, there is a pattern of discrimination, of institutional and systematic racism. Generally, oppressed nationality peoples face worse conditions than whites. Often, this inequality means inferior health care, shorter life expectancies, and a lower standard of living, along with higher rates of extreme poverty, imprisonment, and homelessness, as well as job discrimination and inferior housing. Democratic rights, such as the right to vote, are under serious, sustained attack. There is no equality of languages, which is another basic democratic right. This system of racist discrimination is enforced by police who serve as an army of occupation in oppressed nationality communities.

Oppressed nations in the U.S. include African Americans with a historic homeland in the Black Belt South, the Chicano Nation, also known as Aztlán, in the Southwest, and the Hawaiian nation. These nations are historically constituted groups of people, with common histories of oppression and heroic resistance, that have definite national territories,

common languages, a common economic base, and a common culture. These nations are deprived of their basic democratic rights, including the right to exercise political power within their national territories and the right to self-determination—up to and including separation. The economic and political life of the oppressed nations are dominated by imperialism. African Americans outside the Black Belt South, Chicanos outside Aztlán in the Southwest, and Hawaiians on the mainland also face national oppression and carry out a struggle for full equality.

Alaskan Native, Native Americans, and Native Hawaiians are the indigenous peoples of the United States. Their history is one of genocide and stolen land. Their languages and cultures have been suppressed or sold as commodities. Treaties with the U.S. government have been torn up in practice as their sovereign rights are trampled on.

National oppression serves to enrich the monopoly capitalists who rule the U.S., allowing them to reap super-profits off of the labor of oppressed nationality workers. They also plunder the resources and agricultural lands of the Black Belt South, the national territory of the Chicano nation of Aztlán in the Southwest, and the lands of indigenous peoples.

Discrimination intensifies the exploitation of oppressed nationality workers on the job. Merchants tend to charge more in oppressed nationality communities, where there are also higher rents for substandard housing and fewer community services. This racist inequity is real, and extends from workplaces into communities, shaping all of society. That is why we say that racist discrimination is more than a ruling class trick to “divide and rule.”

Racist inequity or national oppression is the material basis for disunity in the multinational working class, and it is the basis for racist ideas among white Americans. It is also the case that national oppression pushes down the standard of living for the entire multinational working class in a very immediate, here-and-now kind of way—that is why it is possible to unite many nationalities, including working class whites, to fight racist discrimination, inequality, and national oppression.

Buttressing this system of racist national oppression are a host of reactionary, white supremacist, and fascist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, 3 percenters, and neo-Nazis. These groups have been on the rise in recent years, growing stronger during the years of the Trump administration.

Racism and national oppression are consistently met with resistance from oppressed nationality peoples, who create freedom movements that aim at full equality and liberation. Imperialism means national oppression, and blows to national oppression weaken monopoly capitalism, the common enemy of the people of the U.S.

The U.S. Empire and war

The U.S. has created an empire of the dollar spanning the globe. In search of profits, the wealthy rob the land, labor, and natural resources of others. U.S. corporations hire textile

workers in Haiti, own mines in Bolivia, and control vast plantations in the Philippines. U.S. corporations are sucking the wealth out of other countries of the developing world and blocking their path to national development and independence. U.S. corporations are not in the business of helping people.

Many people in countries looted by imperialism try to escape by emigrating to the United States and other imperialist countries. Once in the U.S., most join oppressed nationality communities as immigrants. Oppressed nationality immigrants often fill the ranks of the lowest strata of the working class as farm labor, domestic and elder care workers, and construction laborers.

U.S. imperialism uses investments, loans, foreign “assistance,” its military, unequal trade agreements, and a host of institutions such as the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund to dominate and exploit other countries. U.S. military bases are present around the world. While people in the U.S. go hungry and need shelter, the U.S. military budget consistently hits new records.

U.S. monopoly capitalism holds a number of colonies that have the right to independence including Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Belau (Palau), Guam, the Marshall Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

Imperialism means war, and it is no accident that the U.S. is continuously waging wars on others. The drive for corporate profits means finding new places to exploit labor, acquiring resources—such as oil—and finding new markets for goods and services. People do not want to live under the dictates of Washington D.C., so they wage just wars of national liberation to free themselves.

The principal contradiction in the world today is between the peoples of the developing world and imperialism. The U.S. is presently the principal imperialist power, and as such, it is the main danger to the world’s peoples. From Puerto Rico, to the Philippines, to Palestine, people are rising up and fighting for liberation.

The U.S. also competes with other capitalist powers. Because capitalism develops unevenly, with the economies of capitalist countries growing at different rates, they come into conflict with each other—a conflict that is sharpened by the fact that the world is already divided into spheres of influence. The socialist countries, along with the other countries which have broken out of the orbit of imperialism, place limits on the expansion of the major capitalist countries, and this tends to sharpen the competition among the imperialists.

We fight for peace and support all who are fighting for liberation. Imperialism will always lead to war. Countries want independence, nations want liberation, and people want revolution. For peace to prevail, monopoly capitalism must be overthrown.

U.S. government serves the wealthy and corporations

Government, especially on the state and national level, is dominated by the monopoly capitalists. The rich fund and groom candidates, dominate the two major political parties, and utilize corruption and lobbying to get their way. The state is the terrain where disputes between the capitalists are addressed, and it is an instrument to suppress working and oppressed people. We live in a capitalist cash register democracy where the rich put money in the pockets of politicians and take out billions in tax breaks and land leases.

The capitalist state exists to protect the wealthy and their corporations. The U.S. government has always been about holding down the masses of people. At its core is a repressive apparatus that includes jails and prisons, courts, local police departments, Homeland Security, the FBI, CIA, and more. Law enforcement breaks strikes, the National Guard is used against protests and urban rebellions, and the intelligence agencies, like the FBI, spy on revolutionaries.

The U.S. jails and imprisons more people than any other country. Many are wrongly convicted. Some are survivors of police torture. Those incarcerated are disproportionately African American and other oppressed nationalities.

The laws themselves, along with many government institutions—such as the Senate and Supreme Court—are not democratic. They serve the few at the expense of the many. This includes much of labor law, which exists to limit the rights of labor, or laws concerning “terrorism” which are used against Muslims or those of us who practice working class internationalism. The rights we have in this country are rights we have fought for. The rulers have never given us anything voluntarily.

In addition, the corporate rulers use as an array of private security agencies and resort to extra-legal violence.

Oppression of Women and LGBTQ People

The treatment of women in the U.S. is a stark indictment of monopoly capitalism and the sick society it is at the foundation of.

Inequality faced by women exists in every part of the social order, including the workplaces where discrimination in pay is the norm, in social life where women are often expected to do most of the work maintaining a household, and through attempts to limit democratic rights, including something as basic as the right to control our own bodies and reproduction. Physical violence, sexual harassment, assault, and rape serve to maintain existing gender roles. Capitalist culture reinforces the objectification and subjugation of women.

The owners of big corporations benefit from the systematic inequality imposed upon women. This includes super profits from the pay differences between men and women.

Also, discrimination against women places a downward pressure on the standard of living for the entirety of the multinational working class.

The real inequality faced by women is the material basis for male chauvinism and misogyny. These reactionary ideas trivialize or deny women's oppression and strengthen backwards, repressive social relations in society that subordinate women to men.

The discrimination and inequality faced by all women falls upon oppressed nationality women the hardest, with women workers facing class oppression, national oppression, and gender discrimination.

Capitalism's gendered division of labor is the main basis for today's gender roles. This cements women's oppression and punishes anyone who doesn't fit in—fueling discrimination and bigotry against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender masses. LGBTQ people face attacks on democratic rights, especially trans and gender non-conforming people's rights to control our bodies and correct legal identification. Assault and murder reinforce anti-LGBTQ oppression. Oppressed nationality, working class trans women suffer the most brutality.

Environment

Monopoly capitalism is killing our planet. The boundless drive for profit is a threat to our continued existence. Climate change is causing more extreme weather disasters around the globe, with the most severe falling on the peoples of Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Island countries, in particular, are at risk of disappearing entirely beneath rising sea levels.

The United States, while making up less than 5 percent of the world's population, has accounted for a large majority of the world's carbon emissions.

The U.S. Military, a tool of U.S. Imperialism, is one of the largest polluters in history. In its quest to dominate and murder abroad, it consumes more liquid fuels and emits more climate-changing gases than most medium sized countries. The U.S. military is omitted from climate change treaties like the Paris Accords or the Kyoto Agreement.

To appear more 'green', many U.S. industries have been moved overseas, exporting pollution to places under the thumb of U.S. corporations enforced by trade deals and organizations like the WTO. Meanwhile, imperialism denies Third World countries the right to development and to determine their own futures. At the same time, U.S. corporations also push for more market-based solutions to climate change which entrench the role of capitalism.

Inside the U.S., Indigenous communities are hit hard as their lands have been used to dump military and industrial waste. Treaty lands and territories are often used as sites for oil transportation pipelines that threaten their waters, putting traditional food sources like

wild rice at risk. Moreover, polluting industry is often located near working class and oppressed nationality communities, creating worsening health outcomes and exacerbating poverty. These practices add to the burden of national oppression.

A dying system

Every facet of society is poisoned by capitalism. The culture extols greed, national chauvinism, racism, and misogyny. Reactionary politicians are attacking science. Public education is under attack, while ignorance and a willful disregard for reality is glorified. The decline of monopoly capitalism is accelerating, and life demands something different: socialism.

A socialist future

A revolution is needed to end capitalism. The monopoly capitalists and their political representatives will never peacefully relinquish power of their own volition—they must be overthrown. When people rebel against injustice, the ruling class resorts to repression. The American Revolution against British colonial rule involved force, as did the U.S. Civil War to end slavery. We will never gain anything more than what we are organized to take, ever!

By overturning monopoly capitalism, we open the road to freedom for working and oppressed people. A socialist future creates endless possibilities for humanity to work collectively to solve the great challenges of the economy, health, science, culture, war, and the environment. In a socialist world, we will have lives with purpose in a healthy, productive society that benefits all people.

Socialism and working class political power

The starting point of socialism is the multi-national working class taking political power into our own hands. We will use this power to remake the economy, the political system, and culture—bringing an end to exploitation.

Political power—our collective ability to dictate what is and what will be—lets us effectively attack every kind of injustice and inequality. We live in a society where goods and services are created by work in common, but the wealth created by that common work is appropriated by individuals. Socialism sets us on the road to the collective appropriation and use of what working people create. It is the beginning of a process leading to a classless society.

Socialism in the U.S.

The working class will occupy the commanding heights of the economy, taking control of the factories, utilities, transportation networks, big technology monopolies, mines, big retail stores, banks, and other major financial institutions. In short, the wealth—the means to produce and distribute the things we need and want—will be placed at the service of working people. Human needs—such as food, healthcare, housing, and education—will be produced and provided for the people, not for profit.

We will end the anarchy of production and replace it with a rational, planned economy, where working people come first. Capitalists strive to make the highest rate of profit, and this has nothing to do with meeting people's needs. Capitalism is a wasteful system. We will do away with planned obsolescence, paying farmers not to farm, and most advertising. Instead of technology being a source of unemployment and insecurity, we will employ technology to free us from jobs that are dull or dangerous.

Work itself will be transformed. With the working class in charge of society, workers will have a real say in how our workplaces are run. Under capitalism, we face the despotism of

foremen and supervisors who make us toil for exploiters. Socialism means we will have a real interest in the goods and services we produce.

Monopoly capitalism subjugates entire nations and nationalities within the borders of this country. A socialist U.S. will systematically address the economic and social inequality inherited from capitalism. Discrimination will be outlawed, as will reactionary, racist, and fascist organizations. In all spheres of social life, there will be a determined and protracted struggle against white chauvinism and ideas that promote or defend inequality.

Socialism will address the democratic demands that the rulers of capitalist America were unwilling to address—for example, the equality of languages and ensuring political equality. This means recognition of the right to self-determination for the African American nation in the Black Belt South, the Chicano nation in Southwest, and the Hawaiian nation, up to and including the right to separation. Socialism will support the demand for independence raised by the current U.S. colonies: Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, the Marshall Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa. Socialism will also open the door to all-around national development for indigenous peoples, including restoring land, language, and culture stripped away by the American conquest.

The end of a capitalist society based on the drive for profit opens the door to a more harmonious relationship with nature. With socialism, we can seriously address the growing environmental catastrophe—including climate change. We can systematically raise our standard of living, while getting rid of all that is wasteful and irrational. Undoing the damage done to the environment by capitalism will be a vital goal of a planned socialist economy.

The oppression of women will be challenged and dismantled. While the inequality facing women is as old as class society—and in some cases predates it—for socialism to advance, the oppression of women needs to be pulled up by its roots. This means attacking inequality in the economic base, including inequality in pay. It means the realization of democratic rights, including reproductive rights, and developing ways for women to be able to participate fully in all aspects of political and social life, such as universal and readily available childcare.

Socialist society, in which political power is in the hands of the oppressed, will bring about the full liberation of the LGBTQ community—not only by fighting against regressive and bigoted ideas, but also by guaranteeing employment, housing, and full marital and familial rights. Violence directed against the LGBTQ community will be prosecuted and eliminated. Gender-affirming healthcare will be made freely available and accessible, as is already the case in socialist Cuba.

A new society needs a new culture that is positive, popular, working class in content, and

that fits in with a country of many nationalities. The creation of the new will emerge as a struggle with the old. A socialist U.S. will promote science while combating ignorance. There will be a fight against white chauvinism, male chauvinism, and racist ideas. When necessary, narrow nationalism will be struggled with. A socialist culture, which includes everything from film and music to education and more, must promote socialist values such as cooperation while opposing the ugly, petty selfishness, and stupidity of capitalism.

A socialist U.S. will have a foreign policy that promotes peace and relates to other countries with the aim of achieving mutual respect and common benefit. The basis for this is working class internationalism—the principle that workers and oppressed people should unite for our common ends. We will aid other revolutionaries who are struggling against monopoly capitalism and oppression.

Hammer of change

Socialism is working class political power, and that power is the hammer to remake society from top to bottom. First and foremost, it is needed to break the resistance of the capitalists and their supporters. Over the long run, power is needed to guarantee that society continues to advance and develop, and that the working class can meet those who might challenge it—at home or abroad. We will continue the class struggle until there are no more classes.

The capitalists and their spokespeople have always spun lies to attack socialism, claiming that it means dictatorship and bureaucracy. In reality, socialism is democratic; it is a higher form of democracy than the so-called democracy prevailing under capitalism. In place of the rule of a handful of billionaires and their bought-and-paid-for politicians, socialism is instead democracy for the vast majority. The dictatorship of the multi-national working class establishes for the first time full democratic rights for working and oppressed peoples, and acts as a bulwark against those who seek to drag society backwards.

Socialism is not a distant dream—it already exists in the People's Republic of China, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Vietnam, and Laos. We are glad the socialist countries exist, and we stand with them. Socialist China has eliminated extreme poverty. Cuba has a medical system that is among the best in the world. Collectively, the socialist countries have done great things and their existence weakens the monopoly capitalists—our common enemy. We recognize that they are each the product of their own history and have their strong and weak points—it could not be otherwise. We will build a socialism that suits the needs of the U.S. people.

We have a positive evaluation of the achievements of socialism in the Soviet Union, Albania, and Eastern Europe. Reactionary regimes were overthrown, fascism was defeated, living standards were improved, and working people got power. But we also understand something went wrong. The leaders of many socialist countries gave up on Marxism, separated themselves from the people, succumbed to corruption, and fell prey to the

efforts of imperialism. Abandoning their social base, the working class, they were swept away by, or joined up with counter revolution.

A communist party is a necessity

In order for there to be any revolutionary movement to overthrow capitalism, the multinational working class will need its own political party—a Communist party. This party serves as an organizing center for the advanced within the working class—those who understand the inevitability and necessity of class struggle, who act on this understanding, and who have revolution as their end goal. After revolution, in socialist society, the party will be needed to organize at the forefront of the efforts to meet everyone’s needs and eliminate all relations of inequality.

Marxism-Leninism is needed to guide our efforts to transform society and build socialism. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, V.I. Lenin, Joseph Stalin, and Mao Zedong are the principal theorists of this science of revolution. Marxism-Leninism has been enriched by the contributions of William Z. Foster, Mother Bloor, Harry Haywood, Claudia Jones, and many others. The history of the socialist, and then communist, movement in this country is a source of knowledge and inspiration. We learn from all of it. We do not think that just because someone said something, that makes it correct. Practice is the only criterion of truth.

While we can point to features and goals for a socialist society, we understand that a socialist U.S. will emerge from the revolutionary process that is distinct to this country. We are not proceeding from preconceived notions. Every socialist country is different. Socialism in the real world is the product of the history and circumstances—the concrete conditions—and our efforts to transform those conditions.

Transition to communism

The goal of socialism is a society without classes—communism. The working class is the only class in human history that has a core interest in abolishing itself as a class, and in doing so, all oppression.

A classless society is a long-term project, and to get there we need to keep our eyes on the prize. Socialism is about ending scarcity and replacing it with plenty, about moving to a society where distribution is truly according to need.

When people change the world, they themselves are also changed. To change the world positively, then, in pursuit of justice for the majority of humankind, is to change humankind itself. Only through the struggle for socialism can this bright future be ours. The present is the battlefield where control over the future is fought for and won. There’s no better time to join that fight than right now.

To change society and end oppression, we need a plan to get from where we are now to liberation—a strategy that will work. Any successful revolutionary strategy must address the fundamental issue of who are our friends and who are our enemies and explain how we will go about uniting all who can be united to end the existing order of things.

We live in an era where capitalism has reached its final stage: monopoly capitalism, also known as imperialism. Monopoly capitalism is a doomed system whose continued existence stands in the way of all social progress. Huge corporations and financial institutions are headed by a wealthy oligarchy that dominates the political and economic life of this country, blocking the path to prosperity for the vast majority. U.S. companies are closing down factories here and exporting capital around the globe, to the detriment of all but themselves.

Our ruling class (the big capitalists and their hangers-on) has built an empire that spans the earth. Like vampires, they stand at the apex of a parasitic system that makes its home on Wall Street and sucks the blood of the Main Streets in the cities of the U.S. and villages of the developing world. They live on the labor, land and natural resources of others. Neither distance nor decency is a barrier to their drive to achieve the highest possible rate of profit. The world has been divided up between the big capitalist powers, which will stop at nothing to expand their spheres of influence and control.

Within our borders the monopoly capitalists have accumulated untold wealth based on the exploitation of the multinational working class and the systematic discrimination and robbery that is visited upon the oppressed nationalities.

We need to turn things upside down. This means revolution, a radical break that advances the cause of the exploited, that employs, in the words of Malcolm X, any means necessary. Working and oppressed peoples need political power. This power is the means to reorganize society in our own interests and dictate our terms to all who stand in the way. The seizure of power by the working class and its allies is the beginning of a great change, a transformation that continues until the end of all classes and all oppression.

United Front Against Monopoly Capitalism

Our basic strategy for revolution and socialism is building a united front against the monopoly capitalist class, under the leadership of the working class and its political party, with a strategic alliance between the multinational working class and the oppressed nationalities at the core of this united front.

Identifying our real friends and our real enemies is a first step towards building a united front against monopoly capitalism. To carry out this analysis we need to understand the different classes, nationalities and social groups in U.S. society, identify those forces whose interests are in the main opposed to the monopoly capitalists, and take a look at the specific features of our society.

Of paramount importance is grasping the fact that the United States is a country where entire nationalities—African Americans, Chicanos and Latinos, Asian Americans, Native peoples including native Hawaiians, Arab Americans and others within U.S. borders—are bound by the chains of national oppression. Real and full equality, liberation and self-determination become possible with the destruction of monopoly capitalism. Thus the struggle to end national oppression has a revolutionary significance. One cannot understand the U.S. past, present or future without firmly grasping this point.

Strategic Alliance

Revolutionary change in the United States will bring together two powerful currents: the struggles of oppressed nationalities for equality and liberation, and the fight of the multi-national working class to end exploitation and eliminate all oppression. Building the unity of these two forces is what we mean by building a strategic alliance. This long-term alliance is the foundation for a much broader united front of classes and social groups who can and will unite against the monopoly capitalists.

The real work to build this strategic alliance requires carrying out a set of interrelated and at times difficult tasks. White workers, especially those who are active and forward-looking, have the responsibility to take the lead in opposing white chauvinism or racism among whites and play an active role in building the fight against all manifestations of national oppression. By doing so they help build the unity and strength of the multinational working class and help create more favorable terrain for the development of the national movements.

Revolutionary minded oppressed nationality workers have the responsibility to oppose narrow nationalism among workers of their own nationality. This contributes to overcoming distrust and division between the respective nationalities, raising the fighting capacity of the multinational working class, and helps to create a situation where the national movements of African Americans, Chicanos and Latinos, Asian Americans, Native peoples and other oppressed nationalities can build the respective national movements, cooperating to achieve common goals, while building the strategic alliance.

Within the movements of the oppressed nationalities, which by definition bring together a number of classes and social groups, there is the issue of which class will lead. The stronger the working class leadership of the national movements, the stronger the national movements will be (especially in a country like the U.S., where the overwhelming majority of the oppressed nationalities are workers) and the more durable will be the alliance with the multi-national working class.

Classes in the U.S.

There is a lot of confusion about class in the United States. Politicians, academics, media pundits and even trade union leaders, have obscured the issue. As a result many think the main classes in the United States are the rich, poor and middle class. This view has

problems. It pits the employed section of the working class against the unemployed sections of the working class, by suggesting that the working class is the middle class and has different interests from the unemployed sections of the working class. Another variant is to think that everyone who owns a cabin or lives in the suburbs is “rich.” The effect of this kind of analysis is to pit the working class against itself, confounding friends and enemies and deadening class consciousness.

Marxists approach the matter differently, and we believe that to be a part of the working class is something to be proud of. When socialists look at the issue of class we see that every kind of society, from ancient times until now, is organized around its tools – it means of producing things that satisfy people’s needs and wants. Ownership of the means of production is basic. Classes are large groups of people, who have a defined relationship to the means of production, such as ownership. They also have a defined place in the social division of labor, for example some people are supervisors or managers. The result of these differences in who owns what and where one fits into the social division of labor, means a difference in who gets how much wealth.

The following are the principal classes in the United States. When it is stated that a given class or social group thinks or acts in a given way, it is based on the understanding that nothing is uniform and more can be learned on one hand, but that it is vital that we understand the general motion of something on the other.

Monopoly capitalists

The monopoly capitalist class is the dominant class the United States. They own and control the big corporations like Citicorp, General Motors and Wal-Mart. This class of billionaires, multimillionaires and those in their immediate circles are real rulers of the U.S. Some of the family names in this class are familiar—they have been there for generations—such as the DuPonts and Rockefellers. Others are comparative newcomers such as the Waltons or Bill Gates. All of them are parasites that live off the labor of the working class. This class has several specific features. First, they rule not only the United States; they control an empire that spans the globe. This means they quite literally have friends and allies on every continent. Every blow that weakens U.S. imperialism assists those of us here in fighting our common enemy.

Secondly, they control the political and cultural life of this county, from Congress and the judiciary, the media and military to institutions of education and the arts. They finance a host of institutions and think tanks that actively consider and promote their strategic interests, including the Heritage Foundation, the Rand Corporation, the American Enterprise Institute, the Council on Foreign Relations, and others. They also utilize a host of business associations, such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

They are tied—like puppet masters to their puppets—in a thousand and one ways to the main political parties—the Republicans and the Democrats. This control is maintained

through a host of laws that ensure that the electoral process favors the rich, direct and indirect campaign contributions, outright bribery, cheating, and corruption, and by an army of lobbyists who are guardians of their interests on a day-to-day basis.

As a practical matter this class includes the upper stratum of politicians, military figures, and some intellectuals.

Finally, this class has shown time and time again that it will stop at nothing to maintain its power and privilege.

This class of monopoly capitalist is the principal target of revolution in the United States.

Non-monopoly capitalists

These are the capitalists who are important on a local or regional level. They include some of the smaller banking and finance groups and some of the smaller manufactures, for example in furniture building and food processing, the owners of large farms and ranches, with a larger section centered in the service sector—for example the owners of smaller restaurant chains.

This group also includes a section of large local land developers and real estate speculators, a section of well-off intellectuals, some big entertainers and cultural figures, and a section of politicians, including some big city mayors.

Their distinguishing feature is that they have not made it into the monopoly capitalist class, and they face a constant competitive pressure from the corporations with great resources. Because of that pressure they frequently attempt to compensate by obtaining higher than normal rates of exploitation, and they are often extremely hostile to trade unions and workers' rights.

While they have some independence from, and at times some are hostile to, some of the agenda advanced by the monopoly capitalists (for example, some resent paying for tax-funded projects that benefit their larger competitors and others are concerned about trade issues), as a whole this is not a progressive class. The non-monopoly capitalists are also a target of revolution in the United States.

That said, there are individuals within this class who have the potential to be favorable or at least not hostile to revolutionary change. Given the multinational character of the United States, we note there are also non-monopoly capitalists based in the oppressed nationalities, who at times are hostile to national oppression, and under favorable conditions can be brought into the united front against monopoly capitalism.

Petty Bourgeoisie

In the U.S. the petty bourgeoisie is a large and varied class that includes most

professionals, like doctors and lawyers, and supervisory personnel. It encompasses the majority of intellectuals, such as college professors and scientists. It also includes the owners of small businesses that produce or sell goods and services, small farmers, and small landlords who get the majority of their income from rent.

Those who make up the petty bourgeoisie either have some specialized skill or knowledge or are owners of the means of production or distribution. As a class they value what independence they have. The upper stratum of this class hopes to join the capitalists, and lower stratum fears being pushed into the working class.

Some petty bourgeoisie get a part of their income by exploiting the labor of others, for example most restaurant owners or owners of small auto shops. Others do not, like most doctors employed by hospitals.

Based on their relationship to other classes and their income, the petty bourgeoisie can be broken down into three groups or strata: upper, middle and lower.

The upper stratum of the petty bourgeoisie has a rising standard of living. For them life is getting better. And for those in this group who produce or sell goods and services—they would like to join the ranks of the big capitalists. They live in well-to-do suburbs, condominiums and gated communities. The upper stratum includes many of those who practice law, doctors, small business owners who are doing well and hire workers, accountants, scientists, local media personalities, some landlords and others. They see themselves as the middle class and many want “government to get off their backs” or view themselves as “fiscal conservatives.” This section of the people tends to be active in politics on a state and local level and at present time it is an important social base for the political right wing. Given that, some sections are more progressive than others, for example college professors.

The middle section of the petty bourgeoisie is treading water. They want to move on up, but capitalism is pulling them down. For them, things seem to be stagnating. They feel okay about their economic well-being but fear the future. This group includes a section of management and administrators, small business owners who have some employees but they still have to do some of the actual work, and small time landlords who maintain a few buildings. This group includes professionals who are not doing as well as some of their peers. They tend to own nice homes. Politically this group tends to be a mixed bag. The small business owners hate government regulation. Professionals employed by government tend to have a very different view.

The lower section of the petty bourgeoisie is a step away from the working class and many have an income that is lower than the upper or even middle sections of the working class. They own small neighborhood businesses that frequently fail. Small farmers, owner operators of trucks, some small building contractors and working supervisors with the

power to fire are all part of this group. Many in this section of the petty bourgeoisie have their roots in the working class, and really like being their own boss. This section of the people frequently places demands on government, as is the case with many farm movements. They use small business loans, and are as a group hostile to big business and would like to see the power of the monopolies curbed.

Over the long run, the petty bourgeoisie as a whole has no future as a class. It cannot realistically compete with the big capitalists and there is a tendency in many of the professions towards less independence—for example the decline of small medical practices.

It is important that as many people as possible within this class be brought into the united front against monopoly capitalism. In some cases, this will be done based on the economic interests of sections of this class. For example, building farm protest movements or uniting with small storeowners to oppose a Wal-Mart in the community. In other cases work will be done by building progressive political centers in a certain profession for example, for example building the organizations of progressive lawyers.

Working Class

The working class constitutes the majority of the American people and it will be both the main and leading force for revolutionary change in this country. It is composed of women and men of all nationalities who labor to create goods and services, be it in factories, offices or the fields. It encompasses the employed and the unemployed, those who do manual labor or mental labor, people working in the service sector or manufacturing and transportation. It includes the organized and the unorganized.

The working class makes its living by selling its ability to work. The capitalists own the places and things that are used to create goods and services. They appropriate for themselves all that is produced by the collective labor of the working class. This gives rise to an irrepressible conflict, a clash of basic interests that can be solved by the working class taking all power into its own hands.

The U.S. working class has a proud history of struggle. From the fight for the 8-hour day in the 1880s to the heroic battles against concessions that have been waged over the past 20 years and the inspiring movement of undocumented workers for full equality, the capacity of the working class to take its destiny into its own hands has been repeatedly shown.

In the U.S. today the working class as a whole is characterized by a low level of class consciousness. While it's true that many workers are dissatisfied with the existing order of things, there is not a widespread understanding that the working class has a distinct set of interests that can only be addressed by the collective action of the class. In fact, while there is a widespread perception among working people that life for them and their children might well get harder, many workers, particularly the sections of the working class which

are better off or more stable, either do not view themselves as a part of the working class or have hopes of leaving it altogether.

Broadly speaking, the working class can be divided into upper, middle and lower sections.

The upper sections of the working class have both the largest income and the highest social status within the class as a whole. It includes those in the skilled trades, such as electricians, plumbers, some carpenters, some tool and die makers and those who do specialized repair and maintenance. Teachers and nurses are a part of this group. It also includes a section of organized workers in basic industries such as mining, auto and steel, and some government workers.

In the building and skilled trades, this section of the working class is disproportionately white due to discrimination and national oppression. Depending on the region of the country, and whether the production facility is based in an urban or rural area, this is less true in the unionized sections of basic industry.

At times the upper section of the working class has shown itself to be extremely militant when it comes to defending its class interests.

Some parts of the upper sections of the working class are influenced by white and national chauvinism; hence, these elements at times exercise a conservative influence in the labor movement and society as a whole.

Over the past thirty years, this section of the working class has been hit hard by changes in the productive forces and the departure of factories to other countries—particularly in the basic industries. As a result, it is less of a force in the working class as a whole.

In a similar vein, some of the skilled trades have gone through a process whereby the degree of skills required has declined (machinists) or where the degree of unionization has declined (carpenters) and as a result, larger and larger sections of these professions have found themselves in the middle or lower sections of the working class.

In the private sector, this is the most organized section of the working class. This section of the working class often sees itself as a part of the “middle class,” and in many ways believes that their whole way of life is disappearing.

The most important section of the upper section of the working class are those concentrated in basic industries, where there are still many large, multinational workplaces.

The middle sections of the working class include most workers in the public sector, unionized workers in light industry, transportation and communications and a large section of the office workers in finance, insurance and real estate. While public employees have a

higher rate of unionization than the working class as a whole, the middle section of the working class is less organized than the upper and many tend to work under less socialized conditions.

This section of the working class is under serious pressure, and is seeing its standard of living erode. While public sector workers face real pressures, many in this section of the class are in danger of being pushed into the lower sections of the class in times of economic crisis or restructuring. This is particularly true where households have fewer resources to fall back on, for example, oppressed nationality workers who face 'last hired and first fired.'

The middle section of the class has been where most new union members have come from in the past forty years. This is partly because of the growth of the service and healthcare industries. It is also because of the motion of public sector workers into joining unions.

The civil rights movement had a large impact on the union movement among the public sector because of the significant employment of Black workers. When Martin Luther King Jr. died in Memphis, he was there supporting a strike of sanitation workers.

The requirements of organizing new members made unions change, and in turn led to struggles against the failures of the old union leadership.

Organizing new members is in the interests of the class, and in the main, organizing the unorganized has contributed to the class struggle.

The lower section of the working class is growing, labors under the most difficult conditions and is disproportionately made up of women and oppressed nationalities. It includes many who work in agriculture, retail, and the food processing industries, the less unionized sections of light industry, prison laborers, and temporary workers—especially those who do not receive benefits. Workers without jobs are a part of this section of the working class.

The employed section of this group of workers has no illusions about being part of the "middle class." As a group, homelessness is just a few lost paychecks away. Issues like health care and childcare affect the entire working class and parts of the petty bourgeoisie as well, but for the lower sections of working class their importance cannot be overstated. No childcare can well mean no job. No health care coverage means long waits in hospital emergency rooms for basic care.

Many undocumented workers are in the lower section of the working class, and a portion of this section of the class would like to see radical change.

The urban poor is the stratum of the lower section of the working class who are without jobs or who lack stable employment. It includes people on public assistance and day laborers. The urban poor is extremely dissatisfied with conditions, and it is the only stratum of the working class that as a whole, is open to revolutionary ideas about changing society.

Lumpen Proletariat

The lumpen proletariat is made up of those who make their living primarily by criminal means, including drug dealing, street cons and theft. It is mainly made up of former members of the working class who have turned to anti-social means to get by.

While in the main it is the working class that suffers from its behavior, sections of this group can change and become allies of the working class.

Working Class Leadership and the Need for a New Communist Party

For revolutionary change to take place in the United States, three conditions need to be in place. First, the broad masses of people—workers, the oppressed nationalities and others who are held down by the monopoly capitalists—need to arrive at the conclusion that they are unable to live in the old way, and need to be willing to fight to bring the old order to an end. Second, the ruling class needs to be in real crisis, where it is divided against itself and unable to continue with business as usual. And, finally, there needs to be a strong revolutionary organization, a communist party that is capable of navigating complex political situations and that can lead the fight to establish working class political power.

In the U.S. today, none of these conditions exist. In our view, it is the central task of revolutionaries to create a new communist party—a political party that is serious about revolution in this country. Such a party cannot be proclaimed or declared into being. It will be the product of bringing together or fusing Marxism with the workers movement. In a practical sense this means that a substantial section of the activists, organizers, and leaders need to take up the science of revolution, Marxism-Leninism, in order to build a communist party, that is in fact the advanced and organized detachment of the multi-national working class. This process will be the result of an organized effort, and it cannot come about spontaneously.

Building a new revolutionary party is a long-term project that requires perseverance and determination. It is not something that can be done in isolation from the people's struggle and movements. Our party building work should be placed in the context of our three objectives: To win all that can be won while weakening our enemies; Raise the general level of consciousness, struggle, and organization in our immediate battles; and Win the advanced to Marxism-Leninism, thus building revolutionary organization.

The tasks of revolutionaries in relationship to building revolutionary organization change

based on the development of the objective situation. Right now there are very few Marxist-Leninists in the U.S. While the job of uniting them is an important one, this is not key to party building. Finding new socialists in the course of the struggle is the thing to do.

It is possible that an upsurge of the national movements will lead to the creation of Marxist organizations based among a specific nationality, as happened in the late 60s and early 70s. If this takes place again, it would mean prioritizing the principled unity of communist organizations. Likewise if polarization in society due to the decline of U.S imperialism, or radicalization of a section of one or more social movements creates a layer of activists who are revolutionary minded, this in turn will affect the content of party building efforts.

Expanding the scale and scope of revolutionary organization with the long term goal of building a new communist party is closely linked with the construction of a united front against monopoly capitalism. The organizational capacity and political understanding a Marxist-Leninist party provides is the vehicle for working class leadership, and the scaffolding for the united front against monopoly capitalism.

The capitalists are at war with the entire working class. A determined resistance is necessary to defend our rights, dignity, and standard of living. It is the multinational working class that creates everything of value in the country. We understand we will never get more from the ruling class, the monopoly capitalists, than we are ready to fight for and organized to take.

We need a better future for ourselves and our families. We also need militant struggle, to address the conditions we are facing as a class. Freedom Road Socialist Organization promotes and struggles to realize the following demands to advance the cause of working people.

Demands of organized workers:

We are working to make our trade unions organizations that fight and are effective—unions that stand up to the employers and win. This means having class struggle unions, where the rank and file is in charge; and we are prepared to do whatever is necessary to be effective in our battles. In the trade union movement, we work to mobilize every member. When possible, we unite with the existing labor leadership to advance workplace struggles. If necessary, we expose the labor bureaucrats who are tied to management and get in the way.

- **All workers must be able to live a full and enjoyable life with only one job.** No worker should be forced to work overtime. We must fight for shorter work weeks with full pay.
- **Unions must organize the unorganized, including the lower sections of the working class.** We must build unity and struggle in this section of the class, and we must fight for our unions to organize workers in these sectors.
- **Repeal Taft-Hartley and all anti-labor legislation.** All workers must have the freedom to withhold labor on their own terms, anytime, including secondary strikes, boycotts, and strikes with no notice. Workers must also have the freedom to join unions and insist that employers hire union members only. "We support closed shops."
- **Independent contractors and subcontractors must be recognized as full employees of the company they are working for.** No company or corporation can be allowed to skirt labor laws or lower standards and working conditions through contracting or subcontracting.
- **Workplace health and safety measures that protect the short and long term health of workers.** No workers' life should be sacrificed for profits. All unions must fight for the safety of the working class and against bosses who put workers at risk. Workers in each industry should establish their health and safety standards. Workers shall have the right to stop production when safety standards aren't met. Workers shall have the right to refuse all unsafe job assignments.
- **Automation must not reduce the number of jobs or lower wages for any worker.** Any technology that has the potential to cause job loss or dislocation must be the subject of negotiations and must not take place without union approval. Our approach is to fight for every job.

- **No to privatization.** End all attacks on public employees. In times of economic crisis, we reject balancing the federal or state budgets on the backs of the people.
- **International solidarity.** The working class exists in every country, and we stand with all workers resisting capitalism. We must build unity with workers worldwide and oppose collaboration with bosses. This includes opposing national chauvinist and collaborationist slogans like “buy American,” We also favor cooperation between trade unions from different countries.

Demands of the working class:

- **Affordable housing for all.** Everyone needs housing and should be able to afford a decent place to live.
- **Workers must be able to live and support a family.** This must be possible through having one job.
- **We demand universal free healthcare for all.** Healthcare is a basic human need and right and must not be denied to anyone. Employers must not be able to hold workers hostage based on their need to have healthcare. Healthcare must be available to all, including people with disabilities and anyone who cannot work.
- **All workers must be able to retire with dignity at a reasonable age.**
- **We demand paid parental leave for all parents.** Parents, primarily women, spend countless hours doing the labor to raise a family. Raising a family or taking care of relatives must not come at the cost of a worker’s pay.
- **Free childcare for all.**
- **All workers must have enough vacation time to be able to relax and live an enjoyable and healthy life.**
- **Free education for all, at all levels.** Education is a human right. We oppose the privatization of public schools We are against private and charter schools.
- **Defend social security.** Tax the rich to pay for any shortfalls.

Demands against national oppression:

- **End discrimination in hiring practices, and discrimination on the job.** We must fight against all racist hiring practices that further or continue inequality, and we must struggle on our shop floors and in our unions to take up the fight against discrimination and white chauvinism at work.
- **We demand affirmative action in hiring practices.**
- **Unions must unite with movements against national oppression in the streets and in our unions.** To unite the multinational working class, labor must unite with the movements against national oppression. This includes uniting with movements against police crimes, supporting immigrant’s rights, and other struggles against national oppression and racism.
- **We demand an end to document checks.** We support and unite with the entire working class regardless of immigration status.
- **All workers must have the ability to take enough paid time off to travel home to see their family wherever in the world their family lives.** No worker should

have to go many years without being able to see their loved ones simply because it takes a long time to travel home.

Demands against women’s oppression and for gender equity:

- **We demand an end to discrimination in hiring, promotions, job assignments and wages.** We recognize that who gets hired for particular types of work can be very gendered in capitalist society. We demand comparable pay for comparable worth.
- **We demand wages for all that allow a single parent to raise a family with one job.** All parents and all people must be able to have the resources they need to live a full life. Economic independence is often an issue in leaving abusive relationships and domestic violence.
- **We demand an end to sexual harassment in the workplace.** Sexual harassment continues to be rampant and is largely unchecked in workplaces. We must fight against it in all forms whether it comes directly from bosses or from coworkers who are allowed by bosses to get away with it in the workplace.
- **No attacks on reproductive freedom!** Full employer paid coverage of reproductive health care, including birth control, abortion, and fertility treatments.
- **Pay for stay at home parents.** Nobody should lose their income to raise their family.
- **Paid leave for child, parental and family care, and bereavement.** All workers must be able to care for their family members without risking loss of income and all workers deserve bereavement leave to mourn loss including after miscarriages.
- **Complete coverage for all best practice gender affirming medical care for trans and non-binary workers.** This includes not just medication and surgery but other services such as voice training and laser hair removal. We must fight against discrimination in all forms against trans and non-binary workers.
- **Equal access to safe bathrooms for all workers.**

Demands of the unemployed:

- **Jobs or income now!** Government should create union jobs at union wages!
- **Public assistance for all in need!**
- **Unemployment benefits for all!** This includes undocumented workers and first time job seekers and should not be dependent on length of time at previous jobs or amount of time unemployed. We oppose “Work-fare” programs. No one should have to work for unemployment or public assistance.
- **Extend and expand unemployment benefits.** Extended benefits in times of economic crisis and parts of the country where unemployment rates are high.

The struggle of colonized, indigenous, and oppressed nationality peoples have been part and parcel of the peoples' struggle against U.S. imperialism. Historically, these struggles, and in particular the African American liberation movement, have dealt blows against the system, and won reforms that benefited the working masses.

In this spirit of struggle and unity, the FRSO puts forward the following immediate demands:

1. Independence for Puerto Rico and other colonies of the United States! The United States has kept Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Belau (Palau), Guam, the Marshall Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands as colonies. They have no political representation in the United States, and their countries are exploited by U.S. multinational corporations and by the U.S. military. The FRSO supports:

- **Immediate independence for all colonies of the United States.** The United States must recognize and honor all previous commitments (Social Security, Medicare, veterans benefits, etc.) made to residents of colonies and provide economic aid and allow unrestricted immigration during a transition period.
- **Withdrawal of all U.S. military bases from all colonies of the United States and an end to military recruitment.**
- **Observance of a nuclear-free zone in the Pacific and free health care and reparations for all Pacific Islanders affected by U.S. nuclear tests.**

2. Full Sovereignty and National Development for Indigenous Peoples! The United States is based on theft of land, genocide, and destruction of culture of the Alaskan Native, Native American, and Native Hawaiian peoples. Today indigenous peoples have the highest rates of poverty, the poorest health care and housing, and the least education in the United States. Stereotyping and commercialization of their culture and continued loss of land are commonplace. The FRSO supports:

- **Full sovereignty for Alaskan Natives, Native Americans, and Native Hawaiians.** This includes upholding past treaties and abolishing the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the exercise of local political power.
- **The right to national development.** In the current period, this includes gaming and especially the return of indigenous peoples' land and natural resources to make their sovereign areas economically viable.
- **Protection for indigenous peoples' traditions and culture, including full equality of languages, support for indigenous education, and an end to stereotyping and exploitation of their culture.**

3. Self-Determination for Oppressed Nations and Full Equality for Oppressed Nationalities! Africans, Latinos, and Asians were brought to the United States as slave, Bracero, and contract laborers. Immigrants from Asia, Africa, and Latin American, as well as peoples from U.S. colonies, and urbanized indigenous peoples continue to come to the

United States. Together they make up the oppressed nationalities in the United States who suffer racial discrimination, economic exploitation, lack of political representation, and social segregation in the United States. In particular, the peoples of Hawai'i, Chicanos in the Southwest, and African Americans in the South have been forged into oppressed nations, each with a common territory, economy, language and culture.

(A) FRSO supports the right to self-determination, up to and including the right to secession (political independence) for the African American, Chicano, and Hawaiian nations. Land must be returned to the people, and government boundaries must be redrawn to unify these nations politically.

- **i.** The British settlers in North America killed the indigenous peoples and enslaved African to work in the plantations in the South. This period of slavery, and later Jim Crow segregation forged the many African peoples brought to the United States into a common people with a shared culture and language and a common economy based on agriculture in the Black Belt South. Former slaves, promised 40 acres and a mule following the civil war, were forced to work as sharecroppers. Those African Americans who did manage to become farmers have by and large been dispossessed of their land. Despite great migration of African Americans to the north and west, and economic development in the South, the majority of African Americans still live in the south, which maintains a distinct economy based on low-wage, non-union, and less educated labor. African Americans in the south continue as a nation oppressed by U.S. imperialism, and have the right to self-determination.
- **ii.** In 1836 American settlers in Texas revolted against Mexico and nine years later the United States annexed Texas. In 1848 the United States attacked Mexico and seized what is now the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. In this area of the southwest (including Texas), the United States seized the land of the Mexicans, banned them from independent mining, segregated their children in schools, and suppressed their language, forcing them and millions of immigrants from Mexico to work as laborers in the mines, fields, and factories of the Southwest. These peoples were forged into a Chicano (Mexican-American) nation with a common territory, culture, and economy who have the right to self-determination.
- **iii.** In 1893 the United States backed the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai'i and five years later colonized the island. During the years as a U.S. colony Hawai'i developed an economy based on sugar plantations on land taken from the Native Hawaiians, a language (Pidgin) and culture (Local) based on the working masses of the islands made up of Native Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans, Puerto Ricans, and Portuguese. As a nation with a common territory, economy, and culture, that has been seized and exploited by U.S. imperialism, the people of Hawai'i have the right to self-determination.

(B) The FRSO supports full equality for oppressed nationality peoples such as African Americans, Arab Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanos, Latinos, Pacific Islanders and urbanized indigenous peoples. The oppressed nationality peoples share a common history of racial discrimination, economic exploitation, suppression of their language and culture, and restrictions on their political rights and power.

- **i.** African Americans both inside and outside of the south consist of the descendants of slaves as well as many descendants of immigrants of African descent. While most descendants of English-speaking immigrants from Africa, and the Caribbean, are assimilating into the African American community, other immigrants, such as Haitians and Somalis, are forming distinct communities. In addition to supporting the right to self-determination for the African American nation, the FRSO supports the following immediate demands:
 - **Reparations** for the descendants of African slaves in the United States
 - **Political power** through regional and local autonomy for communities of African Americans outside of the African American nation. End gerrymandering of political districts that reduce African American political representation.
 - **An end to the war on drugs** targeting the African American community, police brutality, killer cops, and all-white juries.
 - **Expansion of affirmative action programs** and an end to discriminatory testing and entrance requirements for colleges.
 - **Increase funding for schools** in African American communities
 - **Political asylum** for African and Caribbean people fleeing repressive governments.

- **ii.** Asian Americans (Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, Lao, Hmong, and others) from east, southeast, and south Asia have distinct communities, and at the same time many Asian Americans are undergoing a process of amalgamation and intermarriage. Recognizing the particular character of each nationality, the FRSO supports the common demands of Asian Americans such as:
 - **Full equality of languages** in voting, schools, and government services. Expansion of bilingual education programs
 - **End to discriminatory immigration practices** and licensing laws for professionals. End deportations for all Asian-American immigrants. Full equality for undocumented immigrants and non-citizens in access to all government benefits and services, such as healthcare and welfare.
 - **Stop the persecution** of Chinese Americans who are victimized by the growing U.S. antagonism towards the People's Republic of China.
 - **Affirmative action** for Asian American nationalities who are underrepresented in colleges and universities such as Filipinos, Vietnamese, Lao, Hmong, etc.
 - **Political power** through regional and local autonomy for Asian American communities in the continental United States. End gerrymandering of political districts that reduce Asian American political representation.

- **iii.** Arab Americans (Palestinians, Lebanese, Syrian, Jordanians, Iraqis, Egyptians, and others) have distinct communities but face common conditions. Recognizing the particular character of each nationality, the FRSO supports the common demands of Arab Americans such as:
 - **Full equality of languages** in voting, schools, and government services. Expansion of bilingual education programs.
 - **Full equality** for undocumented immigrants and non-citizens in access to all government benefits and services, such as healthcare and welfare.
 - **Amnesty** for undocumented Arab males who were forced to take part in the “special registration” program of the Department of Homeland Security and were immediately placed in deportation proceedings.
 - **End detentions and deportations** and call for legalization for Arab immigrants; and end FBI/DHS harassment of Arab immigrants and non-immigrants.
 - **Stop the persecution** of Arab Americans and American Muslims who are victimized by the U.S. “war on terror”. Defend the right of Arab and all Muslim women to wear a headscarf, especially in schools and the work place, without harassment
 - **Political power** through regional and local autonomy for Arab American communities in the continental United States. End gerrymandering of political districts that reduce Arab American political representation.

- **iv.** The descendants of Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have formed distinct communities of Brazilians, Chicanos and Mexicanos, Cubans, Dominicans, Guatemalans, Puerto Ricans, Salvadorans, etc. In areas of the Southwest, there is also some amalgamation and intermarriage between Chicanos and other Latinos. In addition to the upholding the right to self-determination of the Chicano Nation, and recognizing the particular character of each nationality, the FRSO supports the common demands of Chicanos and Latinos including:
 - **Political power** through regional and local autonomy for Chicano and Latino communities outside of the Chicano nation. End gerrymandering of political districts that reduce Chicano and Latino political representation.
 - **Reparations** for the forced deportations of Chicanos in the 1930s.
 - **An end to ICE raids** and militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border. Legal Residency for undocumented immigrants. End all deportations of Latino immigrants. No criminalization of the undocumented. Full equality for undocumented immigrants and non-citizens in access to all government benefits and services, such as healthcare and welfare.
 - **End the embargo** on Cuba and all restrictions on travel and family relations for Cuban Americans going to Cuba.
 - **An end to police brutality**, racial profiling, criminalization, high incarceration rates, and trial by all-white juries.
 - **Expansion of affirmative action** programs and an end to discriminatory testing and entrance requirements for colleges.

- **Full equality of languages** in voting, schools, and government services. Expansion of bilingual education programs. Local voting and jury rights for resident immigrants.
- **v.** Pacific Islanders and urbanized Indigenous Peoples consist of Pacific Islanders (Samoans, Tongans, Chamorro, and others), Native Alaskans and Native Hawaiian in the continental United States, and urbanized Native Americans outside of their homelands. Recognizing the particular nature of each people, the FRSO supports the common demands of:
 - **Full equality of languages** in voting, schools, and government services. Expansion of bilingual education programs.
 - **Political power** through local and regional autonomy for Pacific Islanders and indigenous peoples outside of their homeland.
 - **An end to stereotyping and exploitation** of their culture.
 - **Expansion of affirmative action** programs and an end to discriminatory testing and entrance requirements for colleges.
 - **An end to police brutality**, racial profiling, and trial by all-white juries.

4. Empower the working masses of the Oppressed Nations and Nationalities!

While history books focus on individual leaders of these movements, the FRSO recognizes that it was the working masses whose grassroots struggle has propelled the movement. The FRSO puts forward the following suggestions to empower the working class of the oppressed nationalities and to advance the struggle against national oppression:

- **Community meetings** should be held in evenings and weekends when more working people can participate.
- **Education on the history** of oppressed nationalities should emphasize the role of the working masses.
- **Community organizations should educate themselves and support** struggles affecting other oppressed nationalities and the multinational working class such labor, health care, welfare, civil liberties, etc.
- **Expansion of class-based programs** targeting low-income and first generation college students in addition to race-based affirmative action programs.
- **Oppressed nationalities should not limit their political participation to electoral politics in general and the Democratic and Republican parties in particular.**

Note: further additional sections of our program are in progress, such as the immediate demands of various sectors of the people (such as women, farmers, LGBTQ people, veterans, and more).